

Article accepted for publication in *Mediterranean Quarterly* (pre-print version)

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DUAL PRESIDENTIALIZATION AND AUTOCRATIZATION: TURKEY AT A CRITICAL CROSSROAD.¹

Summary

Turkey has suffered a process of autocratization in the last years. The political turn from a defective democracy towards a competitive authoritarianism is fundamentally related to a concentration and personalization of political power in the person of Erdogan, and to the influence of political institutions. This situation has given rise to what I call a “*dual presidentialization*”, meaning a *presidentialization* that has arisen from institutional changes, together with one that derives from certain informal factors. The hypothesis I propose is that this *dual presidentialization* has accelerated Turkey’s advance towards autocracy via several dimensions: a greater control over the judicial branch and over public freedoms in general, and freedom of the press in particular.

Keywords: Turkey, *presidentialization*, presidential system, AKP, autocratization.

1. Introduction

In recent years Turkey has taken a turn towards authoritarianism. From 2013 to 2015 Turkey could be named as delegative democracy². Moreover, since some critical events such as the June 2015 parliamentary elections, the 2016 coup d’etat and the way 16 April 2017

referendum has happened, the tendency and the political orientation of the governing party has conducted the system to an example of competitive authoritarianism.³

This autocratization is fundamentally related to the concentration and personalization of political and executive power in the figure of Erdogan.⁴ Many dimensions of Turkey's government have been affected by this tendency, but the most important impacts have involved the erosion of checks and balances, specifically in the judicial branch and freedoms in general.

If the key to a greater autocratization is a general concentration and personalization of power, we should ask ourselves why this trend towards authoritarianism has come about. The failure of democracy in Turkey can be seen as part of a "new reverse wave of autocratization"⁵ or in what Diamond terms a degeneration of democracy at the global level, occurring between 2000 and 2014. Diamond's general explanation focuses on the poor governance present in all the countries that have undergone this failure.⁶ It cannot be denied that Turkey has also suffered from poor governance, but here there are also other explanations, such as the importance and influence of political institutions, as well as how they work as conditioning and structuring factors of the preferences and strategies of political actors as they shape the political system.⁷

Currently, the most important institutional reform deriving from this progressive concentration of political power can be seen in the change of the form of government to a presidential, or probably even hyper-presidential, system.⁸ Nonetheless, we should not forget that the 1982 Constitution of the 3rd Republic had already conferred more powers upon the executive branch. This has been accompanied by a contingent or informal movement towards Erdogan's more presidential ways of acting even during his time as Prime Minister, and as President in the context of a formally semipresidential system, beginning in 2014.⁹ We can thus see how these institutional changes in the Turkish form of government, moving it to a

presidential system, have been aided by contingent factors and by a strong, centralizing leadership; we can even say that there has been what I call a *dual presidentialization*. I.e., a *presidentialization* that is due to institutionalization and a *presidentialization* that is the result of informal factors.

This *dual presidentialization* as a new and original concept I proposed in this work, can be very useful for explaining autocratization and its implications. That the system is presidential does not always imply authoritarianism or autocratization, the problem is when it is designed with no adequate check and balances, or the country is not a democracy. Linz argues that Presidential model is a danger in defective democracies as power concentration can lead to a *personalismo*¹⁰. Turkey has triggered a personalization of politics and a process of autocratization in the context of a parliamentary and formal semipresidential system. In this way, *dual presidentialization* is a very interesting concept for explaining Turkish case and the present and future impacts for the system.

Thus, in these circumstances, the working hypothesis is the following:

“The *dual presidentialization* has encouraged the progress of authoritarianism in Turkey”

The time frame selected is the AKP period (from 2002 to 2017), a period characterised by being the longest with a single party [in power] since 1950 and with a power personalization without precedents since those times. The research is based in a qualitative analysis where the review of literature, media, legislations and different index are used.

