Abstract
This article analyses how periods of geopolitical conflict and violence have affected the development of capitalism and class formation in Turkey. We argue that all major episodes of conflict, violence and war—from forced displacement and ethnic cleansing of the non-Muslims in the late 19th and the early 20th century, to Kurdish secessionist warfare in the 1990s and the Syrian Civil War—have become major historical turning points in the development of historical capitalism in Turkey. These “hostile conjunctures” transformed capitalism through their direct and indirect effects on dispossession, class formation, and capital accumulation. Although each of these conflicts produced a violent dispossession process, none of them resembled the rural dispossession process in England. To make sense of Turkey’s experience, we turn our attention to what we call the “Castilian/Spanish road,” and what Lenin called the “Junker/Prussian road” and the “farmers/American road.” Our analysis shows that these differential paths of dispossession, class formation, and capital accumulation have produced highly variegated rather than uniform outcomes. We conclude that we are living in a new “hostile conjuncture,” which is pregnant to a major structural crisis and is generating the preconditions of another historical transformation in the way capitalism operates.

KEYWORDS
class formation, dispossession, historical capitalism, primitive accumulation, Turkey, war
INTRODUCTION

In Part 8 of Capital Volume 1, Karl Marx turns his attention to the key role of extra-economic forms of coercion in the initial development of capitalism. His analysis of “the so-called primitive accumulation” skillfully shows that “[f]orce is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power” (Marx, 1990 [1867], p.916). Building upon Marx’s key insight, this article investigates the relationship between violence, dispossession, capital accumulation, and class formation in a semiperipheral context. Building upon the theoretical frame built by Marx (1990 [1867]) and Arrighi and Piselli (1987), we analyse the impact of different types of geopolitical conflicts and wars on Turkey’s path of capitalist development.¹ Our comparative analysis includes the political-economic consequences of the Armenian Genocide and forced displacement of non-Muslims during the late Ottoman Empire and the early Republican era as well as the differential effects of the Cold War and the Korean War (1950–1953) in the mid-20th century. We discuss how these past moments of violence continue to shape contemporary dynamics, including the Kurdish secessionist warfare that escalated from the mid-1980s to mid-1990s, and the Syrian Civil War.

We put forward three main arguments. First, we argue that all of these major episodes of conflict, violence, and wars from the 19th century to the present constituted major historical turning points in the development of historical capitalism in Turkey. These events, which have their roots in deeper conflicts and great power rivalries that transcend the territorial boundaries of modern Turkey, affected the course of historical capitalism in this country through their direct and indirect effects on dispossession, class-formation, and capital accumulation. Hence, in contrast to perspectives, which maintain that capitalism is a distinct system in that “appropriators cannot rely on ‘extra-economic powers’ of appropriation by means of direct coercion [...] but must depend on the purely ‘economic’ mechanisms of the market” (Wood, 2002, p.2), we argue that in Turkey—as in much of the world—extra-economic means of coercion has always been an integral part of capitalist development. The role of extra-economic means of coercion cannot be attributed merely to initiating the “original” capitalist accumulation process because geopolitical conflicts, wars, and violence have constantly transformed existing configurations of capitalism over space and time.

Second, we show that although each of these conflicts produced a violent dispossession process, none of them fit into the orthodox primitive accumulation schemes outlined by Marx in his analysis of rural dispossession in England. Schemes that generalize Marx’s analysis of the English path maintain that primitive accumulation processes should result in capitalist development by producing market-dependent capitalists on the one hand, and fully proletarianized labour on the other hand. In contrast to such schemes, however, our analysis of Turkey shows multiple and diverse paths of primitive accumulation that bear only a “family resemblance” to the English case. Inspired by Arrighi and Piselli’s (1987) analysis of development of capitalism in Southern Italy, we argue that to make sense of Turkey’s experience, one needs to look not to the English prototype of primitive accumulation but to other capitalist countries in history that can be thought as alternative prototypes. We turn our attention to the alternative paths of primitive accumulation taken by Spain (what we call the Castilian/Spanish road), Prussia (what Lenin (1972 [1908]) calls the Junker/Prussian road), and the United States (what Lenin (1972 [1908]) calls the farmers/American road). As we elaborate in the theory section, coexistence of these divergent roads of capitalist development do not contradict but closely follow Marx’s theoretical insights on primitive accumulation in Capital: Volume 1.

Third, we argue that violent dispossession and capital-formation processes in Turkey have closely been linked to the dynamics of the capitalist world economy. We use the term hostile conjunctures to refer to the transformative periods of the world economy during that different types of conflicts (such as a genocide, ethnic violence, state violence, interstate or intrastate wars, or intensified rivalry between great powers) produce different combinations of capital and wage-labour formation. Analyzing the relationship between hostile conjunctures and world-hegemonic cycles, we argue that system-wide expansions of production and trade during the eras of British and United States

¹We use Turkey as a geographical term, which includes the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey but limit the spatial boundaries of our historical analysis to the physical boundaries of modern Turkey.
world hegemony provided existing factions of capital in Turkey with the opportunity to consolidate and concentrate their wealth and power. Conflicts that occurred during systemic crises in the capitalist world economy and the decline of world hegemonies, in contrast, helped produce new capitalist blocs and an intensification of rivalry (including violent feud-type conflicts aimed at centralizing capital) between different fractions of the bourgeoisie. This argument builds upon Arrighi’s (1994) claim that periods of financial expansion and world- hegemonic crisis are fertile for producing new rounds of primitive accumulation and new configurations of capitalism. This paper extends this view by also suggesting that in semiperipheral and peripheral contexts, the effects of financial flows on primitive accumulation can also take during world hegemonies when the new hegemonic powers attempt to increase their spheres of influence. We examine the Marshall Plan aids in the 1950s as an example of this dynamic.

After explaining the theoretical frame and the methodology in the first section, each section of the paper focuses on a distinct historical era. The second section focuses on the rise of British world hegemony during the first three quarters of the 19th century, when a non-Muslim merchant bourgeoisie emerged and concentrated their economic power during the integration of the Ottoman Empire into the capitalist world economy. The third section examines the crisis and demise of British world hegemony from the 1870s to 1940s. Introducing the Castilian/Spanish road to capitalist development and the concept of primitive unification, this section shows how the initial Turkish bourgeoisie emerged by appropriating the land, capital, and business networks of Armenians, Greeks, and Jews. The fourth section focuses on the rise of U.S. world hegemony when members of this new Turkish bourgeoisie started to concentrate their capital and to become industrial capitalists. After discussing the role Marshall Plan aids had on the mechanization of Turkish agriculture, the section shows that in this era, the expropriation of agricultural producers from land occurred in two distinct ways. In the Cukurova region, development followed what Lenin (1972 [1908]) called the Junker/Prussian road, as landlords gradually transformed themselves into big agricultural capitalists. In the rest of Anatolia (with the exception of the Kurdish regions in the South Eastern and Eastern Anatolia), however, the development of capitalism occurred through the expansion of the middle peasantry, which resembled what Lenin (1972 [1908]) termed the farmer/American road to capitalism. The expansion of a middle peasantry, however, did not prevent wage-labour formation over time. Given the difficulties in trying to maintain a livelihood from low quality land, many peasants decided to migrate to urban centres without selling their lands and thus were semi-proletarianized. In the last two sections of this paper, we compare dispossession processes across British and U.S. world hegemonies and discuss the effects of the crisis of the U.S. world hegemonic order on the forms of dispossession and capital accumulation that have arisen from 1980 to the present. We conclude that we are living in a new hostile conjuncture that has been producing a major structural crisis and preparing the conditions for another major transformation in the history of Turkish political economy.

2 | THEORY AND METHODS

In the contemporary literature, much of the existing discussions on primitive accumulation processes and origins of capitalist development are informed by Marx’s discussion of the primitive accumulation process in the English countryside in Capital: Volume 1 as well as the famous transition debates of the 1950s and the 1970s. Both the Dobb-Sweezy debates of the 1950s (Sweezy & Dobb, 1950; see Hilton, 1976) and the Brenner debates of the 1970s (Brenner, 1976; see Ashton & Philpin, 1987) have enhanced our understanding of the contradictions and complexities involved in the rise of capitalism in early modern Europe. Moreover, scholars continue to debate the extent to that Marx’s discussion on primitive accumulation can be used to explain the emergence of capitalism elsewhere (Bernstein, 2016; Akram-Lodhi & Kay, 2010; Arrighi, 1998; Wood, 2002; Lafrance & Post, 2019).

