

**The Process of
Democratization with
Conservative Parties in
Turkey**

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Abstract

This study explores how the Turkish democratization has been affected by conservative parties during the historical process. In addition, it provides information about the democratization experience of Turkey, a country which is Islamic world's door to the West. Furthermore, it reveals the difference of Turkish democracy from that of other democratic countries.

With achievements gained until today, Turkey has become highly prestigious in the eyes of Muslim countries and societies. Its history and experiences of democratization, which can be said to have started earlier than even some of the European countries, generally give neighboring Islamic countries, which are ruled under an absolute monarchy, the impression that Islam and democracy can coexist in a balance. So, the study considers it appropriate to discuss the democratization process in Turkey, especially in the period of conservative parties. How Turkey went through interrupted periods of democratization experience in these periods, and gains and losses as a result of these periods were addressed in this study separately. The analysis and evaluations were conducted within the bounds of possibility, through the interviews with persons, who have a say in the political history of Turkey.

Turkey is the only Muslim country to become a member of the NATO military alliance. Its relations with Israel based on strategic partnership also grant privilege to the country in terms of international relations, particularly with the Arab world. Thanks to these relations, Turkey has contributed to world peace as an intermediary in many issues, particularly Palestine problems. Turkey has a structure that sets an example for many Arab countries associated with Islam because of the elements of modernity embraced by the country. In view of all these considerations, it is essential to scrutinize the experience of democracy specific to the conditions in Turkey. Examining the positive as well as negative effects of democratization experience, in which mostly centre-right and conservative parties formed governments, on Turkey itself, Arab countries and indirectly world conjuncture is the aim of this study.

There is a general opinion in all around the world that normally democracy can improve with left-wing and secular parties. What about the political climate in Turkey? Except for the single-party regime period from 1923, the year marked by the proclamation of the republic, until the 1950's, the most effective and prominent parties of Turkish political life were conservative parties. The fact that conservative parties were almost the only triumphant of democracy, which became truly meaningful with multi-party elections, made this study more necessary, and therefore, it focuses on the democratization process during the period of conservative parties in Turkey in general terms.

Turkey is not a third-wave but a second-wave democracy, having made a transition to democracy in the late 1940s. After 1950, Democrat Party, a centre-right and conservative party, took over the country management in Turkey. Therefore, Turkey, which went through quite painful processes in terms of democracy experience, entered into a period, wherein the country was ruled by centre-right and conservative parties until today, except for very short intervals. Moreover, Turkish democracy has been interrupted a number of times by military interventions. So, in this study, the background of the democratization process in Turkey, centre-right wing parties, the Views of Ummah Movement and AKP's establishment period have been explained.

This thesis concludes that Turkey's conservative parties positively contributed toward democratization by attempting to strike balance between modernization and Islamic identity. The center-right and conservative parties paved the way to democratization in Turkey. Many reforms, innovations, and developments were made during their time in power. Every center-right wing party has achieved so many successes in its first years in power, however, the acceleration of development and democratization had fallen in later years and the developments were rolled back in time. This is not the sole problem of the center-right parties in Turkey. Rather, it is a problem of all parties which come to the power. The main problem is the lack of a developed check and balance system in place in Turkey.

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Abbreviations

- AKP: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
- ANAP: Anavatan Partisi (Motherland Party)
- CHP: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)
- DP: Demokrat Parti (Democratic Party)
- DSP: Demokratik Sol Parti (Democratic Left Party)
- ECHR: European Convention on Human Rights
- EU: European Union
- FP: Fazilet Partisi (Virtue Party)
- GATA: Gülhane Askeri Tıp Akademisi (Gulhane Military Medical Academy)
- HADEP: Halkın Demokrasi Partisi (People's Democracy Party)
- HP: Halk Partisi (People's Party)
- JP: Adalet Partisi (Justice Party)
- MDP: Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi (Nationalist Democracy Party)
- MHP: Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Action Party)
- MUSIAD: Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği (Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association)
- NOP: Milli Nizam Partisi (National Order Party)
- IHH: İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri İnsani Yardım Vakfı (The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief)
- NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- NSC: Milli Güvenlik Kurulu (National Security Council)
- NSP: Milli Selamet Partisi (National Salvation Party)
- PKK: Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê (The Kurdistan Workers' Party)
- WP: Refah Partisi (Welfare Party)
- SP: Saadet Partisi (Felicity Party)
- SHP: Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti (Republican Social Democratic Party)
- TBMM: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi (Grand National Assembly of Turkey)
- TPP: Doğru Yol Partisi (True Path Party)
- TUSIAD: Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association)

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USA: United States of America

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Turkey is one of the largest non-Arab Muslim countries with its territory and population on two continents – Asia and Europe – separated by the Bosphorus. As a democracy with a predominantly Muslim population, which borders the Middle East, the Balkans and the Black, Aegean, and Mediterranean seas, it is a strategic partner not only with its neighbors but also with the United States and Europe.

Despite the multifarious problems the country faces, it has managed to emerge as a progressive nation with a modernized society after years of turbulence, and to create itself out of a crumbling and occupied Ottoman Empire. While Turkey faces challenges, such as neighboring turbulent regions, combating secessionist movements, and corruption, when weighed against its twentieth-century experience, it had taken significant steps in achieving the status of a modern and civilized nation till 2010. Needless to say, the role of the conservative and centre-right parties behind these steps cannot be denied, because, since its foundation in 1923, Republic of Turkey has been governed by centre-right and conservative parties more than left parties. Radical reforms intended for catching up with the developments in the west in the form of secularism were made until the death of Mustafa Kemal in 1938, the founder of the Turkish Republic. After Ataturk's death, Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) started to rule the country under the leadership of Ismet Inonu. CHP, which was Turkey's first political party, ruled Turkey until 1950. This period was recorded in Turkey's political history as a single-party regime. 1950 is an important turning point. While CHP always dominated the elections, which were held with an open ballot and confidential counting until this period, Democratic Party, a centre-right and conservative party, took over the country management as the confidential ballot and open counting system was adopted in 1950. Therefore, Turkey, which went through quite painful processes in terms of democracy experience, entered into a period, wherein the

country was ruled by centre-right and conservative parties until today, except for very short intervals.

This thesis explores the process of democratization with the conservative parties in Turkey. The present chapter reviews the background of the study, presents the study objectives and its literature review. It describes and discusses the methodology employed in the field research and closes with a brief summary of each chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study

Having a strategic importance as a bridge between Europe and Asia, Turkey sets an example for Muslim societies in the world due to its gains from the period of Ottoman Empire, the fact that it is ruled under a secular regime and has democracy with a Muslim public identity, being only Muslim country in NATO military alliance, and finally the fact that it is in European Union Membership process.

With these achievements gained until today, Turkey today has become highly prestigious in the eyes of Muslim countries and societies. Its history and experiences of democratization, which can be said to have started earlier than some of the European countries, generally give neighboring Islamic countries, which are ruled under an absolute monarchy, the impression that Islam and democracy can coexist in a balance. From this point of view, it is obvious that the success of democratization in Turkey will make a significant contribution to Islamic countries' integration with the world.

In the light of these facts, I considered it appropriate to discuss the democratization process in Turkey, especially in the period of conservative parties. How Turkey went through interrupted periods of democratization experience in these periods and gains and losses as a result of these periods were addressed in this study separately. Also, analysis and evaluations were conducted within the bounds of possibility through the interviews with persons, who have a say in the political history of Turkey.

What I meant by conservatism in this study is not only religious notion. Of course, even party members have a religious intention of the Islam. However, re-Islamization is not on their agenda. But, it is clear that these parties, which I mentioned in my dissertation, respect the peoples' conservative ideas as the tradition and as the nation. So, I classified these parties as conservative in Turkey. There are some components of conservatism in Turkey. The first component of the conservatism in Turkey is paternalistic conservatism. So, when researches conducted on this subject are analyzed, it is seen that paternalism is quite dominant in Turkish society. As a result, individuals shape their preferences and votes according to the decisions of their family or prominent figures of a sect. Secondly, the concept of conservatism is generally perceived as religiousness and commitment to traditions in Turkey. So, paternalism, religiousness, and commitment to traditions are the components of the conservatism in Turkey.

Democratization is the transition to a more democratic political regime. It may be the transition from an authoritarian regime to a full democracy, a transition from an authoritarian political system to a semi-democracy, or a transition from a semi-authoritarian political system to a democratic political system. The outcome may be consolidated, or democratization may face frequent reversals. Different patterns of democratization are often used to explain other political phenomena, such as whether a country goes to a war, or whether its economy grows. Democratization itself is influenced by various factors; economic development, history, and civil society. The ideal result of democratization is to ensure that the people have the right to vote and have a voice in their political system.¹

According to Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, democratization entails liberalization, but it is a wider and more precise political concept. Democratization requires open contestation over the right to win control of the

¹ Daniele Conversi, Demo-skepticism and Genocide, *Political Science Review*, September 2006, Vol 4, Issue 3, pp. 247-262.

government, and this, in turn, requires free competitive elections, the results of which determine who will govern.²

It would be useful to explain the democratization in Turkey with these words. The Copenhagen Criteria, which Turkey had to fulfill after full membership application to the EU on 14 April 1987, has contributed to raising the standard of democratization in Turkey. Raising the standards of human rights, civil democracy, and free market economy, the three major titles of the Copenhagen criteria can be seen as the sine qua non of the democratization process in Turkey.

In Turkey, due to different reasons, there has been an ever-increasing awareness about human rights since 1990. In particular, after Turkey activated its right of individual petition in the European Human Rights Convention in 1987 and after the recognition of compulsory jurisdiction by the European Court of Human Rights in 1990, the decisions of the court on issues related to Turkey have come onto the agenda more frequently. Due to the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, there has now been a growing awareness about human rights within the country, as individuals often use this form of international referral mechanism to protect their rights against the state. The number of petitions in Turkey to the European Court of Human Rights since the acceptance of individual petitions is directly related to this increased awareness. The 1990s and after that, the Views of Ummah Movement and AKP were active.

A criticism that can be made against the democratization process in Turkey is that the process is tried to be sustained with the effect of international dynamics. In fact, reforms related to human rights and the state of law provide direct rights to individuals, and the steps to be taken in these matters should not be considered as an international obligation but should be done for the welfare and happiness of the people. This is the more accurate point of action. However, the external dynamics seem to be much more decisive in the initial phase of the democratization process. At this stage, the absence of efficiency in internal dynamics is seen as a significant feature in the democratization process in

² Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, p. 3.

Turkey. Along with the reforms and political developments that took place since the 1990s, the internal dynamics have begun to direct the process of democratization. This situation can be seen more clearly in the 2000s.

Various elements contributing to the clarification of internal dynamics can be discussed. Firstly, the developing economy, especially the private sector, has been forced to keep pace with developments around the world, and unwillingly some structural reforms have been enforced onto the political powers. With the development of the economic standard, the sensitivities of different sectors, especially the working people, have increased in terms of rights and freedoms. Because of this sensitivity, political powers had to pay more attention to human rights demands. In addition, thanks to the globalization, the diversification of mass media and the technological development of communication, people have begun to follow developments more closely in domestic as well as international context. As a result, they have begun to show more interest in human rights developments. Individuals with the opportunity to compare applications in other countries, in particular to the situation in Turkey, have begun to demand more and have started to criticize the incorrect applications in Turkey. This has begun to motivate governments to overcome obstacles in the face of human rights, democracy, and the state of law.

While examining the democratization process in Turkey, of course, one must consider global principles of democracy in the comparison. You must have references in order to be able to reveal the situation in your country. Thus, thoughts, such as the specific conditions in Turkey, the situation in Turkey and the problems experienced in Turkey are matters that must be considered while calculating the stage of democratization which we are in. It must not be forgotten that there have been problems in all states all over the world in every period of history and just like the special conditions are discussed and brought to their agenda in the democratization process, the evaluations should be made similarly also for Turkey. At the same time, democratization is the management of all the solutions to such problems. If solutions to these problems are truly sought, democratization is required.

The idea that "the democracy generally develops more easily during the ruling periods of left parties" is widely held across the world. The emergence of 'right' and 'left' concepts after the French Revolution also supports this perception. In fact, concepts of left and right became a part of political discourse when nobles and clergy, who defended the veto right of Louis XVI, who could not tolerate the oppression in 1760's before French Revolution, sat on the right side of Mounier, while session moderator, and representatives of bourgeois class, who deny king's right to have such a privilege, claim a position in the governance of the country, and support peasant class, sat on the left side of Mounier. Before French Revolution, based on the fact that people, who supported monarchy in favor of the privileges granted to aristocrats, conservative people and visions, which are not open to change, and defend the opinions and interests of society's upper classes, are regarded as 'right,' while innovative, transformative, ideas, opinions and persons, which/who break the taboos of society, are associated with 'left since the representatives of bourgeois, who defended the rights of peasant class as progressive members of the social order back then, sat on the left side. Over the course of time, genuine conditions of social order also changed the meaning and implications of 'leftism' and 'rightism'. To give an example, it can be mentioned the distinction between 'liberals' (innovative) and 'conservatives' (traditionalist) in the British Parliament, which dates back to centuries. As far as the United States of America is concerned, it is seen that the founding fathers of the country also took over this political practice. Democratic left explicitly declares that Republicans represent right politics.

What about the political climate in Turkey? Even in Turkey, there had been tradition of social democrats. Usually, people think that social democrats are representing the democratization. But, why it was not realized? In fact, the so-called social democrats in Turkey are, at the same time, elitist, and one of the most problematic points is that they had been always waiting for military interventions against Islamists. To some extent, left-wing parties are very friendly to workers class, but they are, at the same time, too much nationalistic

and anti-Islamic. Particularly, for the CHP or SHP, they called themselves left-wing and social democrats. However, from outside, for example, these parties are sometimes very fascist parties, because they have very strong opinion against ethnic minorities including Kurds and Armenian. Also, they showed very strong hostility against conservative Muslims. They are very discriminative. For example, the women headscarf issue. In the beginning of 1990s, all the professors at universities did not allow the female students wear scarfs. These very specific characters disturbed the Turkish politics to democratization. This was one of the most important obstacles against democratization in Turkish politics. Moreover, according to Özbudun, the two basic pillars of the Turkish Republics as designed by Kemal Atatürk have been nationalism and secularism. Therefore, state elites, the military, the leadership of the major mainstream parties and large civil society organizations perceive the Islamists and Kurds as threat to the basic characteristics of the Turkish state.³ So, when analyzed in detail, it is obvious that positive contributions were made to democratization during the period of centre-right and conservative parties. I aimed to explain this with examples in this study. Importance of the subject can be understood better if it is considered within the framework of the delicate balance, which Turkey aims to achieve among its other modernization objectives determined since 19th century with its Islamic identity.

The second major obstacle against democratization in Turkish politics was the relationship between military and politics. The most well-known example of the political intervention of the army, namely the role of the army in political representatives, is the military coups. They can target the government or the overall system. Military coups can be in the form of an action taken at all levels of the military within a chain of command. It is generally in the form of a military junta, a small group within the military moving within a certain action plan, with the cooperation or support of certain political circles, with violence or threats to change the government or even the form of order. Military interventions have been seen quite often in Turkey. The military in Turkey has

³ Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000, p. 151.

seen itself as the defense of secularism and Ataturk's principles and has always constricted the government.

Ahmad argues that the Turkish military's role, as standing 'above society' and acting independently of it, continues the role of the military in Ottoman times.⁴ The military having an active role in politics since the Ottoman Empire happens to be inevitable in the post-Republican period. In fact, the Republic was established by the military and administrative bureaucrats who were raised in the Ottoman era. This elite troop has moved from the Ottoman Empire to the political life of the newly established state, interfering with political power and where the elite dominate. The authoritarian administration exhibited radical changes in order not to fall into the faults experienced in the Ottoman period, whether in the framework of political culture or not. Old habits continued to be maintained, because a general framework could not be established in the policies followed with the reflex of protecting the Republic, and there was no change in political culture. The most important factor affecting this situation is the disconnection between the ruled and the rulers, which has continued in the Republican period. Military and administrative elite officials have tried to adopt the innovations that have occurred and have led the authoritarian administration, which shows that they act with the belief that the people do not have the necessary accumulation.

Turkish political life has witnessed various military interventions, the first of which was on 27 May 1960, followed by 12 March 1971, 12 September 1980, 28 February 1997, 27 April 2007, and 15 July 2016. After a short time following the military interventions that took place in Turkey, the power was left to civilians, or civilian administration has undertaken with interruption of the existing regulations. In fact, the military has also disposed of people and groups within itself wishing to hold onto government for longer periods of time. In this context, the military-political relationship or military interventions, in brief, have been one of the main obstacles to democratization in Turkey.

⁴ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, Routledge: London, 1999, p. 3.

The conflicts between government and military, disputes related to the regime, quests for a new system and the tension between large masses of people and political leaders have proved the importance and essential unifying function of democracy once again. When genuine attention is paid, it is observed that Turkey is a country, where military coups have taken place at virtually 10-15 year intervals. In the country, which switched to multi-party political life with the elections in 1946, Turkish Armed Forces have intruded democratic civil government sometimes by declaring that domestic security is under threat, sometimes by preventing certain laws from coming into force or forcing governments to promulgate, and sometimes forcing Turkish Republic's publicly elected governments to resign or overthrowing them. These military coups and memorandums were planned and conducted only by a group of military officers, who were sometimes assigned such task within the chain of command such as 12 September 1980 military coup, and sometimes outside the chain of command such as 27 May 1960 military coup. In other words, Turkish Armed Forces seized the control of the country two times in 1960 and 1980, forced the government to resign in 1971 and 1977, and became successful in this attempt. Also, on 27 April 2007, a declaration on secularism was published on the internet on behalf of the Turkish Armed Forces due to Presidential elections. Some politicians and journalists called this declaration "e-memorandum since it was published on the internet.

Apart from all these, there are also failed coup attempts and revolts in the political life of Turkey; On 22nd February 1962, resistance of Staff colonel Talat Aydemir, Military Academy commander, and his friends against the assignment and arrest incidents for the dismissal of 'May 27' supporters within the military, rebellion that took place on 20th May 1969 as the continuation of previous incidents, and two failed military coup attempts in 1969 and 1971, which took place outside the chain of command in the history of Turkish Republic. Finally, in 2016, military coup attempt organized by a group of soldiers within the body of Turkish Armed Force, who define themselves as *Yurtta Sulh Konseyi*

(Council of Peace in Homeland) took its place in the political history of Turkey, with lots of questions, which haven't been answered yet.