The objective of the research is the following one: we first studying the independent variable (what we have termed *dual presidentialization*). We operationalize the independent variable in two dimensions. In the first one, we go more deeply into legal and constitutional

reforms that favour *presidentialization*. The second one is interrelated to the *presidentialization* of Turkish politics, analysing both the executive aspects and the electoral and party aspects, in accordance with the analytical framework provided by Poguntke and Webb (2005)¹¹. Next, we deal with the impact of the independent variable on the trend towards more authoritarian and personalistic regime. For that purpose, we analyse that impact in terms of three key indicators: (i) the judicial power; (ii) civil liberties en general and (iii) finally, press freedom in particular.

2. The institutional and non institutional changes: towards the Presidential System

Erdogan performance to implement presidential model could not be understood without the comprehension of the institutional and the contingent or informal context which has triggered the current situation. Without the adequate power resources is impossible to reach a situation where has been possible the Constitutional reform. For this reason, the objective is to explain how the resources of power have increased in the institutional aspect (as it is called, the institutional reforms) as well as informal aspect (the *presidentialization* of Turkish politics) with Erdogan acting during his more than fourteen-year term as Prime Minister and President.

2.1. The presidentialization of the political system: institutional reforms

The study of the constitutional reforms is pinnacle to understand the importance and impact of institutional changes in the increase of the power resources. For that purpose, we study constitutional changes beginning with the Constitution of the IIIrd Republic with respect to the positions of the President and the Prime Minister, the reform of the Constitution in 2007 to enable direct election of the President of the Republic, and proposals for reform approved on 16 April 2017 referendum to convert Turkey in a presidential system. Both the 1982 Constitution, without adequate check and balances, and its later reform in 2007 paved the way of the system in which priority is given to granting greater powers and control to the executive branch.

Finally, these proposals approved in this referendum are positioned as favouring a presidential system with no constraints, a system known as hyper-presidentialism.¹²

2.1.1. The constitutional changes in the IIIrd Republic: strengthening of the role of the President of the Republic and of the Prime Minister

The 1982 Constitution created the conditions for the power concentration, strong executive and the judiciary control of the system. The changes made to the Presidency of the Republic were substantial. The roles of President and Prime Minister were enlarged, strengthening their powers vis-à-vis the Assembly which now consisted of a single House.

The Presidency of the Republic changed from having a purely symbolic role in the Constitution of the IInd Republic (1961, Article 97)¹³ to having a supervisory role, going beyond ceremonial prerogatives, without however falling into the category of an executive Presidency.¹⁴ His powers in the executive, legislative,¹⁴ and judicial fields were widened¹⁵ in such a way the influence of the President would be substantial to appoint some charges and certain senior posts related to the judiciary and the university (Art. 104). Moreover, with the 1982 Constitution the Prime Minister was converted into a central figure in the executive (Art. 111-112).¹⁶

With respect to relationships between the President and the Prime Minister, there were also a number of changes. The cabinet, although strengthened vis-à-vis the Assembly, was weakened in several respects in its relationship with the President. The Prime Minister was appointed by the President of the Republic from among members of the GANT. The ministers were proposed by the Prime Minister and appointed by the President of the Republic. The Constitution guaranteed the President the right to dismiss any minister on the suggestion or indication of the Prime Minister. On the other hand, there were also conflicts of power between

the President and the Prime Minister. Although there are these checks and balances in his relationships, the President had no executive authority in the drawing up of policies. However, these power conflicts became clearer with the arrival of Erdogan to the Presidency, leading to the forced exit of Ahmet Davutoglu for the disagreement with a presidential system.¹⁷

2.1.2. The Constitutional reforms in 2007: the way to a semipresidential system.

With the end of the presidency of Sezer (2000-2007), the AKP saw the perfect opportunity to propose a candidate to the presidency of the Republic. Nevertheless, the Kemalist establishment, with its bureaucratic-judicial alliance, was unwilling to permit that change.¹⁸ The Virtual Coup d'Etat came about as the result of an alliance with Kemalism in order to avoid having an Islamic party take the presidency. In addition, the Republican People's Party (CHP) got the Constitutional Court to annul the presidential election due to a lack of quorum (a qualified majority).¹⁹

However, the AKP electoral victory in July 2007, led something of historic importance: the first time that the Parliament elected a member of an Islamist party. The traditional and key Kemalist institutions, such as Higher Board of Education, the Presidency of Religious Affairs and the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors, remained under the AKP control.²⁰ As President, Gül used his powers to change the military leadership and to strengthen the hegemony of the AKP in the judicial system and in the universities.²¹ The prerogatives of the President for nominating senior posts in all sectors began to have their influence from that time.