In this paper, however, we have a different research agenda. We are not interested in explaining when and how Turkey became a capitalist country, and, therefore do not analyse the relative weight of economic and extra-economic factors in this transition from an era of pre-capitalism to an era of capitalism. Instead, we analyse the impact of distinct historical moments of geopolitical conflict and violence on dispossession, wage-labour formation,
and capital accumulation. This approach helps us examine the relationship between violence, dispossession, and socio-economic transformations in Turkey from a long durée historical perspective, focusing on how wage-labour formation and capital accumulation have evolved unevenly across time and space, producing different configurations for capital accumulation at different moments of history and in different regions of Turkey. Hence, instead of identifying one primitive accumulation process that initiates the capitalist development, we analyse different historical moments of extra-economic conflicts and violence that transform historical capitalism by producing different combinations of capital and wage-labour formation, and qualitatively different regimes of capital accumulation. This perspective also helps us to analyse Turkey not as an autonomous and homogenous unit of analysis, but as part of an evolving capitalist world economy and as a conglomerate of different socio-economic subregions that have different but interconnected histories of capital and wage-labour formation.

We define historical capitalism broadly as a social and historical system in that the production and circulation of commodities is subservient to the endless accumulation of capital. In this definition, accumulation of capital broadly refers to a process where money (M) is invested to produce more money (M'), as illustrated by Marx's general M-C-M' (or the short-hand M-M') formula. According to this conceptualization, exact mechanisms of capital accumulation are subject to qualitative changes over time (and space) because all specific capitalist accumulation strategies have their limits and contradictions, and thus produce social, economic, and political crises in the long-run. Strategies that seek to overcome these limits, contradictions, and crises in order to sustain the task of endless accumulation transform existing configurations of historical capitalism. Thus, capitalism is an extremely flexible and fluid social and historical system.

Our conceptualization of capitalist development builds upon Marx's lesser-known world-historical theorizations in Vol. 1 of *Capital* as well as Giovanni Arrighi's macro-sociological theory of historical capitalism (Arrighi, 1994; Arrighi & Piselli, 1987). Although Marx did not use the term capitalism in Vol. 1 of *Capital*, he argued that history of capital, capitalist production, and the successive historical moments of primitive accumulation predated the full development of the capitalist mode of production in England. Although Marx primarily analysed the relatively well-known English path of primitive accumulation as an example of the classic form, he did not present it as a singular path of capitalist transition that will be the only model for all countries. On the contrary, he believed that primitive accumulation "assumes different aspects in different countries, and runs through its various phases in different orders of succession, and at different historical epochs" (p.876, emphases ours). Likewise, Marx noted that capitalist production first developed in Italy in the 14th century (p.876, ft.1) and after Italy, there were successive moments of primitive accumulation in Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, England, and the United States (p.920).

Unfortunately, Marx did not explain what these different forms of primitive accumulation were, how they emerged, and what consequences they had for capital and wage-labour formation. What he explained, however, was that these successive moments of primitive accumulation in world history were linked to each other through international financial flows from declining centres of capital accumulation to new emergent centres. Marx observed that financial flows from Italy to Holland in the 16th century, from Holland to England in the late 18th century, and from England to the United States in the 1860s produced new waves of primitive accumulation and initiated new phases of capitalist development in recipient countries (Marx, 1990, p.920). His analysis suggested that successive moments of primitive accumulation in world history were responses to the crises of existing strategies of capital accumulation, which failed to sustain the task of endless accumulation.

Synthesizing Marx's theoretical insights with Fernand Braudel's historical observations, Giovanni Arrighi (1994) developed his theory of systemic cycles of capitalist accumulation, which asserted that each of Marx's global-level financial flows in world history started not only new forms of primitive accumulation processes in new geographies but also new configurations for historical capitalism at the global level. For Arrighi, these Schumpeterian creative
destruction processes had not only in the financialization processes but also in the simultaneous intensification of inter-capitalist and interstate rivalries during these periods. Periods of financialization and geopolitical conflicts were the hotbeds of primitive accumulation on a world scale. In arguing so, in contrast to Wallerstein's (1974) conception of a capitalist world-system that emerged in the 16th century and developed along a single track through geographical expansion, Arrighi (1994) defended a view of historical capitalism that emerged in northern Italy in the 14th century and switched several tracks during each financial expansion and world hegemonic crisis periods (also see Arrighi & Silver, 1999). Arrighi's view presented a macro-historical theory that did not associate development of capitalism with quantitative changes in the volume of trade, but emphasized qualitative changes in the functioning of the world economy (especially in spheres of production, protection, transaction, and reproduction) that occurred at different moments of history in different regions of the world.

Arrighi's approach has major consequences for studies of capitalist development in particular countries from a macro-historical and world-systemic perspective. This perspective did not reduce class relations and conflicts in individual countries and their political-economic structures to their world-systemic position or vice versa. Arrighi's approach defended the autonomy of class relations from world-systemic forces and suggested that there was no direct relationship between particular roads of capitalist development and their outcomes. In order to show how this complex micro–macro relationship works, in "Capitalist Development in Hostile Environments," Arrighi and Piselli (1987) analysed differential paths of wage-labour formation and capital accumulation in peripheral regions of Southern Italy. They found that a major transformation of class relations took place from the 1860s to the First World War (i.e., during the crisis of the British world hegemony). In this era, the Crontenese, the Plain of Gioia Tauro, and the Cosentino regions of Calabria produced different wage-labour formations, followed different paths of capitalist transition, and produced different forms of class relations. The Crontenese region followed Lenín's "Junker or Prussian" road where large landowners transformed into capitalist enterprises that exploit wage-labour. The Plain of Gioia Tauro followed Lenin's "farmer or American road" where peasants turned into farmers producing for market and small capitalists who employed wage labour to supplement family labour.\(^3\) The Cosentino followed what Arrighi and Piselli labeled a “migrant-peasant or Swiss road,” where the peasant latifundum transformed into a system of peasant holdings employing family labour but also relying on income gained from emigrants who sold their labour in distant labour markets. These three strategies in Southern Italy also produced different modes of appropriation and different forms of class struggle over time. None of them, however, brought a core status to these regions, as all three remained in a peripheral position in the world economy.

Following in the footsteps of Arrighi and Piselli (1987), in this paper, we will analyse differential roads of dispossession, class formation, and capital accumulation in Turkey. In contrast to much of the orthodox world-systems literature, we do not equate Turkey's (or Ottoman Empire's) incorporation into the capitalist world economy as a wholesale transition to capitalism. Although the Ottoman Empire was incorporated into the capitalist world economy in the late 18th and the early 19th century, development of different forms of capital accumulation strategies occurred in different regions of the Empire and modern Turkey at different time periods. By comparing the uneven development of capital and wage-labour formation processes over space and time, we aim to bring light into how capitalism has transformed and is still transforming in Turkey in synchrony with major geopolitical conflicts.

The comparative strategy used in this paper resembles what McMichael (1990) calls incorporating comparison strategy. We analyse and compare distinct dispossession and class-formation processes in Turkey's history as interlinked but spatially and temporally variegated products of a historically evolving social formation (i.e., development of historical capitalism). Instead of starting with a priori causal statements about which factors, conditions, or variables in this system produce which particular outcomes, we directly analyse the historical evolution of these events and processes as interlinked components of a broader world-historical process.