Departing military regimes may attempt to manipulate the electoral process to preserve, for themselves, a larger share of power in the coming democratic regime. Özbudun argued that manipulation of the electoral process by the military is very common in Turkey. The simplest way to accomplish this aim is to elect the leader of the outgoing military regime president in the new democratic regime; well-known examples include Generals Cemal Gürsel and Kenan Evren in Turkey.⁵

The general picture seems to be quite desperate. Consider a society, whose process of transition to democracy took about 150 years, and which hasn't completed this democratization process with lots of shortcomings. Turkey, which, as a matter of fact, can be considered as a more developed country in terms of democracy, compared to other countries in the region, has yet a lot of progress to make in this regard. In the modern sense of the word, democracy is the experience of the 1990's in some western countries, and this happened only with the coercion and support of other western countries. In this experience, the most significant factor was the economic and social promises of democracy. With the establishment of European Economic Community in 1958, founding states, which achieved a significant success in the evolution of a comfortable and liberal society in economic terms, became a model that promises a heaven for people. As a matter of fact, a transition to modern democracy took place only as a result of very tragic experiences in these model countries. In Turkey, on the other hand, this evolution took place as a result of certain imperatives. Hundred thousands of people did not die in Turkey for democratization, but hundred thousands of people sometimes had to go through undesirable methods, such as mobbing, neighborhood pressure, government pressure, state terrorism, manipulation, and cope with these negative treatments. For this reason, I am of the opinion that the process of democratization in Turkey must be discussed with these problems, which took place from the past to the present.

⁵ Özbudun, *ibid.*, p. 112.

In particular, radical Islam movements, which affect the world public opinion, terror attacks resulting from these movements and increase of these in parallel with the reactions of generally oppressed Muslim masses, have once again revealed the significance of the democratic experience of Turkey, which is located in a strategically important geography.

As far as the results of this study are concerned, I strongly believe that Turkey's strategic position in this region will increase further, and confidence of large masses of people in democracy will become more important accordingly, so that they can avoid radicalism strictly. Being a country which incorporates lots of foreign elements with various customs, traditions and conventions as a result of the rich legacy of Ottoman civilization, having a strategic importance between East-West due to its geographical location and being in the position of Christian World's door that opens to Middle East with its Islamic identity bring Turkey one step further and reveal the importance of researching democratization experience and putting it to good use.

1.2 Literature Review

This section provides information about studies related to this study conducted in Turkey and other countries and theories of these studies. The scope of this section covers the information about the democratization process of Turkey in general, and specifically the studies conducted on conservative parties in Turkey. Studies were addressed in a chronological order, and the attempt was made to convey the developments that took place during the period of conservative parties in Turkey, and how researchers approach these developments.

There are different opinions on when Turkish society was introduced to democracy. An exact date is not available in any of the resources. Democratization mentality in Turkish society can be traced back to very old times, and the foundation of this history can be seen in the Turkish States. The way rulers accede to the throne, their actions, their responsibilities towards the nation, their services and how they are overthrown when necessary, and their

liability to meet the needs and demands of all sections of society are the most obvious examples of the understanding of democratization in Turkish history.⁶ Umar suggested that viewed from this perspective, understanding of democratization in Turkish society goes back a long way on a cultural basis. This understanding of democratization slowly became apparent with the Tanzimat reform area. However, Karabulut argued that in addition to democracy culture, Turkish nation's transition to democracy officially took place during the period of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.⁷ Karpaz, who is one of the expert names of Turkey in the field of political history, suggested that after First World War, during Turkish War of Independence, significant steps were taken in Turkey in terms of democratization and popular sovereignty,⁸ and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who had an intensive accumulation of knowledge on French Revolution and democracy, contributed to this process greatly. The fact that he organized congresses at the beginning of the struggle, and enabled the opening of Grand National Assembly (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*, TBMM) are the most obvious proof of the importance he attaches to popular sovereignty and democratization. Indeed, the way Mustafa Kemal dealt with the struggle at the national level and relying on the public by convening the parliament show his tendency to democratization even in the most depressing periods.⁹ In this context, Kemalism did not aim to overthrow the personal sovereignty of rulers but bring public administration, which is actual democratization.¹⁰

Without a doubt, the true foundation of his power was not the ballot box or the constitution, but his prestige as the nation's savior warrior. His concept of

⁶ Ömer Osman Umar, "Atatürk'ün Cumhuriyetçilik İlkesinin Tarihi Temelleri", *Journal of Turkish World Researches*, Issue: 152, Istanbul, 2004, p. 122.

⁷ Mustafa Karabulut, "Tanzimat Dönemi'nde Osmanlı'nın Yenileşme Sürecine Bir Bakış", *Journal of Turkish World Researches*, Issue: 187, Istanbul, 2010, p. 128.

⁸ Kemal Karpaz, *History of Turkish Democracy*, Alfa Press, Istanbul, 1996, p. 40.

⁹ Temuçin Ertan, Atatürk'ün Demokrasi Anlayışı Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme, p. 3. Available at: <http://www.ata.tsk.tr/content/media/01/makaleler/17.pdf>.

¹⁰ Ergun Özbudun, "Atatürk ve Demokrasi", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Journal*, Vol 5, Issue 14 (March), 1989, p. 287.

the republic was plebiscitary and in that sense dictatorial, yet he defined the “golden rule” that soldiers who intended to enter politics should resign from the military. Under him, the military budget was restricted in favor of civilian priorities. Atatürk did not elaborate his “six arrows” ideology into a totalitarian form, and he rejected fascist-style militarism and expansionism.¹¹ To this day, one of his most universally accepted maxims is “peace at home and peace abroad.”¹²

In 1923, with the proclamation of Republic, it can be mentioned the existence of democracy in Turkey officially. However, it is a fact that there was a single-party system, which continued until 1945. Karpaz also suggested that the regime became more oppressive right after Atatürk's death. The government was turned into party government, and Ismet Inonu, the permanent party leader, and President was glorified as the symbol of the nation and the state.¹³ In 1944, the idea of democratization started to manifest itself slowly. According to Erik J. Zürcher who is the expert of the Turkish Studies, the first sign that the government was considering a change of direction came even before the end of the war when Inonu strongly emphasized the democratic parliamentary character of the Turkish political system in his speech at the opening of the parliamentary year on 1st November 1944. On 19th May 1945, he elaborated this theme and promised measures to make the regime more democratic, without specifying what these measures would be.¹⁴ According to Ozbudun, in political science literature, models of transition to democracy are divided into three categories; reform, coercion, and negotiation (agreement). In the case of Turkey, it is seen that government reforms the system, while legalized opposition

¹¹ “‘Six Arrows:’ The Tenets of Kemalism,” *Los Angeles Times*, 15.01.1991, Access Date: 14.02.2016, http://articles.latimes.com/1991-01-15/news/wr-324_1_mustafa-kemal-ataturk.

¹² Carter Vaughn Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity*, Yale University Press, USA, 2010, p. 262.

¹³ Karpaz, *ibid.*, p. 69.

¹⁴ Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey A Modern History*, I.B. Tauris, Third Edition, New York, 2013, p. 209.

reconciles as it takes over the power.¹⁵ The transition from the single-party system to the multi-party system from 1945 to 1950 implies that this process has a completely civil character.¹⁶ Also, it must be stated that the transition took place on the basis of a compromise ground between civil political sides, and Turkish army is not considered as a power, which approves or takes up a position.¹⁷

In Turkey, after the transition to the multi-party system, the Democratic Party came to power consequent to the election held in 1950, and a new period started for Turkey. According to Bernard Lewis, this was a very important event for a country like Turkey. For a government to lose an election and be replaced by the opposition is nothing extraordinary in the political life of established democratic societies. In Turkey, however, such a peaceful transition was a novelty – not only in the history of the country but of the entire region. This was an epoch-making event, seen by many at the time as the dawn of a new era. Some indeed went so far as to assert that the defeat and supersession of Ataturk's CHP was the last and greatest of all its achievements in the building of the Turkish Republic.¹⁸ It has often been said that the peaceful transition from a dictatorship to multi-party democracy in Turkey in 1946 and equally peaceful handover of power four years later are the unique experiences in the developing world.¹⁹

DP government led Turkey to a very different experience with positive and negative aspects.²⁰ DP was providing service to the public with positive

¹⁵ Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges To Democratic Consolidation*, London; Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000, p. 18.

¹⁶ Bülent Tanör, *Osmanlı-Türk Anayasal Gelişmeleri 1789-1980*, 2nd Edition, Der Publication, Istanbul, 1995, p. 284-285.

¹⁷ Feroz Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde Türkiye 1945-1980*, Hil Publication, Istanbul, 1994, p. 23.

¹⁸ Bernard Lewis, "Democracy in Turkey", *The Making and Unmaking of Democracy*, Edit. Theodore K. Rabb and Ezra N. Suleiman, Routledge, New York, 2003, p. 225.

¹⁹ Zürcher, *ibid.*, p. 218.

²⁰ Sina Aksin, "The Establishment of Democratic Party", *Journal of History and Society*, June 1988, p. 269.

applications on one hand, and continued, on the other hand, its political quest with anti-democratic methods and became successful in them. Having understood that he proved his political success with the elections completely, Prime Minister Menderes was swift to take rigid measures against the press, which criticized economic developments.²¹ In Turkey, the extension of the duration of power caused parties and political leaders to evolve from democracy to anti-democratic methods.²² DP also took place in history as one of the examples of this.²³ As a result of anti-democratic incidents, a military coup took place in Turkey on 27th May 1960. According to Sunar, while requirements of democratization were expected to be actualized with all institutions during the ten years power period of DP, the government established a dominance on legislative body by relying on its political majority, changed the staff of bureaucratic and military structures radically and permanently, thereby creating a bureaucracy that supports the party, and started to apply an authoritarian order by creating a strict control over media organs, judicial institutions, universities, non-governmental organizations, opposition parties, and economy.²⁴ As is seen, almost all the scholars working on this subject are of the opinion that DP brought a new lease of life to the country, paved the ground for positive developments in Turkey, but became excessively authoritarian in their last years and was finally overthrown from power with a military coup.

In Turkey, Justice Party ended the absence of a centre-right party after DP. On 13th January, the ban on political activity was lifted and new parties were given a chance to get registered for the elections that were to take place later in 1961. Eleven new parties were registered. Most were ephemeral, but the most important new party was, without a doubt, the JP, which had as its primary goal full rehabilitation of the retired officers and arrested democrats. It was seen by

²¹ Cem Erođul, *The History and Ideoloji of Demoratic Party*, 2nd Edition, Ankara, 1990, p. 401.

²² Süreyya Aydemir, *Menderes 'in Dramı*, 7th Edition, Remzi Press, Istanbul, p. 187.

²³ Mete Tuncay, "Siyasal Tarih 1950-1960", *History of Turkey IV, Modern Turkey*, Cem Publication, Istanbul, 1989, p. 138.

²⁴ Ilkay Sunar, "Demokrat Parti ve Populizm", *Republican Era Turkey Encyclopedia*, Issue: 65-66, İletişim Publication, Istanbul, 1985, p. 2076-2077.

its supporters and adversaries as the continuation of the DP.²⁵ On the other hand, according to Tunçay, this was a period when development supported by industrialization was favored, and a liberal economic mentality was adopted.²⁶ Suleyman Demirel, the leader of JP, for the next five years dominated Turkish politics. The mid- and later- 1960s were good years for Turkey. Economic growth was high, and real incomes went up almost continually by an average of 20 percent in the years between 1963 and 1969. One of Demirel's most important achievements was to reconcile the army with rule by civilians who were clearly heir to the Democrats the military had toppled only five years before.²⁷ End of JP was just like DP, and the party was closed with a military coup.

National Vision Movement (Views of Ummah Movement) had quite a different role in Turkish politics. Different scholars made different remarks about to what extent representatives of a conservative movement, which adopts political extent, can assist or harm democratization in Turkey. For instance, Özdemir argued that after 1980, the Welfare Party was the political party to make the most progress for women's rights. Starting its political life with an Islamic discourse, WP made a considerable progress with regards to "women's participation in the public sphere", which Islamic scholars, whose opinions the party adopts, opposed.²⁸ Inarguably, entering political life and expressing their ideas freely by women is a significant development for the democratization in the country. Suggesting that Views of Ummah Movement in general and WP, specifically, adopted favorable policies, Yavuz also made the following remarks on this subject: As far Turkey in 1990's is concerned, looking at election results, we understand that poor and newly urbanized masses preferred to be recognized and known as Muslims. This choice was inspired by WP's Fair Order motto.

²⁵ Zürcher, *ibid.*, p. 245-246.

²⁶ Tunçay, *ibid.*, p. 159.

²⁷ Zürcher, *ibid.*, p. 250-251.

²⁸ Hakan Özdemir, "28 Şubat arifesinde ve Ertesinde İki Milli Görüş Partisi: Refah Partisi-Fazilet Partisi", *Süleyman Demirel University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences Journal*, V. 20, p. 2, Isparta, 2015, p. 173.

Therefore, the Party suggested an institutional framework for social movements, which seek to redefine and transform silent and suppressed movements and social, cultural and political interactions in Turkey.²⁹ Kevin Boyle, on the other hand, emphasized the fact that WP's Islamist attitude polarized the country substantially and caused tension.³⁰ Kongar also suggested that the 1955-1999 period, which was marked by the most glorious terms of Views of Ummah Movement and WP, was, in fact, one of the most depressed periods in country's history. He attributed this depression to the policies pursued by WP and argued that these policies damaged the country's democratization substantially.³¹

When studies conducted on the Justice and Development Party (AKP) are considered, it seems a very dramatic picture. It can be seen in almost all resources that ruling period of AKP, which came to power in 2002 until 2010 was emphasized as the most successful period of the country's history considering the democratic concepts.³² On the other hand, several resources suggest that after 2010 plebiscite, AKP become an authoritarian party and started to do away with the achievements gained.³³

It will be seen while examining the studies related to the subject that they have not studied the subject in general as conservative parties. For example, some of them have studied only on AKP, while others have only focused on the WP. Moreover, some studies are providing information about the whole history

²⁹ M. Hakan Yavuz, "Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Party in Turkey", *Comparative Politics*, October 1997, p. 74-75.

³⁰ Kevin Boyle, "Human Rights, Religion and Democracy: The Refah Party Case", *Essex Human Rights Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 4.

³¹ Emre Kongar, *Turkey in 21st Century*, Issue: 38, Remzi Press, Istanbul, 2006, p. 269.

³² Ihsan Dagi, "The Justice and Development Party: Identity, Politics, and Discourse of Human Rights in the Search for Security and Legitimacy", ed. H. Yavuz, *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, Utah University Press, Salt Lake City, 2006, p. 88; Bilal Sambur, "The Great Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey: The Case of Justice and Development Party and Erdogan", *European Journal of Economic and Political Studies*, 2009, p. 117; Carter Vaughn Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity*, Yale University Press, USA, 2010; Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey A Modern History*, I. B. Tauris, Third Edition, New York, 2013.

³³ Ihsan Yılmaz, *Kemalizmden Erdoğanizme: Türkiye'de Din, Devlet ve Makbul Vatandaş*, Ufuk Publication, Turkey, 2015; Fikri Sağlar, *İçerden AKP Politikaları ve Sıkışan Türkiye*, Siyah Beyaz Publication, 2013; Fikret Başkaya, *AKP Ilımlı İslam, Neoliberalizm*, Ütopya Press, Turkey, 2013; Cüneyt Ülsever, *Manzara-i Umumiye AKP İktidarının Sosyo-Politik Analizi*, Kırmızı Kedi Publication, Turkey, 2015; İlhan Uzgel, *AKP Kitabı Bir Dönüşümün Bilançosu*, Phoenix Publication, Istanbul, 2013.

of Turkish Politics. However, I think that these conservative parties should be handled and compared at the same time. In my opinion, this is one of the ways that we can understand the conservative parties' role and importance in Turkish Politics.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Objectives of the Study

The most important aim of this study is to find out how conservative parties in Turkey affected the democratization process. In addition, information about the democratization experience of Turkey, a country which is the Islamic world's door to the West, reveals the difference of Turkish democratization from that of other democratic countries. Making use of the achievements of the democratization for the sake of peace is among the other aims of the study.

While about 99% of the Turkish public is Muslim,³⁴ yet Turkey is governed on the basis of a secular system. With the establishment of the republic, Turkey's judicial system is founded on the basis of Western laws, inspired by the constitutions of France and Switzerland. Also, the Turkish public is not Arabic. Turkey has a fairly young population with a median age of roughly 29.6.³⁵ 80% of its inhabitants are ethnically Turkic-speaking people, while the rest consider themselves to be Kurdish, Zaza, Arab, Georgian, Armenian, Greek, Jewish, and others. Turkish is the only officially recognized language.

Also, Turkey is the only Muslim country to become a member of the NATO military alliance. Its relations with Israel based on strategic partnership also grant privilege to the country in terms of international relations, particularly with the Arab world. Thanks to these relations, Turkey has contributed to world peace as an intermediary in many issues, particularly the Palestine problem. Turkey has a structure, which sets an example for many Arab countries

³⁴ Central Intelligence Agency website: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/print_tu.html, Date of Access: 18.04.2017.

³⁵ Central Intelligence Agency website: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/print_tu.html, Date of Access: 18.04.2017.

associated with Islam because of the elements of modernity embraced by the country.

In view of all these considerations, it is essential to scrutinize the democratization experience specific to the conditions in Turkey. Examining the positive and negative effects of democratization experience, in which mostly centre-right and conservative parties formed governments, on Turkey itself, Arab countries and indirectly world conjuncture is the aim of this study.

The question "Why conservative parties?" may be posed by many. Except for the single-party regime period from 1923, the year marked by the proclamation of the republic, until the 1950's, the most effective and prominent parties of Turkish political life were conservative parties. The fact that conservative parties were almost the only triumphant of democracy, which became truly meaningful with multi-party elections, made this research more obligatory. Therefore, I focused on the democratization process during the period of conservative parties in Turkey in general terms. As a natural consequence of this, understanding the views of conservative people in Turkey on democratization and explaining these views is among the aims of this thesis.

1.3.2 Fieldwork

In a scientific research, data collection is carried out by means of different techniques, such as making use of literature review, content analysis, and interview. The scientific aspect of a study is determined by the ratio of this data included in the study and data collection method. Above-mentioned data collection methods were used in this study.