In this manner, the Constitution reform in 2007 signified a further turn of the screw towards the importance of the President: in formal terms at least, a path was mapped out in the direction of a *the facto* semi-presidential system with the presidential election scheduled for August 2014. Moreover, it opened windows of opportunity for such a presidential system. First

presidential elections took place in August 2014, after Gül ended his term and Erdogan brought back to the political scene the debate over the presidential system.

2.1.3. The Presidential System comes into effect in 2017.

If the 2007 parliamentary elections results paved the way to a semipresidential system, the 2011 electoral results eased the way for the proposal for a presidential model.²² After the general election the AKP proposed the Commission for Constitutional Consensus²³, with the task of drawing up a Constitutional draft. Among the most important points, and the one which led to the dissolution of the Commission in December 2013, was the disagreement over the proposal for a presidential system. The fact was that there was an attempt to draw up a model for a presidential system more free of check and balances: what we refer to as hyper-presidentialism as a type of delegative presidentialism. In this model, the President controls the executive and the judicial branches. The assembly or assemblies can only have partial control over the President. In fact there is no separation of powers and power becomes concentrated in just a few hands. In addition, tactics of control can also extend to other fields, such as control of the press, decrease in individual liberties, intimidation of the political opposition and of political associations, etc.²⁴, in order of not disrupting and effective governance.²⁵

Once again, with the victory of the first presidential elections in August 2014, Erdogan declared that "Turkey's existing parliamentary system is in the waiting room to be replaced by presidential system".²⁶ From that moment, in spite of the fact that the system was, formally speaking, semi-presidential, the style became highly presidential, paternalistic, with institutions attached to the general interest of the nation (the parliamentary and the judiciary) and with no horizontal accountability. Something similar to what O'Donnell called delegative democracy.²⁷

With the parliamentary elections in June 2015, both the AKP and Erdogan (even if the President had to remain politically impartial) took up the question of the presidential system. In addition, Erdogan defended the introduction of a presidential system and stated that "the Turkish governmental system has been the facto changed into a presidential one since he was elected by public vote and now it is time to update the legal framework in order to recognize more powers for the presidential office".²⁸ Nevertheless, the results of the parliamentary elections in June did not provide a sufficient majority for the AKP to form a government and there was thus some hope for opposition sectors. Finally, the elections in November 2015 gave the victory to the AKP for forming a government but not the majority necessary (two thirds seats of 550) for changing the Constitution.

Nevertheless, after the May 2016 substitution of Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, who was critical of the presidential form of government, and with the July 2016 coup d'etat, the road to the establishment of this new system was cleared. Erdogan's continual insistence on the need for a presidential system became even more marked after the coup. It had always been on his agenda, and he finally came to an agreement with the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) in order to obtain their support. As a result, on 16 April 2017 Turkey held a constitutional referendum to vote on 18 amendments to the Constitution, the principal purpose of which was the establishment of an executive presidency.

The result (51.2% voted in favor of the presidential system) was that the powers of the President were increased, to the detriment of those of Parliament. The office of the Prime Minister was eliminated. The President would now be the head of state and head of the executive. He would have new and greater powers. He would be able to name ministers and one or more Vice Presidents, prepare the budget, choose the majority of senior judges. The President

can issue decree-laws, dissolve Parliament, convoke elections, and declare States of Emergency.²⁹ A new dual system was established, where the Head of State directs the government, but without any strong separation of powers. This implies a greater risk that the President will behave in an authoritarian way, to the detriment of democratic institutions. The changes that came about, favoring the efficacy of the presidential system over the separation of power, meant an important reorganization of the State as it had been conceived of by Atatürk and other founders of the Republic in the 1920's.³⁰

2.2. The "informal changes". The *presidentialization* of Turkish politics (2002-2014)

Constitutional reforms in Turkey have been accompanied by a process of *presidentialization* in which a charismatic figure has had a particular and personal style. *Presidentialization* of politics, refers to "the process by which regimes are becoming more presidential in their actual practice without, in most cases, changing their formal structure, that is, their regime-type".³¹ In these cases, Prime Ministers in parliamentary regimes are more like presidents.³² For this reason, interest in this process in parliamentary democracies resides precisely in verifying whether, independently of legal and constitutional factors, there are contingent and structural factors leading towards a more presidential manner of acting.