"To safely navigate in a vast sea of empirical facts" (Weber, 1949, p.104), we also make use of a heuristic tool that is similar to Max Weber's ideal types. The different paths described in the paper as the Castilian/Spanish Road, the

\(^3\)For a more nuanced assessment of Junker/Prussian and farmer/American roads see Byres (1996).
Junker/Prussian Road, and farmers/American road are not merely analogies but representations of variegated historical trajectories to capitalism to that other historical dispossession and class-formation processes can be compared. In contrast to Weber's "ideal" types, however, these are not abstract "mental constructs" (Weber, 1949, p.93) but real historical occurrences, hence "real" types. In this paper, comparison of historical occurrences of geopolitical conflicts and dispossession processes in Turkey with these real types helps us not only locate the variegated processes and outcomes in Turkey in proper world-historical context, but also understand why similar mechanisms in different times and places do not lead to uniform outcomes.

3 | RISE OF NON-MUSLIM CAPITAL IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE DURING THE BRITISH WORLD HEGEMONY

There is almost a consensus in the literature that the Ottoman Empire was integrated into the capitalist world economy sometime between the late 18th and the early 19th centuries (Zurcher, 2004, pp.3–4, 63; Wallerstein, 1989, p.129; Kasaba, 1988, p.35; Keyder, 1987). Benefiting from the global economic upswing of the British world hegemony from 1830s to 1873, this integration expanded the volume of trade and commercial activities in the Empire in the course of the 19th century. Although the Empire was in a period of crisis and decline, in this era, the Ottoman economy grew by 3.5% and foreign trade by 5% per annum (Pamuk, 2014, p.6; Quataert, 2005, pp.128–129; Zurcher, 2004, p.63; Kasaba, 1988; Keyder, 1987, p.29).

At the first sight, however, the increasing volume of commercial activities did not radically change the general structure of the Ottoman political economy (Quataert, 2005, pp.128–130; Mardin, 1980, pp.28–29). The Ottoman Empire remained a fiscal state that was not preoccupied with concerns of economic development (Quataert, 2005, p.130; Mardin, 1980, p.29). Rather, it focused mainly on the extraction of surplus in the form of taxes from small peasant holdings in the rural economy, which were redistributed within the Ottoman bureaucracy (Gocek, 2015, p.89; Keyder, 1987, p.25; Mardin, 1980). In the early 19th century, local notables (ayans) enlarged their landed properties (Gocek, 2015, pp.89–90) and started to implement a form of the corvée system that was antithetical to the strong centralized bureaucracy envisaged by the Ottoman bureaucratic elite (Cleveland, 1994, pp.88–89). By the mid-19th century, however, the Ottoman elite managed to undermine the ayans' power by eliminating the tax-farming system together with corvée and confiscating their large holdings (Pamuk, 2014, pp.19–20; Kasaba, 1988, pp.61–65; Keyder, 1987, pp.15–17; Mardin, 1980, p.30). Consequently, most of the Ottoman countryside remained comprised of small peasant holdings using family labour, mainly cultivating less than 5 ha of land (Quataert, 2005, pp.130–134; Kasaba, 1988, pp.62–63; Keyder, 1987, pp.25–48) and employing techniques that had not changed dramatically since the time of the Hittites (Mann, 1980, p.197).

Rather than create a strong Turkish–Muslim merchant bourgeoisie, the Ottoman Empire's incorporation into the capitalist world economy further weakened an already weak Muslim merchant class. Under the classical imperial system, the economic power of the Muslim merchants rested on (a) their role as traders of local and intraregional luxury goods to and from Asian markets, (b) tax exemptions they received from the government, and (c) transfers of wealth through their social connections with the Ottoman bureaucracy. Given their economic dependence upon the Ottoman bureaucracy, their fortunes were tied to those of the Ottoman bureaucracy, which at this time remained relatively meager (Kasaba, 1988, pp.101–103). Moreover, Muslim merchants' ability to exploit their position as central traders within the transnational Asian market was diminished by geographical changes in trade routes that

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4This observation by Mann needs to be qualified. In the late 19th century, there were efforts to develop and modernize the Ottoman agriculture spearheaded by the Chamber of Commerce (Quataert 1973, pp.67–71). As we will discuss later, in terms of commercialization of agriculture, the Cukurova region was an exceptional part of the Empire (see Toksoz, 2000, pp.202–241). In this region, the Armenians were introducing many agricultural technologies, which were prompting opposition by the local populace (Astourian, 1996, p.567). Yet, even in central Anatolian cities like Konya, agricultural producers "proved receptive to innovation" when they were "offered improvements of demonstrated value within [their] financial means" (Quataert 1973, p.174). This period also saw many innovations in tax collection, which expanded the collection capabilities of the Ottoman Empire (see Pamuk, 2014).

The main commercial beneficiaries of this era were the non-Muslim minority populations (e.g., Armenians, Greeks, and Jews) who were engaged in commercial activities in the emergent port cities on the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts in the West (such as Izmir, Istanbul, and Salonika), and on the Black Sea coasts in the North (such as Trabzon; Quataert, 2005; Kasaba, 1988, pp.28–35, 102). In the Eastern provinces, Armenian traders started to catch up with the economic power of their Muslim counterparts (Kasaba, 1988, p.102) and even to control the trade routes leading to Persia (Gocek, 1996, p.97).

The rise of non-Muslim merchant capitalists during this period was due not only to the relative decline of the Muslim traders. It was also the consequence of the specific cultural, economic, and geopolitical advantages enjoyed by non-Muslim populations in the Eurocentric world economy. In the cultural sphere, non-Muslim traders enjoyed an affinity of tradition, religion, and language with European businessmen, and this cultural capital provided them with a unique competitive advantage (Gocek, 1996, p.97; Keyder, 1987). In the economic sphere, reforms enacted by the Ottoman government, including the Gulhane Edict (Tanzimat reforms) in 1839 and the Reform Edict (Islahat) of 1856, gave non-Muslims specific economic advantages such as lower taxes.5 There were also religious advantages that changed the nature of land ownership. Strict application of the Koranic Law (Sharia) in land-related matters, such as division of larger holdings of deceased owners into smaller pieces, had prevented the emergence of large Muslim landowners. Yet, non-Muslim family members were able to buy each others’ share, thus preserving the integrity of the original land and expanding their holdings even more (Kasaba, 1988, p.104). The institution of Sharia law not only diminished the power of Muslim bankers and other financial elites but also helped turn some of the non-Muslim groups into bankers, usurers and sarrafs by permitting the accumulation of capital in their hands through commercial and land related activities. During the course of the 19th century, these non-Muslim sarrafs became increasingly involved in mediating the leasing, subcontracting, and sharecropping arrangements of the ayans, and were therefore essential to the operations of the Muslim merchants (Pamuk, 2014, p.10; Kasaba, 1988; Zurcher, 2004, pp.17, 65–66). Armenians were especially influential in the banking sector in Istanbul and other port cities. Moreover, their influence extended beyond the private sector, as they also managed to occupy the three most important posts in the imperial mint throughout the 19th century (Kasaba, 1988, p.101). In short, in the second half of the 19th century, non-Muslim merchants, landowners, and bankers were on the rise and the Muslim merchants were on the decline (see Senior, 1859, pp.211–215; Zurcher, 2004, p.85; Mann, 2005, p.115).

4 THE FIRST HOSTILE CONJUNCTURE: ACCUMULATION BY ETHNIC DISPLACEMENT AND CLEANSING DURING THE CRISIS OF THE BRITISH WORLD HEGEMONY

Although the association of non-Muslims with Judeo-Christian European powers was privileged under Ottoman rule during the period of British hegemony, it became an object of social conflict as British hegemony unraveled and the regime became more dependent upon a new class of industrial capitalists. Rather than permit the development of industrial capital in Turkey to gradually transform these non-Muslim merchant traders, bankers, and landowners into industrialists, they were violently displaced. From the 1890s to the Second World War, their properties, land, capital, and networks were all forcibly appropriated to pave the way for a specifically Muslim industrial capitalist class. This era constitutes the first hostile conjuncture in the development of capitalism in Turkey.