The fieldwork surveys were conducted in Turkey and the United States of America. During the fieldwork, numerous interviews were conducted with parliamentarians, some journalists, columnists, and related scholars in several universities. Moreover, interviews were held with scholars, who are expert in the field of Turkish Studies, from different countries, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, and Australia, via email and Skype. Besides the fieldwork, the research relied on written literature including

books, scholarly journals, newspapers, and election bulletins of political parties in Turkey.

The fieldwork surveys were conducted on two occasions in 2015 and 2017; the first one in Turkey, and the second one in the USA. In 2015, the researcher stayed in Turkey due to occupational requirements. During this period, interviews were conducted with certain relevant persons within the bounds of possibility. This is the first stage of fieldwork. The second phase was conducted in various states and cities of the United States during the summer months of 2017. As mentioned above, during these two stages, the researcher tried to stay in contact with the persons, who are experts on the subject.

The researcher relied on interviews and discussions based on qualitative methods of gathering information and data. Before conducting the interviews with these persons, questions were prepared and put into an order chronologically by considering the connection between the subject and persons interviewed. The researcher found it suitable to record his observations related to the place, where the interview was conducted, and other people in the location with specific notes. These field notes registered important observations on various matters which proved crucial in reporting the latest details and facts on the ground. This was preferred and useful considering the fact that research could be beneficial for future studies. Also, since persons interviewed were well-informed about the significance of the subject, they answered each question seriously and did their best to facilitate the process.

Without exception, all the interviewees stated that the subject is very important and valuable. This caused the researcher to assume a significant amount of responsibility, as it became a source of pride. For this reason, for the purpose of objectivity, researcher encouraged interviewees to express their opinions as freely as possible and provided an environment accordingly. At this point, I would like to point out regrettably that some of the persons I interviewed in Turkey acted more timidly compared to those in the USA due to the delicate nature of the subject. The researcher witnessed how current political

conjuncture in Turkey became more oppressive, and how people's freedom of speech was suppressed in a terrifying manner.

Another point must be drawn attention is the strong state of prejudice among the Turkish population. Stigmatizing, categorizing, and labeling people seem to be an ongoing handicap of Turkish people for years. For years, almost all acts, movements, appearance, and lifestyle of people were approached with prejudice and stereotyped. This was seen in all periods in Turkey. However, in recent years, politics in the country has separated and categorized people very sharply; there is a prejudice like 'if the researcher is working with right parties, he/she is a rightist, and if he/she is working with secular parties, he/she is a secularist.' For this reason, some of the persons (they were few) declined interview proposal of the researcher, when they heard that it is about conservative parties in order not to be subject to this stigmatizing and labeling.

Each person has different opinions. Accordingly, each person I interviewed had a different mentality, different objectives, and ideals. It is the researcher's duty to carry out the study being aware of these differences. Interviews were conducted by always keeping this in mind. As an interviewer, the aim was to be as objective as possible.

Throughout the fieldwork, the researcher used Turkish or English to conduct the interviews in both Turkey and outside of Turkey. The fact that the subject of the study is Turkey and the researcher's native language is Turkish provided a great convenience. Besides, the researcher communicated with persons outside Turkey in English, which is a universal language, and interviews were conducted easily.

In the Turkey phase of the field study, the researcher went to Ankara twice in order to interview some ministers and members of parliament. Appointments generally took place in the offices of the interviewees. However, the minister of the Turkish Republic and his wife hosted the researcher at their home in a very humble manner, and the interview was conducted in this environment of hospitality. During visits to Ankara, the researcher visited Grand National Assembly of Turkey and its library, and made use of relevant sources here. The

researcher also reviewed old newspapers at archives of the Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry General Directorate of State Archives. In this way, news and data were collected from the newspapers of the period.

In the USA stage of the field study, interviews were conducted with some journalists and scholars. Like in Turkey, the researcher also had the chance to interview some members of the parliament. These interviews were conducted in different states and cities, such as Boston, New York City, New Jersey, and New Haven. While some of the interviewees were Americans, others were Turkish individuals who had gone to the United States for their studies.

1.4 The Chapters

In this section, I will provide information about the chapters of my study briefly. The study consists of six chapters, the first of which is "Introduction," four main chapters under the titles "*Definition and Process of Democratization in Turkey*", "*Centre-Right Wing Parties in Turkish Politics*", "*The Place and Importance of the Views of Ummah Movement in Turkey*", and "*The Establishment of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) and Its Importance in Turkish Political Life,*" and the last chapter is titled "Conclusion."

In Chapter One, a general view of the thesis subject, the significance of the study, why it was selected and the pivotal ideas used in the thesis are described. In this chapter, the researcher also referred to written literature studies, which are directly related to the study, and a general evaluation of these studies has been presented. After this, aims of the study, and methodologies used have been described in detail. At the end of the chapter, difficulties encountered during the study have been explained under the subtitle "Limitations".

Chapter Two titled "Definition and Process of Democratization in Turkey" describes the subtitles Democratization Process in Turkish Political History, The Tanzimat Reform Era, Single Party Regime, and Transition to Multi-party System (1945-1950). The aim of this chapter is to explain how the concept of democratization was introduced to politics of Turkey, and the changes and

processes of DP until they came to power. In this chapter, the implications of democratization have been explained. The concept of democratization was first introduced to political discourse during the final years of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, information was given from the Tanzimat Reform Era (1839). After this, the process starting from the establishment of the Turkish Republic is described. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, and Single-party period, doubtlessly has a very important role in Turkish political history. Finally, the period of transition to a multi-party system, one of the most significant turning points of Turkish democratization, has been addressed with relevant examples.

In Chapter Three titled Centre-Right Wing Parties in Turkish Politics, the relationship between Centre-Right-Conservatism is discussed. Within this framework, Definitions of Centre-Right and Conservatism, Definition and Development of Conservatism in Turkey, and Centre-Right Parties, namely the Democratic Party, Justice Party, and Motherland Party, have been scrutinized. The aim of this chapter is to find out the positive and negative effects of centre-right wing parties, which have a very effective position in Turkish politics, in Republic of Turkey. The chapter initially discusses the relationship between centre-right and conservatism. The reason for this is the fact that one of the common characteristics of centre-right parties in Turkey is the way they define themselves as conservative. Therefore, I aimed to reveal the relationship between the two concepts. In the continuation of the chapter, identities, and narratives of centre-right parties in Turkey have been explained in detail with interviews from the political- conjuncture of the period. One of the most important aims of this chapter is to find an answer to the question "Why did a complete democratization process not take place in Turkey during the period of centre-ring parties, which dominated Turkish politics for a long time?"

Chapter Four titled The Place and Importance of the "Views of Ummah" Movement in Turkey discusses the subject under National Order Party (1970-71), National Salvation Party, Welfare Party, The Foundation of WP, The Identity of Welfare Party, The Rhetoric of 'Just Order', The Electoral Strategy

and Campaign of The Welfare Party, Local Elections in 1994, General Elections in 1995, February 28 Process and Closure of The WP, Virtue Party and Felicity Party subtitles. Views of Ummah Movement is a movement, which started with the establishment of the National Order Party (NOP) under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan (d.o.d.). NOP became a coalition partner four times between the years 1974 and 1978. After this, in the 1990's, its popularity increased to top levels in many local and general elections under the name of Welfare Party, and, as a result, took a role in many government coalitions. It is an Islamist party, which was able to receive the votes of citizens from all sections of the society during this period. Increasing its popularity and success significantly especially in the 1990's, Welfare Party pursued an unprecedented election strategy and campaign, quite different from other political parties. In addition to this, it also introduced Fair Order rhetoric by developing a very different discourse, which was not only the socio-political program of Welfare party, but also the catalyst of the support from the masses to the party. Furthermore, AKP, which left its mark in the last 15 years of Turkey, and its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, were also inspired by Views of Ummah Movement and learnt politics through this movement. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that Views of Ummah is a movement that deserves a particular attention. One of the aims of the chapter is to find out the reasons of the success achieved by an Islamist movement in a secular country like Turkey and investigate this movement's positive and negative effects on Turkish democratization.

Several subjects, namely AKP: From Its Establishment until 2007 Presidential Election, Conservative Democrat Identity of AKP, Effects of the Period on the Democratization of Turkey, Presidential Election of 2007 and 27 April E-Memorandum have been discussed in Chapter Five titled The Establishment of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) and It's Importance in Turkish Political Life. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the founding leader of AKP, was involved in Views of Ummah movement since his youth. On 14th August 2001, he continued his political life with a new party and a new political attitude. AKP declared its identity as

"conservative democrat." Erdogan, who is known as a conservative person, is now, with his own words, not only conservative but also a democrat. For this reason, I aimed to throw light on the implications of AKP's conservative democrat discourse in this chapter. In addition to this, great achievements were made in the early years of AKP in terms of the democratization of the country. Also, at European Union Summit held on 14th December 2012, a specific date was given to Turkey for entering into negotiations. For the first time, such a thing happened in the history of the Turkish Republic. Evaluating the reforms of Turkey during that period, EU's Enlargement Commissioner Gunter Verheugen made the following statement: "Reforms of Turkey over the course of the last 18 months are more than the reforms in the last 80 years." Therefore, one of the primary aims of this chapter is to answer the question "How was AKP able to achieve a success, which could not be achieved since the establishment of Turkish Republic in terms of democratization, in its early years?"

The final chapter presents the overall conclusion with a new analysis.

1.5 Limitations

The fieldwork encountered certain limitations. During the period in which the researcher started to study in Turkey in 2015, he tried to collect data for fieldwork as much as possible. The main plan was to focus on fieldwork in the second and third years of the study. But, in countries like Turkey, political circumstances change very rapidly. After the military coup attempt on July 15, 2016, the government declared a state of emergency. President Erdogan has been making a bad situation worse by using the failed coup as an opportunity to expand his own political power. As a result, 15 universities and thousands of educational establishments, including the university where the researcher was working, were closed. The government started arresting a wide range of opponents that had nothing to do with the coup. Journalists, secularists, scholars and government officials who did not agree with president Erdogan's vision for Turkey were arrested. More than 50,000 people like this were arrested. More than 150,000 civil servants, military officers, teachers, policemen, doctors,

prosecutors, even judges have been removed from their job and many of them have been arrested. I just want to give an example and explain the situation. Incredibly it was reported that Turkey would release 38,000 criminals from prison to make room for those taken into custody in these purges letting murderers, rapists, and thieves go in order to make room for political opponents.³⁶ After all these experiences, the researcher decided it more rational to leave the country after his university was closed. So, it became risky for the researcher to go to Turkey because of the possibility of being unable to leave the country to return back to the university in Kyoto. The researcher tried to compensate for this shortcoming in the Turkey stage of field study through the field study conducted in the USA and with the interviews made with several individuals on the internet. But hopefully, in the near future, the political situation in Turkey will improve and the researcher will further his work and gain value through a more detailed field study. This is the researcher's greatest wish.

³⁶ For more information see. Stockholm Center for Freedom, Available at: <https://stockholmcf.org/>.

CHAPTER TWO: DEFINITION AND PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN TURKEY

2.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide information about how the concept of democratization was introduced to the Turkish politics, and the transformation and processes of the Democratic Party until they came to power in 1950. While the etymological meaning of democracy is "public power," it took on very different meanings in today's societies and become a concept, which is used for describing different applications as a result of long discussions on its meaning, implications, and forms of implementation. Therefore, I am of the opinion that the field of this concept must be limited and evaluated by considering the applications. It can be suggested that democracy is a dialogue regime. Closed societies, wherein dialogue is not developed, cannot create a democratic culture. Therefore, fundamentalism is always under threat in a cosmopolitan communication world, because it is the rejection of dialogue in situations, where reconciliation is possible with dialogue. Dialogue and reconciliation culture of democracy is a regime, which levels extremism and radicalism and integrates extreme ends to the system.³⁷

Democratization is the transition to a more democratic political regime. It may be the transition from an authoritarian regime to a full democracy, a transition from an authoritarian political system to a semi-democracy, or a transition from a semi-authoritarian political system to a democratic political system. The outcome may be consolidated, or democratization may face frequent reversals. Different patterns of democratization are often used to explain other political phenomena, such as whether a country goes to a war, or whether its economy grows. Democratization itself is influenced by various factors; economic development, history, and civil society. The ideal result of

³⁷ Hicret Aydın, "On The Bases of Conservative Thought The Perception of Democracy and The Example of Justice and Development Party in Turkey", Pamukkale University Institute of Social Sciences Department of Public Administration, postgraduate Thesis, Denizli, August 2008, p. 47.

democratization is to ensure that the people have the right to vote and have a voice in their political system.³⁸

Democratization means building a democratic structure in a society, strengthening it, and, more importantly, running it in a healthy way. According to Charles Tilly, "Democratization is a process that, in essence, means a change in favor of the antagonists in relations between those who are not allowed to participate in government administration. The Main elements of the democratization process include more involvement of the governed in state and political decision-making mechanisms and trying to limit the arbitrariness of state organs to legal and institutional mechanisms."³⁹

In order for a society to become democratic in a real sense and permanently, it is imperative that the society has the necessary conditions to be found in a democratic society.⁴⁰ In a more concrete form, for example, the fact that Europe has lived through some periods of time; reform, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the process of industrialization are the basic conditions for the formation of a democratic environment and process. Thus, society should be freed from prejudices based on religious rhetoric, the boundaries of intellectual vision horizons must expand, and the value of individual freedom must become understandable. Otherwise, the democratic structure that is trying to be set up from below in societies that do not have these processes will be short-lived, can be destroyed by small fluctuations, or cannot become rooted and permanent.⁴¹ As long as the democratic society does not have the consciousness of adopting democracy, it can be said that there is no chance of continuing democratization in that society. The inability of democratization to become sufficiently rooted in Turkey, failure to become institutionalized and gain continuity is based on this.

³⁸ Conversi, *ibid.*, pp. 247-262.

³⁹ Charles Tilly, *Contention and Democracy in Europe, 1950-2000*, Cambridge, 2003, p. 14-15.

⁴⁰ Conversi, *ibid.*, pp. 247-262.

⁴¹ Tilly, *ibid.*, p. 14-15.

One of the most important characteristics of democracy is political participation and elections. In terms of participation in political life, a fundamental principle is the freedom of political choice. The citizens are free to become a member of any political party they want, vote for any candidate and think as they wish. These principal characteristics distinguish democracies from authoritarian and totalitarian systems. Democracy refers to a system, in which political power is held by representatives and representative institutions elected by citizens, who have the ultimate authority and say, and assigned officers to comply with them.⁴²

Within the scope of political institutions, three principles are important in a democracy: Recognition of fundamental rights which must be respected by the power, social representation of administrators and their policies, and citizenship, that is, the sense of belonging to a community, which is based on law.⁴³ According to Gozler, in order for a state to be democratic, it must fully abide by the wishes of the entire society. In this theory, real democracies, which are not ideal but come close to reaching the ideal, are addressed. There are 6 conditions for democracy to be realized: 1. Active political authorities take office with an election. 2. Elections must be repeated at regular intervals. 3. Elections must be on the basis of free consent. 4. More than one political party must participate in the elections. 5. The opposition must have a chance to come to power. 6. Fundamental civil rights must be recognized and guaranteed.⁴⁴ In this context, democracy is a system, which is functional on the basis of pluralism, transparency, and participation. In this sense, one must lay emphasis that to what extent politicians in Turkey adhere to these above-mentioned principles.

There are also waves of democratization. According to Huntington, “A wave of democratization is a group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and

⁴² Aydın, *ibid.*, p. 49-50.

⁴³ Alain Touraine, *What is Democracy?*, Translate: Olcay Kunal, Yapı Kredi Publication, Istanbul, 2002, p. 358-360.

⁴⁴ Kemal Gözler, *Anayasa Hukukuna Giriş*, Ekin Publication, Bursa, 2004, p. 112-114.

significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite direction during that period of time. Three waves of democratization have occurred in the modern world. Each wave affected a relatively small number of countries. During each wave, some regime transitions occurred in a nondemocratic direction. Turkey is under the second wave.”⁴⁵ According to Huntington, this second wave of democratization started in World War II. Allied occupation promoted inauguration of democratic institutions in West Germany, Italy, Austria, Japan, and Korea, while Soviet pressure snuffed out incipient democracy in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Turkey and Greece moved towards democracy.⁴⁶

The concept of democracy was first introduced to the political literature of Anatolian lands in the last years of the Ottoman Empire. Understanding the history of democratization of Anatolia will also provide a chance to make an analysis and interpret the current situation of Turkey. Therefore, it is considered to give information about the Tanzimat Period. Turkey started to discuss the democracy and democratization in the last period of Ottoman Empire, especially the Tanzimat (literally meaning reorganization of the Ottoman Empire, was a period of reformation that began in 1839 and ended with the first Constitutional Era in 1876) and Constitutional Era. Between these eras, a large number of reforms had been enacted; guaranteeing the right of life and property to all the Ottoman Empire's subjects, the abolition of slavery, legalization of homosexuality and so on.

After this, the process that took place with the establishment of the Turkish Republic has been explained in detail. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, and Single-Party Period undoubtedly have a very important place in the political history of Turkey. Finally, the period of transition to a multi-party system, which is regarded as one of the important

⁴⁵ Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991, p. 15.

⁴⁶ Huntington, *ibid.*, p. 18.

turning points of Turkish democracy, has been discussed with examples. In this way, the background of democratization quest in Turkey has been summarized.

2.1 Democratization Process in Turkish Political History

2.1.1 The Tanzimat Reform Era

The understanding of democratization can be traced back to very old periods in Turkish society, and the foundations of this can be seen in Turkish states. In Turkish history, the way rulers accede to the throne, their actions, responsibilities towards the nation, services and how they are overthrown when necessary, liability to meet the needs and demands of all sections of society are the most obvious examples for understanding democratization in Turkish history.⁴⁷ Therefore, the most important step for the Turkish nation to adopt democracy was to be taken in the Tanzimat Reform Era, and democracy was to be adopted fully during Atatürk period. It can also be argued that developments in Tanzimat Reform Era made a significant contribution towards the success and settlement of major revolutions in the establishment period of the Republic.⁴⁸

According to David Phillips:

“The Ottoman Empire gradually declined after Suleyman. To stem its decline, beginning in 1839, the Ottoman Empire initiated a process called “Tanzimat”, which means re-organization. Tanzimat was an effort to modernize. It was a strategy to protect against nationalist movements. It also endeavored to address sectarianism that might divide and weaken the empire. In addition, Tanzimat was intended to deter Great Powers from contesting Ottoman rule by allowing greater rights for its subjects. In a bid to modernize,

⁴⁷ Umar, *ibid.*, p. 122.