The analysis of its *presidentialization* in Turkey is an interesting case due that from 2002 to 2007 it was a parliamentary system, and important democratic reforms took place to reach European Union criteria. From 2007 onwards, the powerful personal orientation of politics leads us to study the contingent or informal factors over the period of twelve years in which the Justice and Development Party (AKP) has been in power, with Tayip Erdogan as the undisputed leader as Primer Minister. These factors (which we call aspects) include: (i) the executive or

governmental aspect, referring to the increase in power resources possessed by the leader; and (ii) the electoral aspect of the party centred upon the personalization of the electoral process.³³

2.2.1. The executive increasing power resources

The Prime Minister Office has been growing over decades. The increase in executive functions coincided with a decrease in the roles of the ministers, being more significant since 2011.³⁴

Erdogan exercise of power was highly personalised, with domination by the executive sphere growing over a period of twelve years. He was able to carry the party to victory in three consecutive parliamentary elections (2002, 2007, 2011) and three municipal elections (2004, 2009, 2014), together with another parliamentary elections (2015) with Ahmet Dovutglu and with Erdogan as President campaigning for the AKP.³⁵ This means that the AKP has been the most successful party in Turkey from the beginning of the multi-party period in 1946 and Erdogan, the most successful politician.³⁶ A weak opposition unable to mount a challenge and which has had to face four absolute AKP majorities in four legislatures has also contributed significantly to the phenomenon.

Due to Erdogan lengthy time in office, he had sufficient space for manoeuver for the control of the state institutions and main state agencies. He personalized the Prime Minister Office, which has also permitted an institutional control of the legislative and the judiciary. There also was a very significant move to appointing large numbers of advisors in a number of ministries as a way of controlling and managing their strategies. The power of these advisors, frequently greater than that of many ministers, has on occasion distorted the hierarchy in state institutions. Regarding the executive-legislative relationships, it is important to outline the use of plebiscites on two occasions (2007 and 2010) as a tool for autonomy for validating his personal mandate and obtaining electoral gains.³⁷ Equally, there has been a tendency in Turkey

to veer towards the use of decrees, above all since 2011. For example, that year and in a period of six months, the AKP government signed 35 decrees which, in addition to re-organising the structure, organization and operation of the ministries incorporated new institutions and mechanisms.³⁸ Another important issue was the use of the omnibus bills without any debate and with the aim of controlling the agenda setting in the legislature from 2007 onwards.³⁹

2.2.2. The electoral process and party personalization

Firstly, the electoral aspect is very significant because the types of campaigns in Turkey have had influence over the *presidentialization* of the system. Erdogan has exploited his popular image with wide sections of society as a leader of the New Turkey and has developed a personality cult.⁴⁰ He has tried to create an image of a "man of the people", as a "lover of God" and as the "light and hope of millions".⁴¹ The electoral hegemony enjoyed by the AKP has enabled it to obstructing media access for the opposition, but in a manner that elections continue to be free and fair. He personally has selected the candidates that would be presented for parliamentary elections.⁴²

Secondly, the party aspect refers to the increasing importance of the position of leader in the party, since whilst holding the post of Prime Minister he finds himself protected from pressure from his own party.⁴³ Insofar as the party aspect is concerned, in Turkey an oligarchic party style has been a historic trend, since both the political culture and the institutional context have encouraged the implantation of authoritarian structures.⁴⁴

With this organization, the consolidation of Erdogan's power within his party has been as strong and significant as his power within the apparatus of the State. From the beginnings of the party in 2001 Erdogan was gaining power purging many of his supporters. The consequence is that he managed to neutralise the internal opposition, the more centrist sector (led by Abdullah

Gül), and to consolidate his control over his party, so that the AKP became the most disciplined party since the fifties.⁴⁵ Erdogan in fact, has been the real power of the AKP since 2011.