The chaos of this period was linked to the crisis and demise of the British-centred capitalist world economy and interstate system. First, there was an economic catastrophe. The crash of international stock exchanges in 1873 and the Great Depression of 1873–1896 that followed had an immediate negative impact on Ottoman finances. In 1875, 5Moreover, in the geopolitical sphere, European merchants preferred to trade with groups in the Ottoman Empire who could remain neutral during war times, and therefore actively sought out non-Muslim merchants including Greeks, Jews, and Armenians (Gocek, 1996, p.96).
the Ottoman bureaucracy announced that it would not be able to pay the debts it had been accumulating since 1854—an amount that totalled £200 million (Zurcher, 2004, p.72), and declared bankruptcy. Debt negotiations between the Ottoman bureaucracy and European investors led to the establishment of the Public Debt Administration (est. 1881), an institution that gave fiscal control over Ottoman finances to the European powers (Pamuk, 2014, p.20; Keyder, 1987, p.39; Kasaba, 1988, pp.108–112). As revenues diminished and access to liquidity dried up, Ottoman rulers increased taxes on peasants. This squeeze on peasants was further exacerbated by an unfortunate combination of drought, flood, and famine during 1873 and 1874 (Zurcher, 2004, p.72), resulting in intense competition over economic resources, including land. In Eastern Anatolia, for instance, a violent struggle erupted over land ownership between Turks, Kurds, and Armenians (Mann, 2005, p.116).

The second important factor that produced the chaos of the era was the Ottoman Empire’s involvement in a number of geopolitical catastrophes brought on by nationalist movements, which drained state resources, diminished its territorial power, and ultimately led to the disintegration of the Empire (see Pamuk, 2014, p.17). The 1877–1878 Ottoman–Russian War made it clear to the British Empire that it would no longer be able to protect the territorial integrity of the Ottomans against rising rival great powers such as Russia. Under the Treaty of Berlin that ended the war, the Ottoman Empire lost most of its Balkan territories: Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania became independent, most of the Bulgarian territories became autonomous, and the Ottomans lost their sovereignty over Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the same year, the Empire also lost its Eastern territories (such as Kars, Ardahan, and Batum) to Russia.

In the last quarter of the 20th century, the idea of national liberation also became widespread amongst the Armenians, who saw the Ottoman–Russian War as a major opportunity to mobilize for independence. In 1878, an Armenian delegation had demanded reforms in Eastern Provinces at the Conference of Berlin. In 1885, the Armenagan Party (an underground Armenian patriotic organization) was established (Gocek, 2015, p.125). In 1887, Armenian students in Geneva formed a nationalist organization called Hencak (The Bell). In 1890, Dashnakzoutiun, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, was founded in Tiflis (Zurcher, 2004, p.83; Marasli, 2008). In 1891, the Armenian Revolutionary Party was established (Gocek, 2015, p.125). As a response to the rise of revolutionary national liberation movements, the Ottoman sultan Abdulhamit II, who presided over this era of disintegration, started to experiment with exclusionary forms of religious nationalism (i.e. Islamism) to maintain the territorial unity of the Empire (Gocek, 1996, p.134).

4.1 Violent displacement of Armenians, Greeks, and Jews

It was in the context of this late Ottoman period that the anti-Armenian massacres erupted (Gocek, 2015). Despite some claims that the genocide was caused by dynamics associated with the First World War, the systematic use of violence against Armenians actually started in the late 1890s and continued as a wave of interconnected events until the end of the First World War. To stem the tide of an emerging Armenian national liberation movement, Sultan Abdulhamit supported Kurdish chiefs in the East who were already competing against the Armenians for land and territorial control in the region. In 1890, he established the infamous troops, Hamidiye Alaylari which were modelled after the Russian Cossack troops (Gocek, 2015, p.17, 130–131; Mann, 2005, p.119). The Ottoman Sultan provided these troops with weapons, military training, food, and wages, and sent the children of the Kurdish tribal chiefs to newly established religio-military schools in the Capital (Ahmedbeyzade, 2004, p.113). In doing so, the Sultan not only aimed to repress Armenian nationalism but also to coopt Kurdish chiefs and tribes who were starting revolts against the Ottoman Empire (Marasli, 2008, pp.137–141). This rising tide of Kurdish threat and the possibility of an Armenian–Kurdish

It must be noted that the formation of the Public Debt Administration temporarily slowed down and even limited the influence of the rising non-Muslim intermediaries in the Empire (see Kasaba, 1988, p.111; Zurcher, 2004). For instance, Sheikh Ubeydullah rebellion of the early 1880s was already a full-fledged Kurdish nationalist rebellion aiming at establishing a new independent state in the region. In the course of the rebellion, Sheikh Ubeydullah and his son Abdulkadir had declared a fatwa ordering the Kurds not to engage in violence against the Armenians and the Assyrians in the region.
alliance played a major role in the Sultan’s efforts to win the Kurdish chiefs to his side in the struggle against Armenians (Ahmedbeyzade, 2004, pp.113–114).

Both in its early and later phases, a common and still underexamined theme of the anti-Armenian violence is the plunder of lands, goods and other valuable properties (Gocek, 2015; Kaiser, 2005, p.123; Akcam, 2012). In reference to an Armenian massacre in 1896 by Hamidiye Alaylari, the Manchester Guardian reported that the value of plunder by Turks and Kurds was nearly as great as the value of the destroyed properties.

1950 persons were killed in the November massacre. The value of the property pillaged and destroyed was £480,000. One third of this represents the useless destruction of houses and goods by fire, the value of the plunder which the Turks and Kurds obtained being £320,000 […] (The Manchester Guardian, 17 Jan 1896, p.6)

The plunder of properties was more or less spontaneous and unorganized during the early phase of the anti-Armenian violence, but during World War I (WWI), these incidents became part of a conscious and planned effort organized by the Empire (Akcam, 2012, p.361). The violence against Armenians came to a peak during WWI. In 1915–1916, approximately 800,000–1,500,000 Armenians were deported from Central, Southern, and Eastern Anatolia (see Figure 1). Increasing geopolitical turmoil provided the officers of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP, Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti)—the governing party that sought to promote ethnic unity in the Empire and modernize it in the Western model—with the opportunity to confiscate non-Muslim properties in order to create a Muslim bourgeoisie (Gocek, 2015, p.157; Akcam, 2012).8

Akcam (2012) documents numerous telegraphic messages sent by the Ottoman Interior Ministry, which reveal an effort on part of the Empire to forge a Muslim bourgeoisie out of the ongoing conflict. For instance, on September 16, 1915, a cable from Talat Pasha (Minister of Interior) proposed handing over some Armenian lands and properties

8Indeed, the Committee of Union and Progress government had already organized boycott campaigns against Greek and Austrian products in 1908–1909 to strengthen a national bourgeoisie (see Ahmad, 1993, p.44). These boycotts mainly affected Greek and Armenian importers of Austrian goods (Zurcher, 2004, p.104).

FIGURE 1 Deportations of Armenian population in 1915
Source: Akcam (2012, pp.120–121)
to the Anatolian Cotton Industry. Likewise, in 1916, a coded telegram from the Interior Ministry suggested that confiscation of Armenian properties was a conscious attempt to produce a Muslim bourgeoisie.

It was previously communicated that, in order that those [commercial] establishments left by the Armenians, such as factories, shops and mills, not be left empty and unused, they [the establishments] were to be turned over, under the appropriate conditions, to Muslim companies, and all manner of facilitation and assistance be afforded for this purpose. It is suggested that they be rented or sold to Muslim applicants at low prices and that they be shown the necessary assistance [for this to happen]. (cited from Akcam, 2012, p.363).9

For a proper understanding of the relationship between the violent disposessions of ethnic groups in the formation of the first Turkish/Muslim bourgeoisie, one must also consider the effects of the displacement of the Greek (Rum) population in 1912–1924. Displacement of Greeks started in the 1910s and continued after the establishment of the new Turkish Republic in 1923. Even before the outbreak of WWI, “campaigns of threats and intimidation, orchestrated by Izmir’s CUP secretary (and later president of the Turkish republic) Mahmut Celal (Bayar) drove at least 130,000 Greeks from the Western coastal regions into exile in Greece” (Zurcher, 2004, p.126). The properties of the Greeks were then confiscated by Muslim landowners. Similar to the displacement of Armenians, the CUP-led Interior Ministry took an active part in this confiscation process.