⁴⁸ Ziya Umur, *History of Turkish Law*, Volume: 1, Beta Publication, Istanbul, 1987, p. 59.

Tanzimat also endeavored to curtail the influence of religion. It was a defense against both internal opposition and external powers.”⁴⁹

The Tanzimat is not a 'Constitution', because 'Constitution' is a main law document, which shows the foundations of a state, relations between state authorities, and their duties. There is no such content in the Edict. However, some of the fundamental principles of modern constitutions (Security of life, property, honor etc.) give it a constitutional quality. For this reason, while it is not a constitution, the edict is considered as a document with constitutional qualities.⁵⁰

Tanzimat was a statement of intent on the part of the Ottoman government, promising to enforce four basic reforms:

- The establishment of guarantees for the life, honor and property of the sultan’s subjects
- An orderly system of taxation to replace the system of taxing farming
- A system of conscription for the army
- Equality before the law of all subjects, whatever their religion.⁵¹

Reform movements in the Ottoman Empire and 18th and 19th centuries were intended to put an end to problematic conditions of Ottoman Empire.⁵² However, although the Ottoman society was open to reforms, the fact that reforms were not intended for radical objectives and defeats of the army caused a domestic restlessness in the country. Above all, since commerce and industrial

⁴⁹ David L. Phillips, *An Uncertain Ally Turkey Under Erdoğan's Dictatorship*, Transaction Publishers, 2017, p. 16.

⁵⁰ Ibrahim Durhan, “Tanzimat Dönemini Hazırlayan Temel Etkenler Üzerine Bir Deneme”, *Atatürk University Erzurum Faculty of Law Journal*, Vol. 5, 2001, p. 66.

⁵¹ Zürcher, *ibid.*, p. 51.

⁵² Zürcher, *ibid.*, p. 53.

bourgeoisie did not develop, Ottoman society was influenced by democracy very late with great difficulties. For this reason, some developments which took place on the subject of democratization and human rights were not the result of the pressure from bourgeois class, but with the support from Western countries and handful of intellectuals who were drifting with the tide of European civilizations as it was with The Rescript of Gülhane in 1839.⁵³

In the 18th century, political, technological and intellectual change in Europe started to leave its marks in the minds of an intelligentsia. The fact that military's failure became evident, chaotic situation in industry and agriculture indicates the inevitability of change. It is interesting to observe that most of the reformists of the 19th century were those who knew Western civilization well. Taking office in the Chamber of Translation and embassies had an influence on their way of thinking. Reforms of this period had a top-down quality, intervening in many spheres including education, health, taxation, military service, bureaucracy, and the order of daily life, and affecting all layers of society.⁵⁴

New arrangements were brought to the press by Printing Regulation in 1857. On 21st October 1860, *Tercüman-ı Ahval*, the first newspaper in the Turkish language, was published. The aim of the newspaper was to provide news in a language that could be understood by the public. A new newspaper named *Tasvir-i Efkar* was published on 27th June 1862.⁵⁵ This newspaper, which was published by Shinasi, one of the writers of which was Namık Kemal, pursued quite a courageous editorial policy. The number of printing houses also increased considerably during this period. The number of printing houses increased to 199 from 1893 to 1907, and to 368 from 1907 to 1917. As the

⁵³ Haluk Ülman, *Birinci Dünya Savaşına Giden Yol ve Savaş*, Imge Publication, Ankara, 1983, p. 59.

⁵⁴ Mustafa Karabulut, "Tanzimat Dönemi'nde Osmanlı'nın Yenileşme Sürecine Bir Bakış", *Journal of Turkish World Researches*, Issue: 187, Istanbul, 2010, p. 129.

⁵⁵ Karabulut, *ibid.*, p. 130.

number of newspapers increased, polemics also started to surface. Intelligentsia shared the common idea that the sultan must look out for his public more.⁵⁶

A great importance was attached to newspapers during the Tanzimat Reform Era. Artists of this period, who claimed that awareness of the public could be raised by this means, continued publishing newspapers to fill the void of closed newspapers. Literacy of the public increased over the course of time. Newspapers, for which Namik Kemal and Ahmet Mithat Efendi wrote, became very popular. Certain subjects, such as liberty, equality, family life, constitutional monarchy, press rights, state administration etc., were among the subjects, which were particularly addressed in Tanzimat newspapers. Newspapers emerged as a better means of communication between intellectuals and the public.⁵⁷

The Tanzimat Reform era saw a number of important changes in the judicial system; many of them related to the changing position of the non-Muslim communities. The canon law of Islam, *the shariah*, was never abrogated, but its scope was limited almost completely to family law and it was codified along European lines in 1865-1888. The Empire had always been ruled under a dual system with sultanic decrees functioning side by side with the Islamic canon law, but Tanzimat statesman created new secular laws and institutions to replace this traditional *kanun system* (law system), mainly where the changing position of the foreigners in the empire or the Ottoman Christians demanded it.⁵⁸

In the education field, secularization was the most important trend in the Tanzimat era. As in the preceding period, priority was given to the creation of professional training colleges for the bureaucracy and the army, the most important being the *Mektep-i Mülkiye* (civil service school) founded in 1859.⁵⁹ These are the positive developments in the Tanzimat era. Reform movements

⁵⁶ Karabulut, *ibid.*, p. 130.

⁵⁷ Karabulut, *ibid.*, p. 130.

⁵⁸ Zürcher, *ibid.*, p. 61.

⁵⁹ Zürcher, *ibid.*, p. 61.

during this period seem to have imitated the Western world in all their aspects. The desire to live like European people caused them to adopt a bling and extravagant life styles. The fact that a significant amount of debts Ottoman Empire received from foreign countries under very adverse conditions were spent on luxurious life dragged the state, which feels the pressure from foreign countries to the highest degree, to a destructive process. Especially the high prices of imported products ordered by high-ranking bureaucrats are remarkable. The way reformist sultans, such as Sultan Mahmud and Abdülmecid, and reformist bureaucrats, like Reşit Pasha and Ali Pasha, used flashy dinner tables they imported from France, and moving from Topkapi Palace to Dolmabahçe Palace are among the most evident examples of this mentality.⁶⁰

Despite the contradictions and problems of Tanzimat Era, it is known that this period had positive improvements with regards to political and legal life. During this era, many achievements, such as the principle of abiding by laws and legality instead of arbitrariness, development of the idea of restricting the boundaries of political power, orientation towards secularism in institutions and rules, facilitating the process of establishing a constitutional process, modernization, and westernization, were gained during this period.⁶¹

It is indisputable that the political parties which are among the indispensable basic elements of the democratic order are important for the development of democratization in the Ottoman society.⁶² It would not be wrong to say that the democratic sub-structure prepared in this period affected the period of the Republic. In other words, this period can be regarded as an important period in the preparation of the sub-structure of the Republic in various matters; Turkish thought life, democratization, women's rights, and press freedom. In this period, considerable developments were made in terms of

⁶⁰ Abdullah Saydam, "Yenileşme Döneminde Osmanlı Toplumunu", *General Turkish History*, Vol. 7, Yeni Türkiye Publication, Ankara, 2002, p. 551.

⁶¹ İbrahim Durhan, "Tanzimat Döneminde Osmanlı Yargı Teşkilatındaki Gelişmeler", *Ege University, Faculty of Law Journal*, Volume: 12, 2008, p. 110-111.

⁶² Ülman, *ibid.* p. 68.

democratization, and in the coming Constitutional Period, Turkish society started to get used to the political parties and the constitutional system.

2.1.2 Single-Party Regime

As a result of the subversion of the Ottoman Empire de facto and National Independence Movement, which started after this and ended with triumph, the Turkish national chose to embrace a new political life. "An Independent Turkish republic based on national sovereignty" was established under the leadership of Atatürk. Democratization process, which started with the abolition of the sultanate, was to continue with naming the regime and implementing more radical reforms. Turkish army made a vital contribution to National Struggle. However, there was no agreement on the regime, which must be established after the triumph.⁶³ Mustafa Kemal's proposition to the Parliament was the proclamation of the Republic and this proposition was accepted.⁶⁴ Thereafter, the name of the state was the Republic of Turkey. The polity of this state was the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*, hereinafter referred to as TBMM).

After First World War, in a country where remains of Ottoman Empire were to be eliminated, significant steps were taken for democratization and popular sovereignty in Turkey even in the initial days of the National War of Independence. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who had an intensive accumulation of knowledge on French Revolution and democracy contributed to this process greatly. He organized congresses at the beginning of the struggle and enabled the opening of TBMM. These are the most obvious proof of the importance he attached to popular sovereignty and democratization.⁶⁵ Atatürk's understanding of democracy became evident in national sovereignty principle. Atatürk is the

⁶³ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, Sarmal Publications, Istanbul, 1995, p. 17.

⁶⁴ Erik Jan Zürcher, *Milli Mücadelede İttihatçılık*, Bağlam Publication, Istanbul, 1995, p. 195.

⁶⁵ Temuçin Ertan, An Analysis on Atatürk's Understanding of Democracy, p. 3. Available at: <http://www.ata.tsk.tr/content/media/01/makaleler/17.pdf>.

first Turkish leader to attribute national sovereignty principle to public opinion. This principle was also shaped by the republican regime.

Atatürk's primary goal was always a democracy and a democratic society also during the republic period. In order to achieve this, multi-party experiments were made at certain intervals for the purpose of developing a new background of society. Besides, the concept of 'election' was always a priority throughout Atatürk's life. Taking office almost in all positions with elections during and after War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal did not accept the permanent presidency offered to him, and he continued his duty after each election with the appreciation of the new parliament.⁶⁶

Having abolished sultanate on November 1, 1922, Atatürk, as I just mentioned above, took a significant step on the road to democratization. Now, it was necessary to abolish the caliphate. A "so-called" caliphate without sultanate was already continuing in turkey until 3rd March 1924. While reformists under the leadership of Atatürk were keeping the Parliament and the government under their control, they know that caliphate was always a threat for democratization. For this reason, Mustafa Kemal came out against the caliphate, and the caliphate was abolished on 3rd March 1924, and caliph was exiled from the country.⁶⁷

In a speech he delivered on 5th November 1923, Atatürk made the following statement: "The only foundations this state relies on our total independence and unconditional national sovereignty. This nation will not ever make any compromises from this sovereignty; they are now awoken."⁶⁸ With this statement, Atatürk emphasized the importance of granting sovereignty to the public.

In 1923, Atatürk established CHP and an important step was taken in country politics. CHP came into power as the party of a single-party government

⁶⁶ Ertan, *ibid.*, p. 3.

⁶⁷ Karpat, *ibid.*, p. 57-58.

⁶⁸ Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri, Volume 2, Ankara, 1952, p. 91.

system, which continued from 1923 until 1945.⁶⁹ In addition to this, Atatürk expressed his opinion on democracy with this statement:

“In governments, which are based on democracy, sovereignty belongs to the public, the majority of the population; the principle of democracy implies that sovereignty belongs to the nation, not anything else. Therefore, political power relies on the source and legality of sovereignty in democracy principle.”⁷⁰

Obvious qualities of democracy principle according to Atatürk can also be seen in his own writings:

“First of all, democracy is essentially political. The democracy we know is particularly political; its goal is to guarantee political freedom by its control over people, who rule the country. Secondly, it is an idea, a matter of mentality. It surely is not a matter of stomach. The government principle also requires a commitment to justice and an idea of morality. Democracy is the love of country as well as fatherhood and motherhood. Thirdly, democracy is essentially a matter of individuality; this quality is citizen's participation in sovereignty with his human qualities. Once for all, democracy is the commitment to equality; this quality is the inevitable result of democracy being individualistic. Beyond any doubt, all individuals have the same political rights. These individual and equalitarian qualities of democracy result into common and equal vote principle.”⁷¹

⁶⁹ Başak Ince, *Citizenship and Identity in Turkey*, London: L.B. Tauris and Co Ltd, 2012, p. 40.

⁷⁰ A. Afet Inan, *Medeni Bilgiler ve Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün El Yazıları*, Turkish History Association Publication, Ankara, 1969, p 29.

⁷¹ Inan, *ibid.*, p. 31.

There is no doubt that the contemporary state of Atatürk is also considered as a democratic state. Understanding of democratization is closely associated with Kemalist thinking of system's principles, such as republicanism, national sovereignty, secularism, and populism. As mentioned above, these expressions, which imply popular government, administration of people, and the public having control over their future, are used as synonymous with democracy. In short, according to Atatürk, in a country, where sovereignty belongs to the nation, the government system must also be based on self-government i.e. democracy.⁷² In this context, Kemalism aimed not only to abolish the personal sovereignty of the ruler but also to replace it with democracy. Kemalist thought system, the way national sovereignty is complemented with populism principle, gives it a democratic implication. Atatürk used the phrase 'democracy' not by ascribing different implications and contents to it, thereby distorting its meaning as was done in some countries, but on the contrary, in its traditional sense, i.e. to express liberal political democracy.⁷³

From the promulgation of the Law on the Maintenance of Order in March 1925, Turkey's government was an authoritarian single-party regime. While the CHP had a rank-and-file organization throughout the country, which its secretary-general led, the members of the national assembly, the cabinet, the prime minister (who was also executive chairman of the party) and the president (who doubled as party chairman) dominated it.⁷⁴ However, when Second Period Grand National Assembly of Turkey was established after First Grand National Assembly of Turkey (1920-1923) completed its duty period, the decision that political regime of the new Turkish State must be a democratic regime continued. Atatürk reiterated his belief in democratic regime in the statements that he made during this period. For instance, in the statement he made to a correspondent of Time magazine: "Existence of political parties is natural in

⁷² Zekai Güner, "Atatürk, Republic and Democracy", *Zonguldak Karaelmas University Journal of Social Sciences*, Volume 2, Issue 3, Zonguldak, 2006, p. 47.

⁷³ Ergun Özbudun, "Atatürk ve Demokrasi", *Journal of Atatürk Research Centre*, Volume 5, Issue 14 (March), 1989, p. 287.

⁷⁴ Zürcher, *ibid.*, 2013, p. 177.

countries, which are based on national sovereignty principle and have republican administration. In the Turkish Republic also, there is no doubt that there will be parties, which supervise each other."⁷⁵ In this environment, a group of parliament members, which left the Republican Party, established an opposition party under the name of Progressive Republican's Party.⁷⁶

In Turkey, a short time after the proclamation of Republic, 1921 Constitution, which reflected the extraordinary conditions of the era, was repealed and a new constitution came into effect on 20th April 1924. The fact that this constitution was not closed to pluralist regime structurally, therefore did not pose a challenge to democratization, democracy experiments with the establishment of Progressive Republican's Party in 1924 could be suggested as the typical proofs of general opinion, which does not ignore democratization during Atatürk period.⁷⁷ According to the constitution, a Parliament elected by the public, a president elected by the Parliament, the Prime Minister assigned by a president from the parliament and a cabinet established by the prime minister, shows that the Turkish Republic is not different from Western democracies on paper.⁷⁸

As mentioned above, Mustafa Kemal, who wanted an opposition named Progressive Republican Party against the ruling party, was satisfied with this development in the beginning. He expressed his satisfaction with these words; "Let them confront us." Let's discuss affairs related to the country."⁷⁹ In another speech, he said: "In our assembly, we give the impression of a dictator with a single party. Western people, who observe our country, say that the regime in this country is party dictatorship. There must be two parties also in our

⁷⁵ Times Magazine, 11 December 1924.

⁷⁶ Ergun Özbudun, Available at: <http://www.atam.gov.tr/dergi/sayı-14/ataturk-ve-demokrasi>, Access Date: 25.04.2016.

⁷⁷ Ertan, *ibid.*, p. 3-4.

⁷⁸ Bülent Daver, "Atatürk ve Sosyo-Politik Sistem Görüşü", *Atatürk in the Light of Contemporary Thinking*, Dr. Nejat Eczacıbaşı Foundation Publications, 2nd Edition, Istanbul, p. 253.

⁷⁹ Füzün Hüsrev Tökin, *Türkiye'de Siyasi Partiler ve Siyasi Düşüncenin Gelişmesi*, Elif Publication, Istanbul, 1965, p. 70.

parliament, a system for supervising the government must be established, and we must be similar to the parliaments of civilized countries.”⁸⁰

The party declaration and program, which was issued to the press on the establishment day of Progressive Republican Party, consisted of documents, which were essentially in favor of liberal democracy in both political and economic terms. From the declaration and program of Progressive Republican's Party, we understand that they embrace republic, democracy, liberalism and national sovereignty and they regarded despotism as the greatest threat.⁸¹

Unfortunately, this multiple party experiment did not last long, and it was considered necessary to take extraordinary measures when Sheikh Said Rebellion,⁸² which started in eastern cities in February of 1925, aggravated to a serious degree; Law on the Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu*) dated 4 March 1925 granted broad authorities to the government, and Independence Tribunals, which were used during War of Independence, abolished afterwards, were established again.⁸³ During these measures, Progressive Republican's Party was also closed on 3rd June 1925 as per the Decree of Council of Ministers. In this sense, what is interesting is the fact that extraordinary measures never resulted in permanent and favorable policies. On the contrary, they were legitimized with the compelling requirements of the conditions. As a matter of fact, in his Civil Information book, Kemal Atatürk stated as follows:

⁸⁰ Tökin, *ibid.*, p. 70.

⁸¹ Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol 2, Istanbul, 1983, p. 452.

⁸² For more information on Sheikh Said Rebellion, see. <http://belgelerlegercektarih.com/2012/05/15/seyh-said-ingiliz-ajani-mi-musulu-nicin-kaybettik-seyh-said-isyani-gercegi/>.

⁸³ Like all political structures, democracy also forms an individual model, which is suitable for its system. This model grants certain rights and assigns certain duties to both individuals and social institutions. This political structure stipulates certain values and asks individuals to share these values. However, when these values are complied with, institutions can perform their duties in accordance with the system. If individuals do not act in accordance with the individual model stipulated by the political system, institutions, which constitute the basis of the political system, will inevitably fail to function. See. Şafak Ural, Democracy Concept, Social Values and Individual, From the transcribed text of 'Philosophical Foundations of Democracy' meeting organized by UNESCO in March, 1988, p. 457.