3. The Impact of *dual presidentialization*: the autocratization process.

The progressive concentration of institutional power, aided by personal factors, has been an ingredient for autocratization. Since Erdogan came to power, he has been able to gather enough resources of power to erode and virtually destroy certain checks and balances. The absolute control of the AKP, the ideology, the consecutive electoral victories (parliamentary, locals, presidential), the charismatic leadership, the control of the main institutions and state agencies, the social network, the mobilization capacity and the media control⁴⁶, have been the power resources which have allowed a control which has repressed freedom and institutions. The conception of politics since then has been one of majority rule without any kind of respect for the system and without adequate safeguards.⁴⁷

In this way significant impact could be appreciated on various key dimensions significant for the quality of democracy. The greatest ones, as it was pointed out, can be observed on the following variables: governmental control over the judicial power, civil liberties in general and more specifically of the press. In other words, the system has been damaged in terms of the functioning of government, rights and public liberties. Why the interest in controlling these two areas specifically? The judiciary and the media are a counterbalance to power. They constitute horizontal and vertical check and balances to executive power (Cinar, Ugur, 2015) and they are analyzed taking into account the constitutional amendments and the Erdogan personal orientation of politics.

3.1.The Judicial Power

Regarding the judiciary power indicator, some power resources such as the electoral victories, the control of the main institutions and agencies and the party support, have been useful for Erdogan to monitor the appointment of the main positions of the judiciary.

In this sense, 2010 and 2013 were important moments of inflexion for executive-legislature relations. In September 2010, a constitutional referendum, which obtained 58% of affirmative votes (but with the opposition of the CHP and MHP) gave the green light to a wide review of the judicial power. The philosophy of these changes was to destroy the former state ideology, the influence of the military and the kemalist bureaucracy and to guarantee that no surprises could happen in important trials. However, with the crisis in December 2013, including cases of corruption detected in the AKP and which even implicated ministers, AKP realized that the judiciary was not under control.⁴⁸ The reaction of the AKP was to amend the legislation so that it had to be informed immediately of any secret investigations. All the members of the Higher Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK) were against this reform because it constituted a significant threat to the independence of the judiciary, but finally the draft became law in February 2014. Immediately, and before the opposition could appeal to the Constitutional Court, a large scale government operation transferred judges and prosecutors who were investigating cases of corruption to other posts without their consent, and replaced them with persons more sympathetic to the AKP.⁴⁹

During the process, the different events were not exempt from personal involvement. Erdogan made various and significant declarations: he accused signatory members of the HSYK of "being guilty of violating the laws and stating he would have put them on trial if he had had the power to do so." Erdogan also stated that "the AKP had made a mistake in 2010 by strengthening the autonomy of the HSYK and weakening the role of the Minister of Justice

within the Council".⁵⁰ Even when his reform received critics from different circles, he directly declared about the inconveniency of considering the “judiciary as a separate power”.⁵¹

Resuming, and taking also into account reports such as the BTI, until 2013, “the judiciary, in spite of some structural weakness, was considered relatively independent of the influence of other institutions”. However, from 2014 onwards, this report considers that the judiciary suffers some considerable pressure from government⁵². This horizontal check and balance have progressively been eliminated. Erdogan has put efficiency ahead. For his conception, power separations slow down an effective implementation of policies. As a consequence, the judiciary is considered as a threat and disloyal to the State if they don’t abide executive decisions.⁵³

Table 1: Power separations

Years	2012	2014	2016
BTI indicators			
Separations of Power	9	8	7
Independent Judiciary	7	7	6

Source: BTI (2012, 2014, 2016)

3.2. Civil Liberties

Civil liberties have been also affected by constitutional changes and personal implications. Regarding civil liberties, particularly freedom of expression, association and assembly rights, education and religion, these are formally guaranteed under the Constitution. Rights and public liberties were promoted in the AKP's first legislature, sponsoring even the liberal Islam⁵⁴, but in practice they have been limited at least during the IIIrd Republic and in recent legislatures, highlighting Erdogan personal involvement. Specifically, media and civil

society constitute important vertical check and balances importantly eroded in the last years by the different reforms and by the Erdogan personal authoritarian style. Different power resources have allowed restrictive reforms to be carried out: the important majority in parliament, Erdogan's continued leadership and ideology with his indoctrination of a "pious generation" and the imposition of values (declarations regarding LGBT rights, alcohol consumption, couples relations) and the control of the main institutions, the media control and the mobilization capacity.