In 1918–1920, these Muslim landlords eventually supported the CUP and the CUP-led “Defence of National Rights” organizations (i.e., Mudafai Hukuku Milliye cemiyetleri) against Greek and Armenian territorial claims in Anatolia. As Zurcher (2004) put it,

In the towns of Anatolia, the Muslim landowners and traders generally supported the ‘Defence of Rights’ organizations. Many of them had become wealthy through government contracts and by taking over the land, property and businesses of the deported and emigrant Greeks and Armenians for next to nothing; they thus had a very strong incentive to resist the Greek and Armenian claims (Zurcher, 2004, p.148).

Indeed, incidents of anti-Greek violence and dispossession intensified in the aftermath of the First World War, culminating in a full-scale Turkish–Greek War of 1920–1922 in Western regions of Turkey. This bloody war ended in 1922 with a complete Greek defeat (Zurcher, 2004, p.136). At the conclusion of this conflict, under the Treaty of Lausanne, “the remainder of the Greek (Orthodox) population of Anatolia [...] about 900,000 people, was exchanged against the Muslims from Greece [...] who numbered around 400,000” (Zurcher, 2004, p.164). When the population exchange was completed in 1924, a total of 1.2 million Anatolian Greeks were forced to move to Greece (Keyder, 1987, p.69; Içduygu & Sirkeci, 1999). In addition to their property, “about 15% of the cultivable area of Western Anatolia was abandoned by the leaving Greeks” (Keyder, 1987) and was appropriated by the Muslim landlords.

The common denominator of these Armenian and Greek displacement policies was the desire to forge a new national state based on ethnic and religious homogenization, and accordingly, put economic power in the hand of a Turkish–Muslim bourgeoisie. As Table 1 shows, the non-Muslim population in the Empire declined from 19.1% in 1914 to 2.5% in 1927, this amounts to the disappearance of 90% of the pre-war merchant, financial, and emergent non-Muslim industrial bourgeoisie in Turkey.

It would be erroneous to believe that the accumulation by ethnic displacement strategy was limited to the chaotic period during which the Ottoman Empire disintegrated. Indeed, the single party regime of the newly established Turkish republic also temporarily continued this tradition of appropriating non-Muslim property. In November 1942, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi passed through parliament the infamous “wealth tax” (Varlık vergisi; Zurcher, 2004, pp.199–200; Keyder, 1987, pp.113–114). Ostensibly, the wealth tax was intended to punish war profiteers who

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9As suggested by the Interior Ministry, the properties Armenians left behind were confiscated in different forms. Although some of these properties were confiscated by the Turkish military and the state (and were later used as schools, public buildings, and prisons), most of them became the private property of Muslim Turks, thereby helping to produce a new Turkish-Muslim bourgeoisie (Gocek, 2015, p.276; Akcam, 2012; Kaiser, 2005).
were starting to make huge profits in the black market during the Second World War. In practice, however, this was a policy aimed at dispossessing the remaining non-Muslim bourgeoisie in the country. Sixty-five percent of the tax revenue was collected from non-Muslims and foreigners (predominantly Jewish businessmen). Jews and remaining Christians in the new Republic were taxed some 10 times higher than Muslims, and unlike Muslims, they were not allowed to spread their payments over time. Those unable to pay this tax were either deported or sentenced to forced labour. This led to a major wave of predatory accumulation and expulsion.

Christian and Jewish businessmen not readily able to obtain the sums needed were forced to sell their businesses and real estate to Moslem profiteers. Most of these businessmen left Turkey immediately after the war. Despite short term gains by Ankara government and the statist bourgeoisie (state revenues increased by one-third in 1943), and despite windfall gains by Moslem businessmen who were in a position to buy from less fortunate Istanbul merchants and industrialists, the Wealth Levy seriously damaged business confidence in the years after the war (Keyder, 1987, p.113).

4.2 The Castilian/Spanish road in Turkey

To what extent were these policies successful in producing a Turkish–Muslim bourgeoisie and facilitating the rise of industrial capitalism in Turkey? The appropriation by Muslims of the non-Muslim populations’ capital, land, and private property led to the emergence of a new domestic capitalist class. It is not a coincidence that the first Turkish–Muslim businesses to emerge in the newly established Turkish Republic—such as Koç, Çukurova, and Sabancı (still amongst the largest Turkish companies today)—emerged in the aftermath of the deportations of non-Muslims in the 1920s (see Table 2).

Some of these companies, such as Çukurova and Sabancı, emerged in regions that were both amongst the most fertile agriculturally and subject to severe deportations (see Gocek, 2015, pp.276–277; Keyder, 1987, pp.137–8). For example, in Çukurova, the displacement of Armenians from the region, the systematic plunder of their properties, and the taking over of their businesses put a significant amount of capital in the hands of Muslim landlords and merchants. Haci Omer Sabancı—the founder of the second largest industrial and financial conglomerate in Turkey—was one of the many muslim workers from Kayseri who went to the Cukurova region in the early 1920s to take over the commercial and industrial establishments left idle after the extermination and deportation of Armenian and Greek owners (Bugra, 1994, p.82; also see Gocek, 2015, pp.276–277). Business empire of the Koc family, the largest industrial financial conglomerate of Turkey, also emerged in Central Anatolia by filling the vacuum produced by the displacement of Armenian merchants in certain sectors; having close connections with the state helped them to win the government auctions through that Armenian-owned assets were transferred to the new Turkish–Muslim bourgeoisie.
An interesting feature of the successful Turkish–Muslim holding companies is that in their initial phase, they all collaborated with some non-Muslim individuals in one way or another. This is important because, with the expulsion of the Greek and Armenian merchants, commercial, industrial, and technical know-how was also lost (Zurcher, 2004, p.165). In autobiographies of members of the Sabanci and Koc family, we find various passages about the significance of Jewish or Armenian individuals who either helped them start their operations or from whom they confiscated business assets (Koc, 1977; Bugra, 1994, p.86).

This trajectory of capitalist development more closely resembles what we call the Castilian/Spanish road of primitive accumulation that took place in the late 15th and the early 16th centuries. The key feature of this path is the convergence of the primitive accumulation and the primitive unification processes. By primitive unification, we mean the amalgamation of efforts by political elites to centralize power and to achieve territorial “national” unity by mobilizing certain cultural (ethnic, religious, racial, etc.) groups against others in order to expel, exterminate, or exclude them. In the Castilian/Spanish road, the emergence of capitalist production relations and the formation of nation-states are not separate processes, but rather constitute the differential intended or unintended consequences of a single dynamic. In the course of the Reconquista, the Catholic Kings (Ferdinand and Isabella) used the Inquisition to mobilize their Catholic subjects, and thereby violently expel and displace Jews and Muslims (i.e., Moors/Moriscos) from the land. This displacement of non-Christian populations was not only a starting point for the “unification” of the Spanish peninsula and the formation of a proto-nation based on religious (i.e., Catholic) homogenization, it was also a key moment of primitive accumulation in Spain (Araghi & Karides, 2012). Together with the appropriated treasures of the Kingdom of Granada, the confiscation of the properties of the conversos (i.e., Jews who converted to Catholicism) by the Spanish Inquisition was a major moment of capital expropriation by force (Kamen, 2014). The process of expropriating conversos—who were amongst the wealthiest population in Spain in the 15th century—started in 1478, continued after the expulsion of Jews in 1492, and came to a peak in 1530 during the era of Charles V (Lea, 1901, p.561). Because many expelled Jews transferred their properties to their converso relatives and friends in 1492, wealth of conversos had even increased in the early 16th century. Historical studies document that the Inquisition mainly targeted the wealthiest conversos (Kamen, 2014, pp.149–150), whose wealth and property were distributed by the state amongst feudal lords and loyal subjects who played the role of “the informer” (Lea, 1906, p.319).