“Laws such as Law on Treason and Independence Tribunals can be regarded as magnificent measures for the preservation of Republic. Of course, these laws cannot always be implemented. They can only be implemented out of necessity, when it is impossible to prevent threats with other measures.”⁸⁴

In the emergence process of the Turkish Republic, the slogan of the leading politicians was "The dominance belongs to the nation." Also, when the republic was proclaimed, the popular wisdom was: "Republic was there for the public and in favor of the public." The politicians, who claimed that they were there for the public, formed a group under the name of CHP and tried to organize republic and democratization in the country. They worked to become "a people's party, which embraces all sections of the society," as Mustafa Kemal stated. The actual process of settling Atatürk's revolutions commenced during the period when Law on the Maintenance of Order⁸⁵ was enacted. Mustafa Kemal defined Law on the Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükun*) as an authority, which is legal and necessary for the peace and quiet of the country.⁸⁶

After the first experiment for a transition to multi-party system failed, a second step was taken in 1930 as per the 6th article of six actions necessary for transition to ideal democracy, as suggested by Kemal Gözler: "There must be more than one political party."⁸⁷ In line with this objective, Atatürk asked Fethi Okyar Bey, Paris ambassador of the country back then, to establish a party under the name of Free Republican Party on 12th August 1930. Atatürk's letter to Fethi Okyar on this subject is very important for understanding his opinions on democratization:

⁸⁴ Ergun Özbudun, Available at: <http://www.atam.gov.tr/dergi/sayi-14/ataturk-ve-demokrasi>, Access Date: 25.04.2016.

⁸⁵ The lexical meaning of *Takrir-i Sükun* is "Maintenance of Order" The law, which was enacted in 4 March 1925, granted extraordinary authorities to the government against religious conservatism.

⁸⁶ Inan, *ibid.*, p. 56.

⁸⁷ Gözler, *ibid.*, p. 112-114.

“Free negotiation of matters related to the country at the parliament and before the public, well-intentioned people and parties' seeking the high interests of the nation by putting forward their ideas form the system, which I have craved for and favored since my youth... I gladly see once again that we have come together on the grounds of secularism. As a matter of fact, this is the basis, which I always seek and will be seeking subjectively. Therefore, I consider the establishment of a new party, which relies on the same basis and can discuss national matters freely, as one of the fundamentals of a republic. In this respect, I surely considered well of your participation in political struggle following your opinions. During my period as the president, you can be assured that I will perform high and legal duties assigned to me by Presidency justly, objectively and equally to all parties, regardless of whether they are in the government or not, and political activities of your party will not be barred within the framework of secular republic.”⁸⁸

The program of the party includes the following:

- Free Republican Party abides by the principles of republicanism, nationalism, and secularism.
- Taxes shall be decreased in a manner that it does not exceed the economic enterprise capacities of members of the nation and strength of the public.
- The party shall determine the value of Turkish currency urgently, and ensure that foreign capital can enter into the country.
- The party refuses government interventions, which prevent the welfare of the citizens, and all kinds of financial and economic enterprises.

⁸⁸ From Erdun Ozbudun, Çetin Yetkin, *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası Olayı*, Karacan Publicaiton, Istanbul, 1982, p. 52.

- Credits will be given to peasants and farmers with low interest and under convenient conditions.
- Industrial promotion law shall be enacted.
- Home products shall be protected, and foreign markets shall be found for these products.
- Direct suffrage system shall be established and right to vote and stand for election shall be granted to women.⁸⁹

This new party, which was established under the leadership of Fethi Okyar, was supported by a large number of people in the society. High level of participation in this society, which advocated liberalism, brought dynamism to politics in the country. However, during Fethi Okyar's visit to the Aegean region⁹⁰, the public shouted against the government, and demonstrations against secularism and revolutions were organized in many places. This situation was interpreted as a potential danger to the detriment of revolutions, which could pave the ground for chaos and outbreaks in the country.⁹¹ Therefore, it was decided to close the Free Republican Party, which was considered responsible for these incidents.

Although this experiment did not end with desirable results, as Maurice Duverger, a prominent French constitutional lawyer and political scientist, suggested, "Even carrying out these experiments is meaningful. Such a thing was out of the question in Hitler's Germany or Mussolini's Italy. Despite everything, these attempts suggest that Atatürk regime highly appreciated pluralism and operated within the framework of a pluralist state."⁹²

⁸⁹ Cemalettin Taşkıran, "Atatürk Dönemi'nde Demokrasi Denemeleri (1925-1930)", Ankara University, Institute of Atatürk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution, *Atatürk Yolu Journal*, Issue 14, 1994, p. 261.

⁹⁰ The Aegean Region is one of the seven geographical regions of Turkey. It is located in the western part of Turkey.

⁹¹ Taşkıran, *ibid.*, p. 261.

⁹² Ergun Özbudun, Available at: <http://www.atam.gov.tr/dergi/say1-14/ataturk-ve-demokrasi>, Access Date: 25.04.2016.

Although these initiatives for a transition to multi-party democracy are regarded as unsuccessful in political terms, yet it can be suggested that they also had positive effects for interiorizing of the idea of opposition by the public.

Putting aside the unsuccessful three month Free Party attempt, Turkey was ruled under a one-party regime from the closing of Progressive Republican Party until the transition to multi-party regime towards the end of 1945. In Turkey, single-party was not legitimized as a permanent and desirable model. On the contrary, it was regarded as a temporary regime, applied due to inevitable conditions, which would be replaced by pluralist democracy when the time comes. As the attempts in this field suggest, multi-party political democracy was preserved as an ideal to be achieved. According to Duverger, which I would like to refer to for the purpose of justifying my argument, "Primary characteristic of Turkish single-party is its democratic ideology. This ideology never had the qualities of a Sect or Church as Fascist or Communist ideologies did or imposed any faith or mystical elements on its members. A rational attitude of the party's administrative members brought them closer to the liberalism of the 19th century. Even 'republican' in its name brought this party closer to the French Revolution and terminology of the 19th century, more than authoritarian regimes of the 20th century. The argument of authority, which is seen in fascist regimes every day, was replaced by the defense of democratization in "Kemalist Turkey", which is not a 'new' democracy portrayed as 'populist' or 'social,' but a traditional political democracy.⁹³

Certain initiatives were taken for the sake of achieving democratization even after Free Party attempt failed. For instance, in 1931 and 1935 elections, CHP did not nominate some of its deputies as candidates, and these chairs were allocated for independent candidates. CHP declared transition to universal direct suffrage system as one of their objectives in both their program declaration accepted in 1927 Congress and also in the program accepted during 1931 Congress:

⁹³ Özbudun, *ibid.*, Date accessed: 25.04.2016.

“Applying universal direct suffrage is among our primary aim. However, we consider granting our citizens the freedom to elect persons, whom they know closely and trust, more appropriate for the genuine purposes of democratization.”⁹⁴

As far as Atatürk period is concerned, although single-party system seems to be valid in political practice, yet attempts were made for the transition to multi-party political life. This, as a principle, suggests that this period was not close to the pluralist regime. As a matter of fact, establishing an opposition party, even thinking about this, constituted a crime. The existence of single-party was a contemporary application as much as it was compulsory practice for the education of the nation and the success of modernization efforts in general. The primary aim was a transition to the multi-party and free system. As mentioned earlier, for achieving this objective in a shorter span of time, Atatürk tried a multi-party regime two times but was unsuccessful in these attempts.⁹⁵

Attempts to restore normal political conditions were not successful after any revolution in the world. Sometimes, strict measures had to be taken in order to remove the traces of Ottoman Empire, strengthen the newly established republic and impose fundamental principles, particularly secularism. As distinct from Ottoman reformists, Atatürk wanted to end old-new discussions and never failed to forget the fact that he was a revolutionary while he was doing this. The primary goal of Atatürk, who was the founder of a nation, was not to switch to democracy, but he was taking measures to protect the existence and independence of the state that he founded.⁹⁶

After the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the architect of National Struggle and Turkish Revolution, on 10th November 1938, İsmet İnönü, the leader of the political group that took over power in Turkey, became one of the

⁹⁴ Özbudun, *ibid.*, Date accessed: 25.04.2016.

⁹⁵ Ertan, *ibid.*, p. 6-7.

⁹⁶ Ertan, *ibid.*, p. 7.

most important figures of single-party system by receiving “*National Chief*” title at CHP extraordinary meeting convened on 26th December 1938.⁹⁷

During the National Chief Period, The Tithe, which was repealed by Atatürk in order to release the burden of poor peasants, who constituted 80% of country's population although it was vital for the early years of the state, was brought back under the name of Agricultural Products Tax, which put this section of the society into a great trouble.⁹⁸ Also, Turkey, which was affected by the difficult conditions of Second World War, resorted to restricting social and economic freedoms during this period through various laws such as National Protection Law, Asset Tax Law, and Press Law.

2.1.3 Transition to Multi-Party System 1945-1950

Within a few years of the end of the Second World War, Turkey’s political system, economic policies, and foreign relations underwent a fundamental change. In this section, I will examine the factors behind the change and the way it came about.

The political atmosphere of the country did not become milder during the period of Ismet İnönü, who became the President after Atatürk. On the contrary, the regime became more rigid. The government was turned into a party government, and Ismet İnönü, who was the permanent leader of the party and President, was glorified as the symbol of the nation and state.⁹⁹ As a result of these applications, reactions against CHP started to surface in a gradually increasing manner.

Problems caused by the Second World War undermined the single-party system and changed ideas and opinions. During this period, problems were

⁹⁷ Presidency of Republican People's Party, CHP, Extraordinary Meeting, 26.12.1938, Statute Amendment Proposal, Ankara, 1938.

⁹⁸ Cemil Koçak, *National Chief Period in Turkey (1938-1945)*, Yurt Publication, Ankara, 1986, p. 369.

⁹⁹ Karpat, *ibid.*, p. 69.

attributed solely to the single-party system, and idea that an opposition mechanism is needed urgently was favored strongly.¹⁰⁰

Turkish Republic's transition from a single-party system to a multiple-party political model is a problematic subject.¹⁰¹ This is a disputable subject with conflicting arguments like CHP regarded multi-party regime as the ideal for political development and maturation, or level of socio-political development achieved by Turkey paved the ground for a democratic revolution by gradually undermining CHP's bureaucratic tyranny government despite their reluctance to take these steps.¹⁰² These arguments are highly correlated with the political attitudes of today.

In political science literature, models of democratization are described by three terms; reform, coercion, and reconciliation (agreement). In the case of Turkey, it can be suggested that the power reforms the system, and legalized opposition makes compromises when it takes over the power.¹⁰³ In addition to this, it can be said that the process, which started in 1945 and ended in 1950, had a completely civil character, which did not grant any authorities to Turkish Armed Force by any means.

It is seen that CHP drew itself away from the power in a manner that no single-party government did in the political history of 20th century. It is widely accepted in political science literature that single-party model in Turkey is different from fascist and communist one-party system, in that it is a guardianship party. CHP never had authoritarian legitimacy doctrine, always presented legitimacy as an ideal, and 'revolution will be completed with democracy' had always been a part of the official discourse. In this case, the single-party administration's evolving into a competitive multi-party regime is

¹⁰⁰ Rıfıkı Salim Burçak, *Transition to Democracy in Turkey 1945-1950*, Ankara, 1979, p. 33-34.

¹⁰¹ Ertan, *ibid.*, p. 6-7.

¹⁰² Sedat Yaralı, Cumhuriyet'in İlk Yıllarında Demokratikleşme Çabaları, Available at: <http://turkoloji.cu.edu.tr/ATATURK/arastirmalar/yarali.pdf>, s. 225.

¹⁰³ Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges To Democratic Consolidation*, (London; Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), p. 18.

not against its nature. On the contrary, it is in accordance with its political trajectory.¹⁰⁴

According to Hakkı Devrim:

“By the end of the Second World War, Ismet İnönü’s government had become deeply unpopular, even hated by the large majority of the Turkish population for a variety of reasons. The regime had never been popular with the masses. The small farmers in the countryside, who still made up about 80 percent of the total population, had not seen any great improvement in their standard of living, health, education, or communications. If we take something like electrification as a measure of modernization, we note that as late as 1953, the total number of villages that had been linked up to the electric grid was ten; just 0.025 percent of Turkey’s 40.000 villages.”¹⁰⁵

The figures quoted by Hakkı Devrim are quite striking. Now, the necessity of change is inevitable. The transition from a single-party regime to a multi-party system was caused only by the above-mentioned internal factors besides the external factors. Erik J. Zürcher explained these external forces as follows:

“In a very general sense, the defeat of the Axis Powers in the Second World War was in itself a victory for democratic values. The United States of America, a pluralist, capitalist democracy, emerged from the war as the dominant world power and its example could not fail to impress many in Turkey, just as it did in countries all over the world. In April 1945, Turkey took part as a founding member in

¹⁰⁴ Rıdvan Akın, “Türkiye’de Çok Partili Siyasal Hayata Geçiş ve Demokrat Parti İktidarı (1945-1950)”, Available at: [https://www.tarihtarih.com/?Syf=26&Syz=354662&/T%C3%BCrkiyede-%C3%87ok-Partili-Siyasal-Hayata-Ge%C3%A7i%C5%9F-ve-Demokrat-Parti-%C4%B0ktidar%C4%B1-\(1945-1960\)-/Dr.-R%C4%B1dvan-Ak%C4%B1n-](https://www.tarihtarih.com/?Syf=26&Syz=354662&/T%C3%BCrkiyede-%C3%87ok-Partili-Siyasal-Hayata-Ge%C3%A7i%C5%9F-ve-Demokrat-Parti-%C4%B0ktidar%C4%B1-(1945-1960)-/Dr.-R%C4%B1dvan-Ak%C4%B1n-)

¹⁰⁵ Hakkı Devrim, *Encyclopedia of Turkey 1923-1973*, Vol. 2, Kaynak Publication, İstanbul, 1974, p. 583.

the San Francisco conference and, in signing the UN charter, committed itself to democratic ideals. There were, however, more immediate reasons why the Turkish government felt compelled to move closer to the West, especially to the USA.”¹⁰⁶

Just as Erik J. Zürcher suggested, after the World War II, a defeat of totalitarian regimes, such as Germany, Italy and Japan, caused the rise of democratization movement across the world; a factor that drove political and economic liberation in Turkey, and forced the administrators of Turkey to reform the regime. What is more, the winning side of the war were Western countries, which adopted democracy.

These are the external factors, which caused Turkey to embrace the multi-party system. Apart from these, it is certain that there are internal factors. Economic reasons could be listed among the most important factors.¹⁰⁷ Just as an example, although Turkey did not enter the Second World War, it was affected by all the negative developments caused by the war; military spending during the war-damaged national economy considerably. During the war year, citizens went through expensive living conditions, poverty, and various abuses. In a country, which did not enter the war, the expansive living conditions, which were not observed in countries which went into the war, caused an increasing dissatisfaction with the CHP government.¹⁰⁸ This led to a search for a new system, a new party.

Social reasons could be added to internal factors, which paved the ground for the adoption of the multi-party system. For instance, peasants were the section of the society, which was affected by social problems most. In 1945, 83% of the total population was living in villages.¹⁰⁹ Single-party power's

¹⁰⁶ Zürcher, *ibid.*, 2013, p. 208.

¹⁰⁷ Devrim, *ibid.*, p. 583.

¹⁰⁸ Ercan Haytoğlu, “Türkiye’de Demokratikleşme Süreci ve 1945’te Çok Partili Siyasi Hayata Geçişin Nedenleri (1908-1945)”, *Pamukkale University Faculty of Education Journal*, Issue: 3, 1997, p. 51

¹⁰⁹ Karpat, *ibid.*, p. 91.

pressure on the peasantry increased, and peasants started to go through an indescribable lack of liberty period. During this period, the peasants, master of the nation, were complaining about gendarmerie, tax collectors, and agricultural product taxes. Ercan Haytođlu's example on this subject is quite dramatic:

"Those who could not pay road tax of six lira were forced to work on the roads and mines for days, and peasants were not able to meet their urgent needs due to the oppression of economic structure."¹¹⁰

Ismet İnönü, who was aware of all this, worked with CHP before 1946 elections and delivered speeches in Eskisehir, Aksehir, Erzincan, Kars, Trabzon community centers and other regions from May until July intended for familiarizing the public with the democratic environment, which would be brought by the transition from direct suffrage system to the multi-party system.¹¹¹

With the establishment of DP in 1946, a new period started in the political history of Turkey. I avoided details on this subject in this section, since DP will be discussed in the next section in more detail. However, in Turkish history, the first election, which was based on direct suffrage, open ballot, secret canvass and simple majority principles, was held on 21st July 1946.¹¹² 1946 election is very important since it was the first attempt for multi-party system after two unsuccessful experiments. In this election, which was the first the multi-party system experiment of Republic history, although elections were controversial, CHP won 397 seats, DP won 61 seats, and independent candidates won 7 seats in the parliament.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Haytođlu, *ibid.*, p. 51.

¹¹¹ Mustafa Albayrak, *Democrat Party in Turkish Political Life (1946-1960)*, Phoenix Publication, Ankara, 2004, p. 33.

¹¹² Mustafa Albayrak, "Türkiye'de Demokrasiye Geçiş Yılları ve Demokratikleşme Sürecinin İlk On Yılı", *Ankara Bar Association Journal*, Issue: 1, 2014, p. 299.

¹¹³ TUIK, 2012, p. 4, 8, 25.

2.2 Conclusion

No historical event and period can be addressed or analyzed independent of the previous events and periods. From this perspective, before drawing any conclusions about the political regime of Atatürk period, one must analyze the establishment process of the republic, and social, political and economic structure taken over from the Ottoman Empire.

The process of democratization in the Turkish society began with the reform movements of the Ottoman Empire, and this process gained momentum particularly during the Tanzimat reform period when international relations increased. Although Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, was a republican and democratic leader, yet Turkey could not achieve a completely democratic structure during the period marked by his personality. As far as the practices are concerned, he is portrayed as an authoritarian one-man. However, Atatürk directed the society towards democratic institutions and concepts. Traces of his ideas were observed in steps taken for democratization in later years of turkey. When the democratic condition during Atatürk period is questioned within the framework of universal principles, although deficiencies in a political democracy are indisputable, the existence of social democracy, which developed as a result of the efforts of creating a modern society, is beyond argument, because modernization is a step for democratization in its own right.

According to present measurements, the record of the Ataturk era in the press, politics, and university is far from being brilliant, but it is not black. In spite of everything, there was a lively press life, a discussion environment, while being closed to a religious right. In politics, while it was a single party order, the two attempts for the multi-party system show that there was a political attitude that was not considered positively towards totalitarianism. On the other hand, the basic steps that we can call brilliant in terms of women's rights have been taken and the infrastructure of today's democracy has been established.