With respect to association and assembly rights, they were in general according to international standards, but the use of force was excessive in the case of demonstrations that took place without permission. However this right has been significantly eroded since Taksim events in 2013⁵⁵ and the coup d'état. The human consequences of the Taksim revolts characterised by severe repression during which he described the demonstrators as "looters", "terrorists", "pawns of international powers" and "provokers from marginal sects of society" (May, 2013: 299).⁵⁶ For example, in March 2015 the AKP brought the Internal Security Package before Parliament with the goal of augmenting police authority during protests to include opening of lethal fire or extending detention periods.⁵⁷ The long detention period, the breaches of the right to a fair trial, the extremely vague definition of terrorism and terrorist propaganda is another consequence. Prison is also being more commonly used against some intellectuals and secularism is more under threat and restriction. The 2016 July Coup d'état has also had an impact on restrictions on rights and freedoms affecting the political regime. The arrests and purges without guarantees and the state of emergency, has promoted an advance towards a more authoritarian regime.

Regarding the aspects of education and religion, it can be cited, for example, the changes made in certain educational policies. Religion has always been part of the national education system, although it has undergone constant changes depending on the stage and party in government. The Kemalist approach was accused of being monolithic and failing to respect religious freedom. When the AKP came to power, their objective was to build a more religious generation. In order to accomplish this, beginning in 2012 they expanded religious education and supported the iman hatip schools.⁵⁸ The result of this reform is that the more plural and liberal approach that the AKP had nominally favored, as opposed to the Kemalist model, has morphed into a strict monopoly over religious instruction and education.⁵⁹

These changes could also be appreciated in indexes, such as the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) and Freedom Rating. Both of them, reveal the erosion of rights and freedoms. In 2017, the Freedom in the World Index for Turkey was 4.5 (with 1 being the best ranking, and 7 the worst: from 1 to 2 means free, 3 to 5 partially free, and from 6 to 7 unfree), meaning that it was ranked as only partially free, having fallen a full point from 2016 and a point and a half since 2010 (with 3.5). The BTI also illustrated the negative trend in freedom since 2012 (with 10 being the best score, and 1 the worst).

Table 2: Civil Liberties

Years	2012	2014	2016
BTI indicators			
Freedom of Expression	7	6	5
Association/Assembly	7	7	6
Rights			
Civil Rights	7	7	6

Source: BTI (2012, 2014, 2016)

3.3. Freedom of the Press

Finally, with respect to the freedom of the press, the most notable is the continued pressure by the AKP from 2002, both in the legal and constitutional aspects and in the executive aspects of *presidentialization* with Erdogan personal commitment. Freedom of expression and dissemination of thought is recognised in the article 26 of the Turkish Republic Constitution. Perhaps the second paragraph of Article 26 of the Constitution, is the clearest expression of the dual nature [of some "guarantees"] when it limits freedom of expression for, amongst other reasons, "the protection of the basic characteristics of the Republic and the indivisible integrity of the State with its territory and nation."

At the legal level, the complexity is so great that we shall give only a few examples. Firstly, the Press Law 2005. This Law embodied certain advances, but nevertheless it maintains certain links with the Criminal Code which has a restrictive effect in practice. Although there were some advances with the reform of April 2008 and fewer investigations relating to Article 301 of the Criminal Code, there are still some parts of the Code which have not however been reformed or are used in a restrictive manner⁶⁰.

Equally, from 2010, in the area of new communications media, Law 5651 on the Internet limits freedom of expression. In these areas, Turkey is far behind the advanced democracies. Twitter, Facebook and YouTube have been subject to powerful controls. The control over the Internet has increased gradually, reaching the point of web pages being blocked for hours without prior permission given by the courts. The Telecommunications and Communications Presidency (TIB) charged with regulation has arranged for thousands of sites to be inaccessible. Blocking occurred during the corruption scandals in 2013 and the local elections in March 2014.