In addition to this inward-oriented expropriation strategy, the Castilian/Spanish road of primitive accumulation also had an outward-oriented strategy. The colonization of the Americas was a direct extension of the Reconquista and the ongoing campaign against the infidels in the name of Christendom (Kumar, 2017; 156). The Spanish rulers colonized and plundered the Americas while expropriating the indigenous population by conquest (Araghi & Karides, 2012). In the absence of this outward-oriented strategy, the Castilian/Spanish road of primitive accumulation would not have been successful because the expulsion of Jews and Moors produced a major loss of labourers and taxes.\footnote{For a recent review of ongoing debates on the origins of capitalism in Catalonia from a political Marxist perspective, see Zacarés (2018). For a discussion of the role of Genoese merchant traders as another external anchor, see Arrighi (1994) and Karatasli (2013, pp.433–440)
Turkey lacked this outward anchor. Although the violent dispossession of non-Muslims produced significant capital in the hands of a new Turkish/Muslim bourgeois group, it did not set in motion a sustained process of capital accumulation because it did not lead to the proletarianization of the displaced. Furthermore, because most of the Armenian—and some Greek—businesses tended to hire workers from their own ethnic or religious groups, the forced expulsions even led to a significant decline in the disciplined labour force in key sectors. For instance, after the expulsion of non-Muslims, the construction business was extremely difficult to sustain because in this era “there were virtually no Muslim–Turkish construction workers with the basic skills” (Bugra, 1994, pp.92, 60–61). This was a serious bottleneck for capital accumulation.

Another distinct feature of the Turkish case was the special status of the Kurds. As mentioned above, as the backbone of the Hamidiye Alaylari, some Kurdish tribes were directly involved in the atrocities against the Armenians and the plunder of their properties. Likewise, after the deportations at the turn of the century, Armenian lands in eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire were seized by both Turkish landlords and Kurdish tribes (Keyder, 1987, p.81). Some of these Kurdish chiefs were absorbed by and assimilated within the Turkish nation-building project as their status and wealth increased in synchrony with the late Ottoman and the early Republican “Turkish” state. Some of these Kurdish agas gradually became a part of the Turkish agricultural bourgeoisie and often Turkish nationalists themselves. For instance, Ziya Gokalp (1876–1924)—the ideological founding father of Turkism who was closely involved with the 1909 anti-Armenian massacre and was a source of inspiration for many during the atrocities of 1915–1916—was of Kurdish descent. His mother was from a family of wealthy Kurdish landowners who had been amongst the main organizers of the anti-Armenian violence in 1895 (see Uzer, 2013).

The assimilation of Kurds, however, was not the only outcome of this process. Some of the Kurdish chiefs, even some who rose to high-ranking positions in Hamidiye Alaylari, were not coopted by the Sultan’s pan-Islamist hegemony-building strategy, nor by CUP’s ethnic assimilationist project for that matter. On the contrary, they used their gains—especially the military training and experience—in pursuit of Kurdish national liberation (Ahmedbeyzade, 2004, p.115) and hence pursued an alternative counter-hegemonic nationalist project.

5 | THE SECOND HOSTILE CONJUNCTURE: DISPOSSESSION AND ACCUMULATION DURING THE ERA OF THE U.S. WORLD HEGEMONY

The practice of accumulation by violent ethnic displacement came to an end not with the birth of the new Republic, but with the emergence of a new world order—an American-centred world capitalist hegemonic order—in the post-World War II (WWII) period. It was during this era of U.S. world hegemony that we see the emergence of a second and qualitatively different kind of hostile conjuncture. The period spanning 1945 to the late 1960s experienced a different form of geopolitical conflict than the earlier period. The geopolitical conflicts of this era were linked to the ongoing “war of position”11 (Gramsci, 1971, pp.238–9) between great powers, that is, the efforts by the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to establish their hegemony over other members of the interstate system. Although the violent atrocities that occurred in Turkey during the period of British world hegemonic decline did not reappear under U.S. hegemony, the “Cold War” had a significant impact on processes of dispossession, class formation, and capital accumulation in Turkey.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the United States implemented a number of development assistance projects to countries in the so-called “Third World,” which were intended to counter the influence of the Soviet Union (McMichael, 2012, p.42). Although some of these countries attempted to circumvent U.S.–Soviet rivalry by

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11According to Gramsci (1971), “war position” is a slow-paced, hidden (cold) confrontation between groups seeking power and influence over a civil society. It often corresponds to efforts by competing powers to gain decisive influence over others. In the context of the international relations, we argue, this corresponds to the hegemony-building efforts by the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the post-1945 era, which is known as the “Cold War.”
forging a non-aligned movement, Turkey actively sought to side with the U.S.-led capitalist western bloc. Turkey became a member of the United Nations in 1945, and the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 1947. In 1950, Turkey fought in the Korean War, becoming the second country (after the United States) to respond to the call of the United Nations. After becoming a North Atlantic Treaty Organization member in 1952, Turkish ruling elites enthusiastically championed the interests of the West wherever they could (Ahmad, 1993, p.119). Fortunately for them, the United States was probably even keener than Turkey itself to secure Turkey on the side of the western capitalist bloc. In this pursuit, the United States offered generous military aid and development assistance through the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. Starting in 1947, Turkey received over the course of a couple years more than $350 million in bilateral aid and credit from the United States, which was almost equal to Turkey’s balance of payments deficit at the time (Yerasimos, 2005, pp.178–183; see Ahmad, 1993, p.118).

Both the Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi that held power since 1923 and the centre-right Demokrat Parti (DP) that rose to power in the 1950s were eager to use the U.S. aid to finance infrastructural development, such as upgrading and extending the road system and to boost agricultural production. Much of the aid provided under the Marshall Plan was used to modernize agriculture through mechanization. For instance, although there were only 1,150 tractors in Turkey in 1945, by 1955, the number rose to 40,000. This allowed a radical enlargement in the area under cultivation, from slightly over 13 million hectares in 1945 to around 22.5 million in 1955 (also see Zurcher, 2004, pp.224–225; Mann, 1980, pp.188–210; Yerasimos, 2005, pp.183–188). As Mann notes, “[...] with the new cheap power the tractor provided, tremendous areas of pasture and common grazing land were brought under the plow. From about 4 million hectares sown to wheat in 1947, by 1955 the total sown had increased by 70% to 7 million hectares” (Mann, 1980, p.198). Table 3 shows changes in the size of cultivable land and the number of tractors from 1946 to 1961, with a particularly dramatic increase notable during the 1947–1955 period.

One of the most important consequences of this process of U.S. aid-driven capitalist development was the production of the largest internal migration wave Turkey had ever experienced (Içduygu & Sirkeci, 1999). Table 4 shows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of tractors</th>
<th>Annual growth of number of tractors (%)</th>
<th>Annual growth of area cultivated (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1,156</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>1,356</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>1,556</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>1,759</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>9,170</td>
<td>422.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>16,585</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>31,415</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>35,600</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>37,743</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>40,271</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>43,736</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>44,173</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>42,539</td>
<td>−3.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>41,901</td>
<td>−1.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>42,152</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Devlet Istatistik Enstitusu, Turkiye Istatistik Yilligi.
that between 1927 and 1950, the percentage of the urban population of Turkey increased only 3%, from 16% to 19%. By 1960, the urban population reached 26% of the total population and in 1970, 36%. Hence, the main take-off for urbanization occurred in the late 1950s and the 1960s, with labour migration from the countryside to cities playing the most critical role. This massive wave of migration to urban areas helped create a large reserve army of labour available to fuel the industrialization process that took off in the 1960s (Keyder, 1987, p.138).

In contrast to the previous era of dispossession, when the uprooted were forcibly displaced and deported, this new process of rural displacement resulted in the creation of new rounds of capital accumulation that exploited the labour of the dispossessed. Post-WWII demand for food in Europe and later the Korean War created a favourable price conjuncture for the export of agricultural goods, providing Turkish agricultural capitalists with ample incentive to modernize agricultural techniques and accumulate capital by exporting food and raw materials (Keyder, 1987, p.132; Zurcher, 2004, p.228).