A significant point that must be understood is that single-party was not legitimized as a permanent and desirable model in Turkey. On the contrary, it

was considered as a temporary regime, which was resorted out of necessities to be replaced by pluralist democracy when the time comes. As the experiments in this field show, multi-party political democracy was preserved as an ideal to be achieved. Although Atatürk wanted the country to adopt multi-party regime, but both attempts were unsuccessful. Establishment of a party, which could be rival to CHP, was an actual condition. However, since political, economic and social balance of the state and newly established republic was not settled well, upheaval took place within a short period of time, and malicious people intervened in the process, dragging the country into a state of political anarchy. For this reason, two movements, which started in 1924 and 1930, had to be abolished.

After the period of Atatürk, İnönü was elected to the presidency. Turkey has endeavored to approach the western states, and while it pursued a balanced policy during the war, towards the end of the Second World War, cooperation was made with the Western countries that won the war. Democratization movement in Turkey has been revived under the influence of sometimes internal and sometimes external pressure. At the beginning, these external influences were the threats of Soviet Russia and the politics of rapprochement with the Western states, especially the USA.

It was not easy to create a republic regime which is embraced as an inseparable aspect of the new state after a state like the Ottoman Empire, which ruled over Anatolian lands with autocracy. However, as one would appreciate, it was a considerable success, which was attained despite all these deficiencies and problems. All individuals from each section of society could stand as candidates through free elections and take positions in the most responsible authorities of the state as a result of these elections. Each step taken was in accordance with the essence and structure of the republic. Inconvenience of the conditions was the only reason why these developments were delayed. No step backward was to be taken on republican path at all costs. This was the goal of democratization.

On the other hand, single-party regime in the country did not leave good impressions in the minds of Turkish people. Policies of single-party regime, especially those implemented by Ismet İnönü, caused a serious reaction on the part of the public. Taxes received from the public and practices of politicians who interpreted secularism as prejudice to the religion attracted public reaction.¹¹⁴ Due to the policies pursued during this period, which can be considered more moderate compared to other fascist dictators of the period such as Mussolini and Hitler, even AKP can use past mistakes as a trump against CHP.

As one can infer from the statements of Ismet İnönü: “All revolutions did not form as the works of a dictatorship regime, they all were established with the laws of TBMM, and accountable for the audits and supervisions of TBMM.” In the opening speech of TBMM on 1st November 1945, a serious and sincere struggle was given for the republic and democratization even during the transition process. The fact that elections took place at four year intervals although there was not an opposition shows the struggle given for the continuation of democratization and ensuring that the public embraces democracy.

¹¹⁴ Devrim, *ibid.*, p. 585.

CHAPTER THREE: CENTRE-RIGHT WING PARTIES IN TURKISH POLITICS

3.0 Introduction

Each society forms its social structure as a result of various problems and by confronting these problems. This, in a way, is a supply-demand phenomenon. When the process in Turkey is analyzed from the past to the present, it is seen that centre-right and conservative parties have always received the support of the public. Of course, there are some reasons behind the public support for the centre-right parties in the background of the issue. Given the fact that most of the Turkish population has conservative values, it will be clear that the central right-wing parties have received more votes during the historical process. That is the reason why the symbols of religion and religious discourses started to be voiced in the political arena by leaders after the multi-party political system in Turkey. The most successful parties that appeared in this frame in Turkish politics are listed as the Democratic Party, Justice Party, and Motherland Party. These political parties were able to win a large majority of votes in almost every election from 1950 to 2002.

When the emergence of centre-right parties in Turkey is studied, it is seen that emergence of centre-right parties is correlated with the conditions of the period after Second World War, economic policies, and social structure of Turkey. Centre-right policy is acknowledged as the political representation of beliefs, value judgments and life-styles of a vast majority of the public. Centre-right parties pursue a path, on which they combine liberal policies with the beliefs and lifestyles of society within the framework of modernization. This road-map was maintained by adapting to new conditions to a great extent. DP and other centre-right parties followed a similar political concept to a certain extent. A centre-right political understanding primarily consists of economic liberalism, religious sensitivities and nationalism formed.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Hüseyin Çavuşoğlu, "The History of the Centre-Right Spectrum in Turkish Political Life", *Firat University Journal of Social Science*, Volume 19, Issue 2, Elazığ, 2009, p. 266.

In this chapter, the centre-right wing's role in Turkish politics will be discussed. However, since I am discussing how democratization process in Turkey was affected during the period of conservative parties from the perspective of this study's research question, so it was considered suitable to address the relationship between centre-right parties and conservatism in Turkey. In addition to this, the question of whether there is any difference between how the term conservatism is perceived in Turkey and Western countries will be discussed. After this, information about Democratic Party, Justice Party and Motherland Party, which were the most successful right parties from the early years of the country, under the title of Centre-Ring Parties in Turkey will be provided.

3.1 The Relationship between Centre-Right and Conservatism in Turkey

The primary reason why the centre-right party is associated with conservatism is certain parameters which conservative thought contains within itself, and centre right's political approach, which corresponds to these parameters. While these are not determinants in the strictest sense of the word, there are some criteria, which define conservative thought and distinguish it from other thought systems.

Conservatives think that the source of reality is based on experience and history besides intellect. Within this context, against Enlightenment Period's approach, which praises mind, conservative thought argues that traditions and habits are also important. In conservative thought, tradition reflects the wisdom accumulation of the past as an important theme. Institutions and practices of the past were subject to the tests of time. Therefore, it must be protected for the benefit of current and future generations.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Heywood, Andrew, "Siyasî İdeolojiler", trans. Ahmet Kemal Bayram, Ankara, Adres Publication, 2010, p. 87.

Karl Mannheim defined conservatism as a conscious traditionalism.¹¹⁷ This definition embraces tradition as a reality and also chooses elements, which comply with the conditions of the day. An important reason why conservative thought attaches importance to tradition is the fact that tradition gives an identity to society as well as an individual. The essence of this identity is customs and practices. Tradition gives a person a feeling of belonging and origin. In this context, tradition, which is regarded as an important theme by conservative people, creates unity and integrity by connecting the society on the basis of historical foundations, and the stability of the society relies on this unity.¹¹⁸

Another theme, on which conservative thought is built, is the society itself, which is enriched with the accumulation of the past. With these qualities, society is regarded as an aspect, which is more important and effective than the individual. What is more, it is family, which is the richest prototype model that protects the moral values of society. For this reason, conservative thought regards the family structure as an institution, which must not be neglected.

Another phenomenon, which conservatism attaches importance to, is religion. If a society is alienated from religion, it turns into a soulless and inanimate sculpture, because religion has the qualities of cement, which bonds individuals of the society together.

All these parameters refer to conservatism's normative suggestions related to the political field, and the way Centre-wing is inspired by these common grounds reveals its organic bond with these elements. The centre-right parties have always relied on national will throughout their political life and have generally respected the religion, culture, customs, and traditions of the public.

Following arguments can be suggested for two common characteristics of centre-wing parties: First of all, political principles pursued by centre-right parties consist of liberal economic policies, respect for the beliefs and values of

¹¹⁷ See. Karl Mannheim, *Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953, p. 98.

¹¹⁸ Veysel, *ibid.*, p. 20.

the society, and nationalism. Secondly, the majority of the achievements of centre-right parties depend on their leaders.¹¹⁹

Basically, “the conservatism of the Turkish right parties” depends on the belief that while getting the technology emanating from the West in an effort to catch up with it and reach the level¹²⁰ of contemporary civilization, Turkish peoples’ self-values that they are an indispensable part of themselves should not be abandoned.

The tolerance towards religion by the center-right political parties is mainly due to the voting potential. The votes of the people of the traditional religious values are usually one of the most important considerations for the right-wing parties. Religion, which is the institution that provides social stability and order, is one of the most valued institutions for the conservative ideologies. The Turkish modernization, which is accepted as "conservative modernization", has given strategic importance to religion, because it is aware that religion is an institution that provides social solidarity.¹²¹

In Turkey, people who hold traditional beliefs have generally voted to those parties, which respect religion. Also, people who hold these beliefs have always supported conservative or liberal parties against CHP under all circumstances. Considering the fact that a vast majority of the Turkish population protects these values, it will be seen clearly that the centre-right parties received more votes throughout the historical process. For this reason, since Turkey's transition to the multi-party system was completed, parties have used religion and religious symbols in the political arena.

I find it useful to explain the meaning of conservatism, centre-wing and conservatism in Turkey to provide further details.

¹¹⁹ Çavuşoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 277.

¹²⁰ “Reaching the level of contemporary civilizations” is an aim stated by the founding father of the newly-established Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. “The level of contemporary civilizations” refers to “the highest level of civilization of the age”. For more details, see. Aydın Sayılı "Atatürk and our National Culture", *Erdem Journal*, Volume 6, Issue 17, May 1990, p. 326.

¹²¹ Feroz Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde Türkiye 1945-1980*, Hil Publication, Istanbul, 1994, p. 16.

3.1.1 Definitions of Centre-Right and Conservatism in General

Centre-right politics are the politics that lean to the right of the left–right political spectrum but are closer to the center than other right-wing variants. Generally, it embraces liberal economic views. The centre-right politics can be called conservative, conservative democratic or liberal democratic. When we look at the meaning of the center-right politics, we can clearly see that it has some differences between Europe and Turkey. For instance, in Europe, closeness to the center is measured by nationalism and conservatism based on tradition. In Turkey, however, it is measured by secularism. What distinguishes centre-right and other right parties from each other is their stance against extremities. While centre-right parties are completely close to extremities, others are parties, which can embody extremities to a certain extent, with more tolerance to radical ideas. The centre-right is to reach a common ground, maintaining balance in everything. Centre-right parties' closeness to the public combined cultural differences together. Basic elements of centre-right are achieving harmony between local values and universal values and laying bridges, which connect the public to the state and political life.¹²²

The beginning of conservatism as a "thinking style" and "attitude" can be traced back to the beginning of the history of humanity. However, conservatism does not have a long history as a political doctrine and specific ideology. The birth of this type of conservatism is the 18th century, which is known as the age of enlightenment. The reaction to the French Revolution and the criticism directed against those who laid the intellectual and philosophical basis of this revolution gave rise to this conservative ideology.¹²³

The word conservatism originated from 'consarve' in Latin, which means protection, preservation, and safeguarding. The concept of conservatism first emerged in France. A local newspaper published in France in 1818 was named 'Conservative.' Afterward, in England, a party was established under the name of "Conservative Party" in 1832 in the place of "Tories" and the concept of

¹²² Şakir Süter, *Merkez Sağda Tapu Kavgası*, Maviyağaç Publication, Istanbul, 2004, p. 53-62.

¹²³ Berat Özipek, *Muhafazakarlık: Akıl, Toplum, Siyaset, Liberte*, Ankara, 2004, p. 66.

Conservative started to be used more commonly in England. Conservatism started to bear the qualities of a more social and political doctrine over the course of time.¹²⁴

As a political ideology, conservatism is based on the French Revolution.¹²⁵ The chaos and violent acts caused by French Revolution gave rise to conservative criticism. Conservatism, which has a rich philosophical accumulation in the intellectual history of Western civilizations, is a modern ideology with anti-modern qualities. This political ideology generally stands up for experience, tradition, social and religious institutions against enlightenment mind and understanding.¹²⁶

Many scholars commonly hold the opinion that conservatism is all about the values. Some of these values are related to political, economic structures, and institutions. However, when daily politics is in question, conservatism's relationship with the status quo becomes prominent. "Preserving the status quo" becomes important.¹²⁷ Burke, who is considered to be one of the founders of conservatism as an ideology, determined two characteristics of conservative thought, which are still valid today. These are the importance of religion, treating persons unjustly for the sake of reforms, authenticity, and desirability of rank and duty distinctions, immunity of private property, the idea that society is an organism rather than a mechanism, and, finally, a value of establishing continuity with the past.¹²⁸

Conservatism is a thought system, which emerged in Western Europe in the 18th century as a political idea/attitude and became dominant in the continent as a reaction to Enlightenment.¹²⁹ The main source of conservative thought's

¹²⁴ Philippe Beneton, *Conservatism*, Transl: C. Akalın, İletişim Publication, İstanbul, 1991, p. 7.

¹²⁵ Beneton, *ibid.*, p. 9.

¹²⁶ Ramazan Akkır, "Religion and Conservatism in Turkey", Çukurova University Institution of Social Sciences Department of Philosophy and Theology, Postgraduate Thesis, Adana, 2006, p. 1.

¹²⁷ Ali Bulaç, "AKP and Conservative Democracy", Köprü Fikir Journal, 97, 45-54., 2007, p. 25.

¹²⁸ Bengül Güngörmez, "Muhafazakârlığın sosyolog havarisi: Robert Nisbet", *Journal of East-West Thought*, 25, 2004, p. 153.

¹²⁹ Beneton, *ibid.*, p. 9.

arguments is the criticism for Enlightenment philosophy, which started with the Renaissance and Protestant Reformation. Renaissance (15th-16th centuries) paved the ground for questioning the political authority, which was not questioned before, with humanism it brought to Medieval Europe (especially in Italy and France), this also triggered Reform movements and undermined the infinite authority of Catholic Church in religious life. In this way, this process paved the way for individualism, equality, and participation in the administration of the country. After this, the French Revolution added equality, liberty, and national sovereignty to the principle of individualism. Conservatives developed a reactionary attitude towards these principles of liberalism for ethical reasons. This reaction became the opposite of the thinking system, which dominated Enlightenment and Age of Reason in the 19th century. As a result of this, conservatives were able to gain an identity in the process of condemning Modern regime and blessing the ancient regime (the period before the revolution) with feudal origins.¹³⁰

In the second half of the 18th century, significant changes occurred in the social structure of industrialization. Pre-industrial society changed, and major political transformations took place.¹³¹ These formations adopted change instead of stability. These rapid developments, which took place across the world in the 18th and 19th centuries, caused people to criticize all the previous political, social, intellectual and economic formations, and new thinking systems were developed. Conservative thinking also flourished in individuals' state of confusion and concerns and emerged as a movement of thought, which glorifies the virtues of stability and tradition. Conservatism shaped itself and emerged as a modern concept after industrialization and major political transformations.¹³²

Considering the fact that the subject of this study is related to democratization, it is useful to address the relationship between conservatism and democratization. The first aspect to be discussed with regards to the

¹³⁰ Robert Nisbet, "Conservatism", Transl, E. Mutlu, Ayraç Publication, Ankara, 1997, p. 93.

¹³¹ Nisbet, *ibid.*, p. 95.

¹³² Bahadır Türk, "İdeoloji", *Siyaset*, ed. Mümtaz'er Türköne, Lotus, İstanbul, 2003, p. 122.

relationship between conservatism as a political ideology and democratization is that conservatism supports democracy as well as hinders democracy with its certain characteristics, beyond different attitudes exhibited at specific conditions and during specific periods.

According to Stankiewicz, a conservative person:

“Can be interpreted as a person with a democratic perspective. A conservative person refuses the idea that convenient social conditions, which he/she needs, must be existent before. He/she does not accept imposing the democratic institutions and practices of England, America, or Canada to different cultures without any modifications. Their difference does not change conservatives' opinion about the importance of norms and beliefs. When these norms and beliefs are respected, the society will be ready to develop democratic institutions.”¹³³

After Stankiewicz' conception of the conservative person, following arguments must be taken into account as proofs to the fact that conservatism and democracy can be associated. First thing is, as can be seen in Stankiewicz's conservative person definition, the way conservative individuals recognize the diversity of social values and norms in each culture against universality as a democratic perspective. The respect for cultural differences is also among the indispensable characteristics of democratic understanding. As distinct from other ideologies, another aspect of conservatism, which is in favor of democracy, is their strict opposition to irreversible political transformation methods. For a conservative individual, each irreversible action is, by its nature, a malign action, which can result into irreparable conditions even if the primary goal is to solve a solution.

To summarize, a conservative thought emerged as a reactionary attitude to Enlightenment Era, which started with Renaissance and Reform movements and

¹³³ Özipek, *Ibid.*, p. 147-148.

continued with Industrial Revolution. Conservatism, which formed its political attitude and philosophy against the emergence of class-based capitalist societies, equipped itself with opinions against universality and abstract ideas.¹³⁴

3.1.2 Definition and Process of Conservatism in Turkey

In Turkey, "conservatism" is a concept, which is not well-known in political terms, although it is widely used. This concept, which is generally used for religious sections of the society, may imply an offending remark or praise. Although its origin can be traced back to the French Revolution, its meaning is generally not known by the majority of people. In the 18th century, in reaction to the upheavals of the French Revolution (1789), the conservatism began to develop as a distinct political attitude and movement.

Conservatism, which has a well-established tradition in Turkey, is known, and its role is important in the history of political thought. It is generally associated by attributing pejorative implications, such as being religious or against change. However, conservatism, which is a part of modern times with an opposition and carries a rich philosophical legacy in Western history, is among the most important political thoughts, which left their mark on our age.¹³⁵

The era, during which conservatism actually emerged as a political and philosophical narrative in Turkish political thought, is the early Republic period. Early Republic period, which was regarded as the driving mechanism for the destruction of the past, construction of future and a total modernization movement, was also the period, during which conservatism was constructed. Establishment of a nationalist, secular, republican political regime, which owes its political legitimacy to public opinion, the idea of modernization developed parallel to industrialization, urbanization and capitalist economy shaped the

¹³⁴ Aydın, *ibid.*, p. 52.

¹³⁵ Akkır, *Ibid.*, p. 7-8.

political and philosophical environment, into which new conservative attitude of the Republic was born.¹³⁶

Defining the Turkish Revolution as "conservative modernization," Tanıl Bora argued that Turkish modernization developed in company with a conservative attitude and thinking. Set of values dominating Turkish modernization is Kemalism, which has an opposing attitude to positions that perceive themselves as conservative. CHP never accepted the fact that it is a conservative party or it has conservative tendencies. The party is revolutionary, modernist, and progressive. But, this has never been the dominant principle of the party. Positing Turkish modernization and conservatism as opposite elements stem from the fact that conservatism is generally reduced to religious traditionalism.¹³⁷

According to Mahmut Akpınar:

"Conservatism in Turkey contains a little religiousness, a little nationalism, and a significant amount of statism, praising and glorifying the state. Unfortunately, conservatism values in Turkey are not about preserving and protecting history and culture but abusing them. Also, conservatism has always been in the mouths of the leaders and has been used for Machiavelist purposes in order to gain the support of masses. Several conservative leaders, including Kenan Evren, who positioned themselves in the right wing, abused religious symbols, went on a pilgrimage to Mecca, posed for photographs while doing prayer or with Holy Quran in their hands. Right parties in Turkey have always been religious, statist, and Turkist. Almost all centre-right parties had negative attitudes towards Alewi people, Kurds, and other minorities, and had preferred to develop intimacy with them only to the extent that they

¹³⁶ Nazım İrem, "Kemalist Modernizim ve Türk-Gelenekçi Muhafazakarlığının Kökenleri", *Journal of Toplum ve Bilim*, No: 74, 1997, p. 52-53.