In 2016, Freedom on the Net⁶¹, highlights the key (negative) developments between June 2015 and May 2016. If in 2015 Internet Freedom Status was partly free, in 2016 it is not free.

But there is more than simply restrictive regulation. In the executive aspect of *presidentialization*, this pressure has been carried out in various forms: by creating communications media outlets close to the party⁶²; by control over the High Office of Audiovisual Affairs (its members elected by the Parliament since 2005 and with an ability to impose sanctions which is very high if we compare with European standards); pressure on communications media such as Dogan Media (sentenced to high tax fines) and pressure from the government on journalists (increase in the number of journalists in prison and increase in investigations into journalists).⁶³ The pressures on journalists are common. The organization “Reporters without Borders” continues to list numerous violations⁶⁴. These events are appreciated in the Freedom of the Press Index. In fact, the status since 2013 is not free.

4. Conclusions

The process of autocratization that Turkey has undergone in recent years can be explained from two points of view: the combination of various institutional changes and a number of contingent and informal changes.

This combination of constitutional and legal factors together with informal action in Turkish politics has led to what has been called in the article as an original concept: *dual presidentialization* of the political system and its politics in general.

The analysis of *dual presidentialization* as an independent variable has made it possible for us to understand the institutional characteristics of the system which has allowed the changes to a Presidential model and the impact in the autocratization process. Firstly, it has enabled us to distinguish *presidentialization* of the political system and *presidentialization* of politics.

Presidentialization of the system has permitted the analysis of the prerogatives and powers granted by the Constitution to the executive, the reform of the Constitution in 2007 by which the President is directly elected and the antecedents and the reform that has conducted to a presidential system in 2017. The *presidentialization* of politics has enabled us to assess the actions of Erdogan in the executive electoral and party fields from the perspective of a more personal intervention in politics.

In conclusion, we might point out two main questions. The first of all, is that the greater power resources acquired by Prime Minister and President of the Republic together with the constitutional and legal reforms, and the presence of leaders such as Erdogan, can have a powerful orientating influence on the political system: The *dual presidentialization* has led to a process of autocratization from a defective democracy. Particularly three variables have been affected: the judicial branch, public liberties in general and liberty of expression and press freedom in particular.

Secondly, the *dual presidentialization* that I have discussed, with its institutional and personal aspects, also has had important implications. Beginning in 2007, Turkey has undergone an institutional evolution in its form of government, culminating in highly important reforms that were undertaken after the referendum in April of 2017. The personal aspect has also played an important role, as I have discussed. According to Linz, relying on the qualities of a political leader can involve serious risks, especially in a non-democratic system. In presidential systems, issues such as the President's acceptance of limits to his power, his ability to inspire confidence in the populace, and his garnering a minimum of consensus, are more complicated.⁶⁵ In addition, *presidentialization* can also involve majoritarianism, i.e. the concentration of power in the hands of a majority. With the proposed reforms, Erdogan would be able to run in the upcoming 2019

presidential elections and continue in power up through 2029. This is a personal and institutional variable that will be inexorably linked for more than a decade with all the questions it might involve: from how its internal politics continues to evolve, to its relations with the EU, Russia or NATO.

Marién Durán is associate professor of Political Sciences at the Department of Political Sciences and Public Administration of the University of Granada (Spain). She is member of the Group of Studies of International Security (GESI) and member of the forum for research on the Arab and Muslim world (FIMAM).

1. This work was written within the research project financed by the Spanish Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad: “The Arab revolutions: emerging political actors and reconfiguration of the public sphere in North Africa and Middle East” under Grant (CSO2012-37779); Excellence Project financed by the Junta of Andalucía, “The persistence of authoritarianism in relation to contemporary processes of political change in North Africa and the Middle East: consequences for political regimes and the international stage”, under Grant (P12.SEJ.3118). The author wants to thank Inmaculada Szmolka, Javier G. Marín and Rafa Martínez for their valuable suggestions to the earlier draft of the paper.

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