### 5.1 Divergent roads to capitalist agriculture in Anatolia

Modernization of agriculture in the 1950s was a major transformative moment in the history of capitalist development in Turkey. Development of capitalist agriculture and capitalist industrialization took place in two distinct ways. The first path arose in the Cukurova delta region surrounding the city of Adana in the Mediterranean region. Extremely fertile, Cukurova had been a highly developed region for Armenian cotton farmers and landowners since the 1860s. After the expulsion of the Armenians from the region in 1915, these properties came into the hands of Muslim landowners who established large estates using share-cropping systems of cotton production (Zurcher, 2004, p.228; Keyder, 1987, p.138). The arrival of Marshall Plan aid in the 1940s brought an end to the sharecropping systems, as tractors and other labour-saving agricultural technologies were introduced. The expulsion of
sharecroppers also helped Muslim landowners consolidate their land holdings. This, in addition to the boom in cotton prices during the Korean War, helped transform Muslim landlords into agricultural capitalists who hired seasonal and migrant labour from the surrounding mountains and from the north Syrian plain. A major consequence of this trend was massive dispossession from the land. As a survey conducted in 1953 shows, although 4.1% of the national population was unemployed due to the arrival of tractors, this percentage was 12.4% in the region that includes the Cukurova—that is, the Mediterranean region (see Table 5). Based on the location of villages in the Mediterranean sample, taking into account which are (and are not) in the Cukurova region, we estimate that approximately 14.5%–19.5% of the population in the Cukurova region became unemployed due to the Marshall-aid tractors. It must be noted that these are the immediate effects of agricultural modernization on unemployment in these regions, which does not take into consideration the medium run and long run impacts.

The path Cukurova followed was similar to what Lenin (1972 [1908]) called the Junker/Prussian road to capitalism. In the Junker/Prussian road, “the feudal landlord economy slowly evolves into [a] bourgeois, Junker landlord economy, which condemns peasants to decades of harrowing exploitation and bondage” (Lenin (1972 [1908], p.239). Moreover, “the landed estates are gradually transformed into large capitalist enterprises [...] run by the landlords [...] who employed wage labour, produced for the market, and aimed at a maximum profit. The tenants were evicted and either left the estates for good or continued to reside on them as wage workers” (Arrighi & Piselli, 1987, p.650). As the mushrooming of business holdings in the 1950s (shown in Table 2 above) also suggests, “several of the 30 or so family-owned holding companies that dominate Turkish industry today started out in this way” (Zurcher, 2004, p.228).

Although this Junker/Prussian road of capitalist development took hold in Cukurova, a second, more pervasive path that resembled Lenin’s farmer/American road took hold in the rest of Anatolia, where small-scale farmers, rather than landed elites, became the primary mechanism of capitalist development.12 Because these regions did not have a strong presence of large landowners, Marshall Plan aid was granted directly to regional “middle peasants,” who used it to bolster their productivity without significantly changing existing structures of land tenure. These middle peasants bought tractors with bank credits from Turkey’s Agricultural Bank (Mann, 1980; Keyder, 1987, p.131) and used them to extend their landholdings by obtaining unused fields, state and common property, and pasture lands from village governments (Keyder, 1987; see Table 6). In regions where big landowners bought these tractors and tried to drive off local peasants and sharecroppers, their efforts were thwarted by national legislation that sought to redistribute unused state and Church lands to villagers. As a consequence of these developments, in the 1950s, there was an extension of peasant property in Anatolian villages: “The number of owner-occupied farms increased from 2.3 million in 1950 to 2.5 million in 1952, and to 3.1 million in 1963” (Keyder, 1987, p.131).

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12Exceptions to this general trend include parts of Western Anatolia (such as the lands surrounding the fertile Buyuk Menderes and Kucuk Menderes rivers) where large landowners were dominant and the southeast “Kurdish” regions where quasi-feudal political-economic relations still existed.
Despite the democratizing thrust of these processes, the use of U.S. aid to raise the productivity of local peasants was still highly uneven. For one thing, peasants and farmers needed to qualify for credit from the Agricultural Bank to buy these tractors. Eligibility for credit, especially in the earlier years of the tractor boom, depended on the size of landholdings. A farmer needed to own at least 60 hectares of land and be in possession of the deed to the land in order to qualify for tractor credit (Mann, 1980, p.209; Faculty of Political Science, 1954). This restricted eligibility to less than 2% of farm owners. In poorer villages, there was often only one tractor. As such, many landowners without tractors had to rent the use of a tractor in return for a share of their crop (Mann, 1980, p.201). In practice, this resulted in an alternative form of sharecropping, the ortakci system, wherein the management of a crop was not handled by the landowners, but by the tractor owners. Moreover, due to the low quality of the newly-available land (state land, pastures, and forests) and the low level of non-mechanized agricultural productivity, all farms in the villages needed the services of tractor owners to be productive and to remain competitive.

In short, the infusion of U.S. aid radically altered power relations in the countryside, with tractor owners becoming the new agricultural elite and landowners becoming the new rentiers. Income was transferred from land owners to tractor owners, although the power to refuse the leasing of tractors became the primary mechanism of local class domination. Under these circumstances, many small landowners were compelled to leave their land and look for work in the cities (see Mann, 1980, p.202). Yet, more often than not, farmers kept their unproductive land (and sometimes part of their household) in their village when they migrated to urban areas in search of work. Hence, the dominant outcome of this path was semi-proletarianization (see Gurel, 2011).

The semi-proletarianization of the labour force that began in the 1950s helped buttress the capitalist industrialization process that took off in the 1960s. Initially, semi-proletarianization created downward pressure on wages in Turkey’s industrial cities (Gurel, 2011). However, it gradually turned into a process of full-scale proletarianization, as migrant workers increasingly decided not to return to their villages. Furthermore, due to population pressures, the small amount of low-quality land they owned further depreciated in value over time when divided amongst family members. Hence, many of these workers ended up selling their land for cash; in some cases, the value of the land simply disappeared. This process of gradual proletarianization contributed to the capital accumulation that occurred during the industrial development of Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s (Gurel, 2011; Keyder, 1987).

6 | DISCUSSION: DISPOSSESSION ACROSS BRITISH AND U.S. WORLD HEGEMONIES

The comparative-historical analysis presented in this paper suggests that the so-called primitive accumulation in Turkey occurred in a discontinuous and uneven manner. Development of capitalism in Turkey was a long, regionally-variegated, and highly contingent process. Economic and extra-economic forms of coercion, violence,
and transformations in the global political-economy all played key roles in transforming Turkish political economy. Yet, the exact mechanisms, processes, and consequences of primitive accumulation in Turkey were very different from those found in the English case.

The Armenian atrocities and forced displacement of non-Muslim bourgeoisie that took place during the crisis of British world hegemony produced capital for the emergent Turkish bourgeoisie, but these conflicts did not generate a proletarianization labour force. Because this path involved the extermination, exclusion, and expulsion of the dispossessed masses rather than their absorption and integration, it bears similarities to what we called the “Spanish road”—that is, the Castillian-led process of primitive accumulation in the late 15th century, which expelled and exported non-Christian populations (e.g., Jews and Moriscos) after the Reconquista and confiscated the wealth of the conversos. In both cases, violent dispossession was linked to elite-led efforts to construct a nation around a new state: a religious (i.e. Catholic) proto-nation in the former case, an ethno-religious (i.e., Turkish-Muslim) nation in the latter case. In contrast to the Castilian/Spanish case, however, in the absence of overseas colonies to plunder and indigenous populations to exploit, in Turkey, this violent displacement did not set in motion a process of sustained capital accumulation.

During the Cold War, a second push for primitive accumulation took place. Increasing rivalry between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States, the escalation of efforts by the United States to take Turkey into its sphere of interest, and the eruption of the Korean War had serious consequences for the agricultural mechanization of the Turkish countryside in the 1947–1954 period. In direct contrast to the English path, wherein the dispossession of the peasantry was linked to the conversion of agricultural lands into “sheep-walks,” in Turkey, the dispossession of the peasantry was linked to converting former sheep-walks into cultivable lands and increasing mechanization in agriculture, thanks to the support provided through the Marshall Plan. In this period, the same process triggered two different paths for capitalist accumulation, and two corresponding types of dispossession.