¹³⁷ Tanıl Bora, "Muhafazakarlığın Değişimi ve Türk Muhafazakarlığının Bazı Yol İzleri", *Journal of Toplum ve Bilim*, No: 74, 1997, p. 5-16.

can receive their votes. Conservatism in Turkey came about as a reaction to CHP's practices during the single-party period. It is reactionary.”¹³⁸

The concept of "conservatism," which is widely used in the political literature of Turkey, but does not have the same political applications with that of Western countries, is generally perceived as religiousness and commitment to traditions. However, western civilizations perceive that the concept of conservatism is a political ideology, which does not want radical changes, and is especially in favor of preserving class distinctions in the social structure.¹³⁹ As distinct from England, conservatism in Turkey is not based on all dynamics of industrial society. It was conceived in a society, the majority of which was the rural population, which must be modernized and industrialized by the ruling class.¹⁴⁰ Nuray Mert argued that conservatism is, on the one hand, an effort to keep the system away from "criticism and questioning", while, on the other hand, it is activating its own breaking mechanisms to maintain balance for preventing transformations from being traumatic. According to Mert, a centre-right party, which represents the conservative political attitude, bears both of these qualities. In other words, it confronted the criticism and judgments from left and also attempted to soften the reactions to Republican Revolutions.¹⁴¹

Ahmet Çiğdem described Turkish conservatism's the most important characteristic, which distinguishes it from the conservatism in the West as follows:

“Compared to the examples in the West, the formation, which is to be posited in the opposing side of Turkish conservatism, will surely

¹³⁸ The interview with Mahmut Akpınar, 09.07.2017.

¹³⁹ Murat Sezik, *Muhafazakar Siyaset İdeolojisi ve Türkiye’de Muhafazakarlık, I. Türkiye Lisansüstü Çalışmaları Kongresi Bildiri Kitabı*, 29 June-1 July 2012, p. 113.

¹⁴⁰ Nuray Mert, “Muhafazakarlık, Fundamentalizm Değildir!”, *Karizma: Muhafazakarlık Yeniden Özel Sayısı*, Issue: 17, January-February-March 2004, p. 36.

¹⁴¹ Mert, *ibid.*, p. 34.

be Republic. Turkish conservatism's relationship with republic is identical to modernity's relationship with conservatism. Turkish conservatism is a republican ideology and has formed its existence in this process. However, the conservative Turkish intelligentsia did not seek confrontation with the republic like the conservative, who gave a reactionary response to the French Revolution. Here, the fundamental characteristic of Turkish conservatism becomes evident; it is nothing but a political-cultural reactionism."¹⁴²

During my interview, Bill Park, an academician at King's College London, Department of Turkish Studies, compared the conservatism in Turkey with conservatism in the west as follows:

“Conservative or centre-right parties in Europe are generally pro-free market, less welfare and egalitarian oriented. It is perfectly compatible to hold these views and be tolerant towards minorities, women, personal freedoms etc. Also, European conservative parties are generally supported by the materially better off. This is not the case in Turkey, where conservative = religiously conservative, negative towards personal freedoms – and is more common among the poorer sections of society. Old style European Christian Democratic parties were once conservative in a way that resembles current Turkish conservatism, but this is hardly the case any longer. Turkey has not undergone the revolution in social attitude and behavior that Europe has experienced.”¹⁴³

Demir Murat Seyrek made the following statements in the same comparison during my interview:

58. ¹⁴² Ahmet Çiğdem, *Taşra Epiği: Türk İdeolojileri ve İslamcılık*, Birikim Publication, İstanbul, 2001, p.

¹⁴³ The interview with Bill Park, 22.08.2017.

“While conservatism in the West is mostly at peace with secularism and the system, we observe that this hasn't been achieved in Turkey completely. Attempts to abuse politics with religion and abuse religion with politics still continue. With this statement, of course, it is important to emphasize that there are two types of conservatism in Turkey. The first is the group of conservative persons, who do not have any problems with the system and secularism, and who found a place for themselves within the centre-right tradition to a large extent. The second group is the conservatives, who come from a political Islam background and have a problem with secularism and the system. Of course, there are also similarities. When we look at the conservative parties, especially in Central and East Europe (the same applies to Greece and South Cyprus), we can see an effort to shape religion, religious values, and policies around these values. It must also be stated that democracy culture is not well-established in these countries. However, this situation is observed in subject-based policies (abortion, LGBT rights, and women's rights, supporting the church, immigration, anti-refugee movements, and Islamophobia) rather than changing the secular state.”¹⁴⁴

It can be argued that CHP, which was the leading actor of Kemalism, which was a modernization project specific to the conditions in Turkey, tried to implement a radical modernization project throughout the single-party period. Kemalism incorporated many elements, foundations of which were laid in French Revolution, therefore posited against conservative thought, within its political tendencies due to its Unionist political thought, which continued throughout its existence to a large extent. But, it must not be forgotten that different and opposing political tendencies can co-exist. For this reason,

¹⁴⁴ The interview with Demir Murat Seyrek, 20.09.2017.

opposing political ideologies, traditionalism, modernity, conservatism, radicalism co-existed since the early periods of the Republic.¹⁴⁵

Bora, who described the Turkish revolution as "conservative modernization," argued that Turkish modernization was developed for the accompaniment of a conservative attitude and thinking.¹⁴⁶ The paradigm prevails that Turkish modernization is Kemalism and has an attitude, which is opposite to positions that define themselves as conservatives. CHP never admitted being a conservative party or the fact that it has conservative tendencies. The party is revolutionary, modernist, progressive. But, this principle was not always the prevailing attitude. Assuming Turkish modernization and conservatism as opposing elements generally results in reducing conservatism to religious traditionalism.

Another dimension of conservatism during the single-party period is: In Turkey, while conservatives also regard Islam as an educational institution, they also believe that removing religion from social life undermines family bonds and reprobates the moral level of youth.¹⁴⁷ They especially attributed the decrease of respect for elder individuals and increase of materialism to the moral degeneration of young people. According to Turkish conservatives, the best means of education for restoring the moral of society and youth is Islam.

Resorting to providing religious education at schools as a solution to the decrease in commitment to traditional values, CHP defended giving religious education at school by making changes in a manner that fundamental principles of Secularism are not violated, and opening shrines of Sultans to visits.¹⁴⁸

When developments that took place from the establishment of Republican regime until 1990's are analyzed, it will be observed that although a level of

¹⁴⁵ Özgür Gökmen, *Tek Parti Dönemi Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkasında Muhafazakar Yönelimler* (Ed. A. Çiğdem), Muhafazakarlık, İletişim Publication., Istanbul, 2004, p. 132.

¹⁴⁶ Tanıl Bora, *Three Status of Turkish Right*, İletişim Publication., Istanbul, 2003, p. 71-72.

¹⁴⁷ Karpat, *ibid.*, p. 75.

¹⁴⁸ Karpat, *ibid.*, p. 229.

attention changed from time to time, "the regime maintained its politically revolutionary, socially conservative" character as it was during CHP period.¹⁴⁹

The 20th century was an era, which witnessed the rise of conservative discourse. There were parties in countries, such as England and Turkey, particularly the United States, which used the name and arguments of this ideology. In Turkey, DP, JP and particularly ANAP are centre-right wing parties, which used conservative arguments explicitly. I will discuss this subject in further detail under the title Centre-Right Wing Parties in Turkey.

3.2 Centre-Right Wing Parties in Turkey

3.2.1 Democrat Party (DP):

Founded on January 7, 1946, under the leadership of Celal Bayar, Adnan Menderes, Fuat Köprülü and Refik Koraltan, DP was based on beliefs that the political power must depend on the will of the people and superiority of the civil rights and freedoms over those holding power in their hands.¹⁵⁰

The program of the DP, all the founders of which were from the CHP, was divided into two parts: The first part included general provisions, while the second part included governance affairs. The political themes put forward in the first part concentrated on liberalism and democracy. While it was stated in the first article of the program that the DP was established in order to realize a broad and advanced understanding of the democratization in the Republic of Turkey and to ensure that the general politics was carried out with a democratic mindset, the 9th and 10th articles put forward the free and first-degree elections as a way of this.¹⁵¹

The views expressed by the constituent leader of the DP, Celal Bayar, at various occasions allow us to have a fair idea of the ideological inclination of the party. Bayar drew attention to a direct link between the Western civilization

¹⁴⁹ Karpat, *ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁵⁰ Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey in Democracy Process 1945-1980*, Hil Publication, Istanbul, 1994, p. 28.

¹⁵¹ Democrat Party Program, Ankara, 1946, TBMM Library.

and democratization by stating in a speech he made on March 1948 in the province of Erzincan:

“Today’s civilized world has determined democracy to be the best way of governance and cherished it. The works of the world of advanced civilization, which dazzle our eyes and we watch with envy, have come true through democracy. There is no doubt that democracy is the most appropriate administration for human dignity. This means the superiority of the will of the people based on the rights and freedoms of citizens”.¹⁵²

DP boycotted the first local administrations elections it entered after its foundation specifying the anti-democratic nature of the legislation and caused legitimacy problems in the country. Turkey’s first-degree, open voting, secret counting, and simple-majority elections were held on July 21, 1946. The 1946 elections were very important because they were the first elections of multi-party political life after two unsuccessful attempts earlier. As suspicious as they were, in these elections which were the first attempt for a multi-party political life, CHP managed to obtain 397 deputies, while DP and independents obtained 61 and 7 deputies respectively.¹⁵³

In the 1950 elections, when people were asked, “What is your choice?”, if they had the opportunity to assert their opinions, they declared that they were not happy with the political status quo. In 1950 elections, Turkish People gave a landslide victory to the DP in the Republican era’s first-degree, general, secret and equal voting supervised by the competent judicial organs in line with the open counting and simple majority principles. DP’s main discourse in 1950 elections to the people who were fed up with the 27-year-long single-party administration was “Enough, People will Speak!” CHP campaigned for the 1950 elections under the leadership of President Ismet İnönü and the propaganda

¹⁵² DP Chairman Bayar's Speech in Erzincan, *Daily Vatan*, 25 March 1948.

¹⁵³ Turkish Statistical Institute, 2012, p. 4, 8, 25.

materials were organized accordingly. CHP's campaign visual had six arrows, two men and two women. At the bottom of the visual was the message "Atatürk and İnönü are the leaders of the CHP, Let's Vote for their Party".¹⁵⁴ As can be seen from the propaganda materials, while the DP emphasized the people themselves, the CHP emphasized the founding father of the party. As a result of the election, the power shifted to the victorious party without any major turbulence. Those affected by the hardships experienced in the single-party period were seen to have reacted against the CHP in the 1950 elections. Especially the hardships experienced by the large sections of the society during World War II, Agricultural Products Tax, Asset Tax, National Protection Act and some acts of the security forces against people caused a reaction against the CHP.

According to Bernard Lewis:

“This was a very important event for a country like Turkey. For a government to lose an election and be replaced by the opposition is nothing extraordinary in the political life of established democratic societies. In Turkey, however, such a peaceful transition was a novelty, not only in the history of the country, but of the entire region, and indeed of others that shared a comparable history and tradition. This was an epoch-making event, seen by many at the time as the dawn of a new era. Some indeed went so far as to assert that the defeat and supersession of Atatürk's CHP were the last and greatest of all its achievements in the building of the Turkish Republic.”¹⁵⁵

While Celal Bayar was elected as the President, Adnan Menderes became the leader of the DP. Adnan Menderes promised, “*each and every neighborhood*

¹⁵⁴ Ismail Köse, *Multiparty Political Life, Parties' Election Declarations and Propaganda Images (1950-2011)*, Communication and Diplomacy, Year 2, Issue 3, Ankara, 2014, p. 160.

¹⁵⁵ Lewis, *ibid.*, p. 225.

will have a millionaire” to people who endured great hardships due to the First World War, the War of Independence, and the Second World War. For the first time, an economic motto was being voiced by the DP.¹⁵⁶ The DP’s single-party governance, especially between 1950 and 1957, was the beginning of the zoning and building activities in Turkey. Bridges, roads, dams, and factories began to be established all over the country.

On the other hand, the DP is the pioneer of populism in Turkey until the late 1970s. Populism can be briefly described as "the currents and ideologies that question the dominant alliance or ideology that holds power, and act upon the masses that are out of power against this alliance."¹⁵⁷ Speaking of populism, the DP discontinued the Turkish call to prayer (adhan) and reinstated the Arabic recital of the call to prayer. Furthermore, state-run radio stations allowed Quran recitals. This softening in the religious field created a great satisfaction among the inhabitants of the villages and towns, even though it was causing displeasure among the intellectuals.¹⁵⁸

The DP created a new initiative on secularism,¹⁵⁹ stating that the Turkish community was an Islamic society and citizens could fulfill their religious obligations in the way they want without using religious values for political purposes. Speaking at the second congress of the party held in 1949, Celal Bayar said:

“Freedom of religion, like other freedoms, is sacred. Our program is secular. We have determined the principle of respect for religion in the most beautiful way. The Turkish nation is Muslim, will remain Muslim, and will die as a Muslim.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ Çavuşoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 267.

¹⁵⁷ Sunar, *ibid.* p. 2076.

¹⁵⁸ Karpat, *ibid.*, p. 234.

¹⁵⁹ Karpat, *ibid.*, p. 229.

¹⁶⁰ Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Political Parties in Turkey*, Doğan Kardeşler Publishing House Inc., Istanbul, 1952, p. 680.

Undoubtedly, these statements are very striking and important while considering the circumstances of the period.

The softening of religion-related issues, which began in the 1940s and became more visible during the DP, enabled conservatism to take shape in social life as of 1950. Until the 1950s, religious groups and communities living in the "underground" began to be more visible with the DP government.¹⁶¹ Secularism was seen by the people in general as anti-religion and anti-religious values because of the solid understanding of secularism applied in the Single-Party period. To address the dilemma on secularism, the DP reflected this in the party program as follows:

“Our party considers secularism as the separation of politics and religion and not allowing any of the religious beliefs to exert any influence on the regulations and applications of the laws and refuses the wrong conviction that secularism is against religion. Freedom of religion, like other freedoms, is a sacred right of mankind.”¹⁶²

With a transition to the multi-party political life, political parties sought for various ways to establish links with people who are the source of the legitimacy. To this end, the DP tried to prevent religion from being used as a tool of politics and exploitation. T. Z. Tunaya explained this situation as follows:

“As a result of the attempts to exploit religion as a political tool or to gain votes and, however small in scale, the emergence of reactionary activities seen in social life, the DP enacted a law prohibiting the exploitation of religion for political purposes. In addition, the DP advocated that religion must not be allowed to be used as a political tool or in a way to disturb the love and solidarity

¹⁶¹ Yalçın Akdoğan, *Political Islam*, Şehir Pub., İstanbul, 2000, p. 160.

¹⁶² Tunaya, *ibid.* p. 662.

between people and activate feelings of bigotry against the freedom of thought.”¹⁶³

Religion and beliefs are of utmost significance for the right-wing parties. A DP deputy, Bahadır Dülger, said, “But for religion, the DP would be deemed as a communist political party. The DP has four main features; nationalist at a moderate level, conservative at a moderate level, democratic at a moderate level, and free-market supporter at a moderate level. DP is a humanitarian movement rather than a political act. The DP's primary objective was to ensure the sovereignty of the people. DP wanted the will of the people to be the dominant factor in a democratic order; the people had a say in the state affairs (from the interview by Hüseyin Çavuşoğlu with Mehmet Dülger on April 17, 2008). In this regard, the DP executives emphasized the superiority of the nation's will in their rhetoric.”¹⁶⁴

The DP adopted a majoritarian democracy during its rule. As the opposition rose, it reduced the power of authority which is associated with the national will to a parliamentary majority. A quotation from Samet Ağaoğlu, one of the leaders of the DP, reflects this approach in a concise way:

“Democracy is a number regime. In this regime, what the masses say matters. We, as ruling elites, must comply with the wishes of the masses, not the criticism of a handful of intellectuals and their commotion.”¹⁶⁵

While DP adopted a populist rural model, CHP gave the impression of an elitist urban party. DP never got along with bureaucracy. DP regarded military

¹⁶³ Tunaya, *ibid*, p. 664.

¹⁶⁴ Çavuşoğlu, *ibid*, p. 268.

¹⁶⁵ Rıdvan Akın, “Transition to the Multilateral Political Life in Turkey and the Democrat Party Rule (1945-1960)”, *Türkler* Volume, Yeni Türkiye Publication, Ankara, 2002, p. 915.

and civil bureaucracy as CHP's natural allies and acted quite aggressively in order to establish a bureaucratic structure, which is loyal to its government.¹⁶⁶

When the DP which received huge support from the academia on its path to the power lost the support of the academia and turned into an opposition party, it forbade the teaching staff from actively engaging into politics through the Law No. 6185 dated 21.07.1953. Also in an effort to passivize the universities, it subordinated the universities to the Ministry of the National Education. The opposition between the university and the government increased even further after 1957.¹⁶⁷

In the elections held on 2nd May 1954, the DP won the majority of the MPs, but it received fewer votes. In the 1954 elections, there was an increasing trend in support for the CHP, but this increase did not reflect the rate of deputies. In the elections, DP got 502 deputies, CHP 31, the Republican National Party (hereinafter referred to as RNP) 5, led by Osman Bölükbaşı, 3 independent MPs managed to enter the parliament.