In the Cukurova region, this process triggered Lenin's Junker/Prussian road by gradually transforming landlords into big agricultural capitalists. Agricultural mechanization led to particularly high levels of dispossession, migration, and proletarianization. In most of central Anatolia, however, the same processes launched a process similar to Lenin's farmer/American road by creating stratified peasant groups with large middle strata. Rich peasants and landowners who owned tractors and larger areas of land, imposed indirect pressures on poorer peasants to sell their land. Coupled with market and population pressures, some peasants sold their land, but most, at least initially, were semi-proletarianized. They migrated to urban cities to sell their wage labour while maintaining land in their villages, or passing it on to members of their extended family. These distinct trajectories occurring during the consolidation of the U.S. world hegemony must be seen as two distinct developments that transformed the Turkish political-economy in the 1950s, laying the foundation for the industrialization push of the 1960s and the 1970s by creating different strata of labour reserves and a domestic home market.

Although extra-economic forms of coercion played some role in the development of industrial capitalism in Turkey, the level of violence deployed was much lower compared with the preceding one. Ironically, this episode of primitive accumulation, for the most part, played out via what Marx (1990 [1867]) called the silent compulsion of market relations at the local level that was linked to a geo-political rivalry at the global level. Our analysis of the Marshall Plan aid to Turkey suggests that an international framework of development aid has a consequence somewhat analogous to the global flows of finance capital identified by Marx. What actually concealed the source of primitive accumulation in Turkey was the rise of the United States as the leading capitalist power in the world economy and its “war of position,” that is, its effort to establish American hegemony over other nations during the Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union. In this era, the Korean War also acted as a necessary anchor that facilitated the development of capitalism in Cukurova region and much of the Anatolia.

In addition to documenting the historical, contingent, discontinuous, and fragmented processes of primitive accumulation, our comparative-historical analysis shows that these processes were embedded in the upswings and the downswings in the capitalist world economy. During the rise of British world hegemony in the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire experienced the rise of the non-Muslim bourgeoisie, which benefited from the integration
of the empire into the capitalist world economy. During the crisis of British world hegemony in the late 19th and early 20th century, a violent struggle occurred over the capital and property of this non-Muslim bourgeoisie, which was forcibly appropriated by a new Turkish-Muslim bourgeoisie through violence and coercion. Under U.S. world hegemony, this group flourished as the Turkish industrial bourgeoisie that presided over the country’s industrialization from the 1960s and the 1970s. Interestingly, after the 1980s, with the intensification of the crisis of U.S. world hegemony, we started to see the emergence of a rival capital group in Turkey—emergent sections of the new Islamic capital—to challenge the industrial, and increasingly financial, Turkish bourgeoisie.

7 | CONCLUSION: THEORIZING A THIRD HOSTILE CONJUNCTURE IN THE ERA OF U.S. HEGEMONIC DECLINE

It is difficult to present a complete analysis of the dispossession, capital accumulation, and class formation processes that are taking shape in Turkey today because they are still unfolding and their full effects are yet to be observed. However, based on the findings of the comparative-historical analysis presented in previous sections, we highlight three key features of this new era (linked to three main arguments of this paper), which we believe need to be the subject of future research.

First, since the 1980s, geopolitical conflicts and violence have still been transforming the development of capitalism in Turkey through their direct and indirect effects on dispossession and class-formation. For instance, the rise of the secessionist conflict between the Turkish armed forces and the Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan from the mid-1980s to the late-1990s was the single most important cause of proletarianization during this period. The deadly conflict that made a peak in the 1990s led to the evacuation of many Kurdish villages and the forced displacement of approximately 1.5 million Kurds from Southeastern and Eastern Anatolia, the majority of whom migrated to Western cities looking for work in urban industries. The armed conflict between the armed forces and the Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan was one of the key factors that started to liquidate the semi-feudal structure that had survived the dispossession processes in previous hostile conjunctures. In contrast to the atrocities of the late 19th and the early 20th century, this new round of dispossession did not directly produce capital accumulation by taking over Kurds’ lands or capital. However, the forcibly displaced Kurdish labour force has played a significant role in the neoliberal capital accumulation in Istanbul and Anatolia, especially in urban industrial centres, by becoming the most exploited and oppressed segment of the national labour force. Kurds who have been working the most precarious jobs, the longest hours, and receiving the lowest possible wages were the secret source of absolute surplus-value production in the post-1990 era.

Together with privatization schemes that skyrocketed since the 2000s, exploitation of the Kurdish proletariat has been the main source of the neoliberal capital accumulation in Turkey.

In the last decade, however, the neoliberal capital accumulation in Turkey has quickly reached its limits. That is why in recent decades, a major part of the Turkish bourgeoisie has once again been seeking refuge in the geopolitical conflicts and wars in the region to accumulate capital. One of the factors that helped the rise of a new business elite in Turkey’s construction sector since the 2000s despite low levels of production was the government-sponsored business opportunities in Iraq due to opportunities produced by the U.S.-led War. Likewise, the failed coup attempt in 2015 had important effects on inter-capitalist competition dynamics because it led to the appropriation of businesses, banks, money, houses, and properties of the Gülen group, a faction of the Islamic bourgeoisie that emerged in the 1980s. The beneficiaries of both of these “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey, 2005) processes were business circles linked to Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi. As these recent examples might illustrate, it is almost impossible to provide a critical analysis of the development of capitalism in Turkey in recent decades without taking into account the intended, unintended, and historically-contingent consequences of these geopolitical conflicts, wars, and coups. Therefore, there seems to be a finer line between the so-called primitive accumulation and capitalist accumulation (or to use the language of the classical political economists “the prehistory” and “the history” of capital) than traditionally assumed (also see Perelman, 2000, pp. 28–32; Harvey, 2005).
Second, political-economic trends in Turkey since the 1980s era support our claim that interaction between geopolitical conflicts, dispossession, capital accumulation, and class-formation produce highly contingent and variegated outcomes. Similar to the CUP's efforts to create a new Turkish/Muslim bourgeoisie in the early 20th century, the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi's efforts to create a new fraction of Muslim bourgeoisie in the early 21st century aim at capitalizing on the geopolitical conflicts. In direct contrast to the previous century, when the CUP efforts produced capital but not labour supplies, today there is no labour shortage to sustain endless accumulation of capital. On the contrary, the major obstacle before accumulation is the excessive labour supplies that cannot be absorbed by capital. In addition to the recent addition of the Kurdish proletariat to the ranks of active and reserve armies of labour, the ongoing Syrian Civil War has so far resulted in the inflow of more than 3 million refugees from Syria to Turkey (Icduygu & Diker, 2017). The overwhelming majority of the new Syrian labour force have been constituting what Marx (1990 [1867]) called the “stagnant relative surplus population”—a population that can no longer be productively absorbed by existing capital. The extremely high level of unemployment in Turkey, remaining close to 11% in the last decade (excluding the Syrian labour force), coupled with the increasing foreign debts and rapid devaluation of Turkish lira against U.S. dollar, suggest the existence of a major structural crisis. From the perspective presented in this paper, it is not coincidental that the Turkish elites have been trying to resolve the crisis through capitalizing on internal and external forms of violence, dispossession, and forcible appropriation of wealth both in Turkey and in the Middle East. Yet, instead of preventing it or resolving it for good, their efforts seem to be further deepening the structural crisis Turkey has been facing by creating a vicious cycle.

Finally, the forms of geopolitical conflict that dominate the post-1980 era (secessionist conflicts, interstate, and intrastate wars linked to great power rivalries) seem to resemble the types of violence that occurred during the late 19th and early 20th century more than those that arose during the post-WWII era. The return of violent and predatory accumulation practices suggests that historical capitalism does not linearly move from a phase of violent, coercive, and predatory/primitive forms of accumulation to a phase of capitalist accumulation wherein the “silent compulsion of economic relations” dominate. At least in the case of Turkey, the relative weight of violent and predatory accumulation practices seem to increase and decrease in tandem with the dynamics of system-wide expansion and crisis. During system-level expansions and booms in the world economy, existing bourgeois classes flourish and capital concentrates. During systemic crises, however, new and rival factions in the bourgeoisie emerge, and a violent struggle over land, property, and capital starts anew. However, neither concentration of capital during periods of peace and prosperity, nor violent appropriation schemes during periods of crisis and chaos did change Turkey’s position in the world hierarchy of wealth and power in the last two centuries. The alternating strategies of capital accumulation ended up reproducing the country’s semiperipheral position over time. In short, it took all the running Turkey did to keep it the same place.

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