In the 1954 elections, it was observed that the political parties were engaged in an intense propaganda activity, which was different from the two previous elections. As reflected in the election results, the expected economic recovery in the first four years of the DP government was not achieved, and this failure affected voter preferences.¹⁶⁸ The failure to achieve the promised economic recovery seems to be a source of inspiration for the CHP's electoral campaign. During those same years, Turkey became a member of NATO. The DP wanted to make up for its economic failure with the achievements and alliances that it established in international relations using in the 1954 elections a visual reading "we used to be alone but now the whole world is with us".¹⁶⁹

In an interview with Emin Yalman in the aftermath of the success of the 1954 elections, Menderes, the Prime Minister, stated that the policy they were

¹⁶⁶ Akın, *ibid.*, p. 915.

¹⁶⁷ Akın, *ibid.*, p. 915.

¹⁶⁸ Ahmad, *ibid.*, p. 48.

¹⁶⁹ Köse, *ibid.*, p. 161.

pursuing was being enthusiastically supported by the people and indicated that they would continue to follow the majoritarian understanding of democratization they had been following.¹⁷⁰ As a matter of fact, the DP government managed to preserve the support of the Turkish people despite all kinds of restrictions on the press, the university, and the judiciary. A radio broadcasting period in which Turkey's radios were being used as a mouthpiece of the governing party rather than public property and those in governing positions were propagating their publicity, radio was turned into a means of expressing the views of the state.

If one of the factors behind DP's coming to power for the second time in 1954 elections with 58% vote rate, which is a record in the political history of Turkey, is its positive achievements, the other is the fact that it went for elections after neutralizing CHP and Nation Party.¹⁷¹ Before these elections, CHP's properties and its media organ *Ulus* were confiscated, and the party was paralyzed materially and organizationally.

The DP was on the one hand engaged in positive services, and it, on the other hand, continued the anti-democratic practices and succeeded in that.¹⁷² Understanding that he had been fully proved successful in the elections, the Prime Minister Menderes didn't hesitate to take strict measures against the press criticizing economic developments. In order to silence opposing newspapers, official advertisements were not given to these newspapers, newspapers and ink were not allocated, frequent cases were filed against the opposing journalists, and newspapers began to receive heavy penalties. In this period, the total number of cases opened against the press reached 1460. 577 of them resulted in convictions and 716 in acquittals.¹⁷³ These punishments were significantly

¹⁷⁰ Mustafa Albayrak, *Democrat Party in Turkish Political History (1946-1960)*, Phoenix Publications, Ankara, 2004, p. 340-341.

¹⁷¹ Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 340-341.

¹⁷² Tunaya, *ibid.* p. 664.

¹⁷³ Cem Eroğul, *Democrat Party's History and Ideology*, 2. Edition, Ankara, 1990, p. 401.

influential in the suppression of the press and thus ignoring criticism directed at power.

Tampering with election zones was a frequent practice of the DP. The province of Malatya, which was continually supporting the CHP, was administratively split into two in 1954 and the district of Adıyaman was turned into the province center. Thus, the CHP would be prevented from being successful in the election. After the 1954 general elections, the DP government took a decision that was unprecedented in the world's political history, and turned the province of Kırşehir into a district, because it voted for the opposition.¹⁷⁴

Before the 1975 elections, one of the founders and ideologues of the DP and the former Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Prof. Dr. Fuat Köprülü heavily criticized the Prime Minister Menderes and resigned from the party. Köprülü joined the Freedom Party, the Istanbul provincial presidency, which was being carried out by his son Orhan Köprülü, and asserted that the DP deviated from its original program and identity.¹⁷⁵ These explanations would further exacerbate the DP.

1957 election was an early election. The turnout in this election was 78%, which was well below than those of 1950 and 1954 elections, in which the turnout was close to 90%.¹⁷⁶ Indeed, this showed that a section of the people was disapproving the rising political tension. DP lost majority for the first time in this election. The DP garnered 48%, while the CHP was below it only by 6 percentage points.

The DP government faced significant problems from the initial days of the period after the 1957 election. In the Turkish Grand National Assembly (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*, hereinafter referred to as TBMM), tense sessions began to be experienced even on the initial days. The DP government began to look for

¹⁷⁴ Mustafa Albayrak, "Transition to Democracy in Turkey and the first Decade of Democratization", Ankara Bar Association Journal Issue:1, 2014, p. 304.

¹⁷⁵ Cumhuriyet, Ulus, September 7, 1957.

¹⁷⁶ Tunaya, *ibid.* p. 668.

ways to reduce the effectiveness of the opposition in the TBMM from the initial days. To this end, the DP Assembly Group discussed on November 14, 1954 issues such as stricter control over bureaucracy and the press, changes in Universities Act, and changes in Bylaws of the TBMM. On November 28, the 27th article of the Bylaws of the Assembly was completely amended. According to this amendment, the parliamentary groups of the RNP and the Freedom Party were abolished and restrictions were imposed on the speech and conduct of parliamentarians in the TBMM. The ministers would have the right not to disclose what they think is necessary, the immunity of the deputies could be removed much more easily, and the deputies could be punished more easily. Among these punishments were the removal of the deputies from the assembly and cuts from their salaries. In addition, subjects forbidden to be published by the judiciary will not be published, even if they are included in parliament minutes.¹⁷⁷

These decisions taken the DP were terrible. In short, in this arrangement, the ruling party chose to rely on its majority in the assembly to prevent the opposition from performing its duty of supervision and to exert greater pressure on the press. The fact that the government managed to keep its position, however, fewer votes it garnered, and the opposition strengthened caused the political tension to grow. As the DP hardened its position not to lose its authority, the opposition didn't hesitate to put more pressure on the government on the regime legitimacy.

Gradually deteriorating economy forced Menderes to take measures for silencing the opposition, and political possibilities outside the parliament were hindered.¹⁷⁸ Even outdoor meetings of legal parties were prohibited, and the relationship between the government and opposition became more severe as economic depression aggravated.

According to Mahmut Akpınar:

¹⁷⁷ Albayrak, *ibid.*, p. 305.

¹⁷⁸ Tunaya, *ibid.* p. 673.

“As put forward by Lord Acton, power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Ruling parties and leaders initially garner votes by pointing out that they would take democracy, human rights, and universal values into considerations. However, if their term in power goes on for too long, the power balance changes in their favor and the control mechanisms and check and balance systems weaken and the party in power starts to control everything and uses the state apparatus according to their narrow political considerations instead of laws and general principles. Moreover, we cannot say that the politicians and elites in Turkish politics could internalize democracy and the rule of law. The absence of intra-party democracy and the leadership-oriented politics are among the factors accelerating the shift towards authoritarianism. Today, we can see this in the outcome of DP.”¹⁷⁹

As a result of these developments, strong reactions were shown to the government. Student demonstrations broke out in Ankara and Istanbul. These demonstrations against the government continued to a larger scope across the country, and many people died or got injured during the demonstrations. As these events happened in Turkey, the way military circles also showed a negative attitude towards the DP government, even tolerated students during student events, caused the government to rely more on a police force.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, it is understood that the secret organization of young officers in the military against the government became more effective during the second ruling period of DP, and DP government started to control important persons in this organization. During these days, when political tension increased gradually and government and opposition parties anticipated early election, it was understood

¹⁷⁹ The interview with Mahmut Akpınar, 09.07.2017.

¹⁸⁰ Tunaya, *ibid.* p. 671.

that a secret military organization in Turkish Armed Forces planned a military coup against the government and accelerated its activities for this purpose.¹⁸¹

The last authoritarian initiative of DP before the coup of May 27 was to establish Investigation Commissions. Investigation Commission first prohibited political activities and imposed a broadcast ban on media.¹⁸² Therefore, Turkish democracy became a regime, in which political activities are prohibited. As a result of this, May 27 coup took place.

In short, while DP was expected to maintain democratization with all institutions during their period of power, the government dominated legislative institutions by relying on its political majority created a bureaucracy, which works for its interest by restructuring bureaucratic and military organization embraced a completely authoritarian system by establishing control over press and media, judicial institutions, non-governmental organizations, opposition parties and economy, and finally worked for a one-party power by creating an environment of social conflict. In other words, as Fuat Köprülü argued, “it completely moved away from the fundamental principles and objectives of its establishment...”¹⁸³

Above all, it is also evident that the DP has a special place in Turkey’s multi-party political life. DP is the first example that the Turkish people voted three times to govern the country as a single-party government. The great reputation the DP gained in public cannot be explained only by an image of the party supportive of development. It is true that the measures taken by the government in favor of the agriculture sector made major changes in the daily life of the peasantry and this mass was attached to the DP in a heartfelt way. But, other factors also played a big role in taking the root of popular love for the party. The animosity felt for bureaucracy should be pointed out. Indeed, DP is defined as the party that broke the civil servant culture.

¹⁸¹ Albayrak, *Ibid.*, p. 309.

¹⁸² Fahir Giritlioğlu, *Türk Siyasi Tarihinde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi’nin Mevkii*, Vol 2, Ankara, 1965, p. 583.

¹⁸³ *Cumhuriyet*, *Ulus*, September 7, 1957.

3.2.2 Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, JP):

In the period starting with the coup on May 27, 1960, the reorganization of political institutions, the planning of social and economic life according to new aims and the emergence of new formations were observed. In this period, a new political constitution, a new economic arrangement and the “*Adalet Partisi*” (Justice Party, hereinafter referred to as JP) coming to the political scene of Turkish political life were developments worth mentioning. JP is a centre-right and liberal party, which carried out political activities from 1961 to 1980. Positioning itself on the center-right of the political spectrum, the JP adopted the market economy and aimed at development and growth. It was basically a secular party, with religious elements and structures affecting social relations to a certain degree, but it could position itself at the center of conservative and liberal circles.¹⁸⁴

In the aftermath of the May 27, a new period started in the Turkish political life with the DP being replaced by the JP. This period is characterized by a time when the industrialization-led development is advocated and a concept of liberal economy is cherished.¹⁸⁵ JP completed its organization process in 61 cities in the year it was established and participated in 15th October 1961 elections, and managed to get 159 seats in Grand National Assembly of Turkey with 158 parliament members, and 70 seats in Republic Senate with 150 parliament members, polling 3.8% votes. As a result of the elections, CHP-JP coalition, the first coalition government in the history of republic, was established under the leadership of CHP's party leader Ismet İnönü.¹⁸⁶ After the death of JP's leader Ragıp Gümüşpala on 6th June 1964, Sedat Bilgiç, temporary chairperson of the party, handed over his duty to Süleyman Demirel during the grand congress organized on 27-29 November 1964. JP under Süleyman Demirel's leadership

¹⁸⁴ For more information see. Fahir Armaoğlu, *20. YY. Siyasi Tarihi*, Alkım Publication, 2010.

¹⁸⁵ Mete Tunçay, “Siyasal Tarih 1950-1960”, *Turkish History IV*, Modern Turkey, Cem Pub., Istanbul, 1989, p. 159.

¹⁸⁶ General Parliamentary Elections 1923-2011, *Turkish Statistical Institute*, 2012, p 12.

overthrew CHP government. Demirel, who was not a member of the parliament yet, made JP the first party in 1965 elections, and the party won 240 seats in the parliament by polling 52.9% of the votes across the country. 97 senators from JP were elected to the Senate. With these results, first Demirel government was formed.¹⁸⁷

Under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel, the JP created a conservative and rural-dominated political atmosphere, creating a discourse that religious elements are frequently mentioned with an anti-communist propaganda. Süleyman Demirel stated that the reason for his engagement in politics is "to reconcile the state with peasantry and religion". From this point of view, Demirel is closer to the religious values and represents more right-wing based values than Adnan Menderes. Now, the leader of the center-right was a peasant child who proved himself through engineering education rather than someone from the elite cadre of Republican regime.¹⁸⁸

In an interview, Süleyman Demirel said that there was not a right or left distinction in Turkey until 1965, but there were "those who were for the CHP" and "those who were against the CHP", and while the CHP defined itself as leftist party at the center, the JP was at the right of the political spectrum.¹⁸⁹ Thus, he was clearly positioning the JP as a right-wing party.

The masses who voted for the DP rallied behind the JP after 27th May coup. Both the DP and JP aimed at the votes of the people. DP and JP strived for the social state and respected people's beliefs, religions, traditions, and customs. The JP strived to take the benefits of the civilization to the most remote corner of the country and had an understanding that "what is available at the cities must be made available in the villages and towns".¹⁹⁰ The reason for the DP and JP being the most important parties in the center-right is that they kept the pulse of the people well. A policy understanding based on the needs of the people was

¹⁸⁷ General Parliamentary Elections 1923-2011, *Turkish Statistical Institute*, 2012, p 12.

¹⁸⁸ Çavuşoğlu, *ibid*, p. 268.

¹⁸⁹ Tanel Demirel, *Justice Party*, İletişim Pub., İstanbul, 2004, p. 338.

¹⁹⁰ Çavuşoğlu, *ibid*, p. 269.

followed. The DP and JP received support from broad sections of society. The power of both parties to move the masses was due to the social structure of Turkey rather than ideological reasons.

One of the greatest contributions of DP and JP to Turkish political life was to the culture of political parties. The DP and JP masses, whether in the senior management or in lower positions, had always showed love, respect, loyalty, and solidarity towards each other. Here, the personalities of party leaders were important.¹⁹¹ In particular, the JP made a great contribution to the formation of a bureaucrat and technocratic staff. The JP staff members were firmly attached to their party. This commitment and volunteerism played a very important role in the JP's success. The role of Süleyman Demirel was great in the fact that the JP members were enthusiastic about their party. Dubbed as the “First Peasant Prime Minister”, Süleyman Demirel was loved and respected by a great majority of people.¹⁹²

Various sects also supported AP. For instance, the Nur Movement, which was started by Said Nursi as a social and religious movement across the country, supported JP except for 1973 elections.¹⁹³ During the process after 1973, the movement chose to support AP.¹⁹⁴ The Sulaimani Jamia (*Süleymancılar*), another sect, also supported AP.¹⁹⁵ Kemal Kaçar, who as among the prominent figures of the sect, took office as AP's deputy from 1965 to 1973, and 1977 to 1980. A group, which consisted of members of the Nur Movement and organized around Yeni Asya newspaper and Yeni Nesil magazine, also supported Süleyman Demirel unconditionally and under all circumstances.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ Armaoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 78.

¹⁹² Çavuşoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 270-271.

¹⁹³ Hakan Yavuz and John Esposito, *Turkish Islam and Secular State: The Gulen Movement*, NY Syracuse University Press, 2003, p. 3-4.

¹⁹⁴ Şerif Mardin, *Bedüzzaman Said Nursi Olayı* (Transl., M. Çulhaoğlu), İletişim Publication, Istanbul, 1992, p. 251.

¹⁹⁵ Barry Rubin, *Guide to Islamist Movements*, M. E. Sharpe, London, 2010, p. 410.

¹⁹⁶ Demirel, *ibid.*, p. 52.

The party, with its emphasis on tradition, defended the understanding of the organic state and society and adopted the notion of nationalism that advocated the Nation / State identity. The traditions and values identified with the religion that the right-wing parties insist on are the most important factors that reveal the viewpoint and mentality of the JP.¹⁹⁷ In the same way, JP's ideological society conveyed inspiration from conservative thinking. While Demirel while talking about his own family also gave information about the ideal society and the values he praised:

“We were a happy Istanbul family. We were a family who took the life seriously, didn't complain about the life struggle, didn't lose the battle in this struggle and who were realist, liked to work and didn't like luxury, waste, pomp and fanfare and who preferred a busy working life, never gave up humility, kind-heartedness, and helpfulness and didn't have an eye on other people's properties, respected rights and laws and who liked society and was liked by society.”¹⁹⁸

As can be understood from these statements by Süleyman Demirel, the family has an important place in the political discourse of the JP. Also, the family is one of the most important social institutions that conservative thinkers attach importance to. The continuity of the society and future generations depend on the protection of the family institution. That is why the conservative parties and the parties that use conservative arguments have always tried to enact the laws and practices that will protect the family.

3.2.2.1 September 12,1980 Coup:

Towards the end of 1960's, like everywhere in the world, right-left conflicts, student movements, workers' demonstration and Anti-Americanism

¹⁹⁷ Demirel, *ibid*, p. 343.

¹⁹⁸ Demirel, *ibid*, p. 344.

increased in Turkey. As this chaotic environment prevailed, Turkish Armed Forces discharged Süleyman Demirel from his duties with the 12th March 1971 Memorandum, and Justice was overthrown.¹⁹⁹ Political instability, terror, pressure from foreign countries, economic recession and high costs of living continued to prevail in Turkey. At the end of 1979, just when JP formed the minority government with the support of former partners, the curtains closed with the September 12, 1980 military coup. On October 16, 1980, the party was officially dissolved along with other political parties.

There are many speculations about the reasons of the September 12, 1980 military coup. Increasing number of political murders and Jerusalem Meeting organized under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan on September 6, considered as a sharia purpose coup attempt by the leaders of the military coup, were among the reasons. During this demonstration, which is also known as Konya Rally, people sat down on the ground during the national anthem of Turkey and booed the Turkish national anthem. People called for sharia law during the meeting, and the rally turned into a protest against the state.²⁰⁰

Problems, such as the increase in the foreign trade deficit, which is summarized with "We are in need of 70 cents!", statement of Süleyman Demirel, the last prime minister of the period before September 12, foreign exchange bottleneck, scarcity, labor disagreements, and unemployment are the economic reasons of the military coup. Also, the whole world was going through a neo-liberal economic transformation towards 1980's. Elimination of social opposition and an oppressive environment were necessary for implementing neo-liberal reforms. The USA supported military coups in various countries of the world in order to bring right-wing parties to the government for the purpose of accelerating neo-liberal policies.²⁰¹ During this period, rising

¹⁹⁹ Tunçay, *ibid.*, p. 180.

²⁰⁰ Nail Güreli, *Milliyet Newspaper*, Available at: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/04/17/yazar/gureli.html>

²⁰¹ Noam Chomsky, *Profit over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order*, Seven Stories Press, New York, 1999, p. 88.

social opposition was showing itself, especially in the form of worker and student movements.²⁰²

Serious security problems in the country are also considered among the reasons of September 12 military coup. For instance, supporters of various political opinions raided Higher Education Councils and applied pressure on students to boycott universities. Newspapers published one day before the military coup gave news, like a coffee house's being raked with guns and murder of one person, terrorist who attacked a house and killed 2 persons, a movie queue raked and 4 people killed in Mersin, and murder of one person each in Istanbul, Gaziantep, and Malatya.²⁰³

General Kenan Evren, Commander of the Turkish Armed Forces during the period, made the following statement on behalf of National Security Council on the radio: “NSC decided to perform its duty to protect and preserve Republic of Turkey on behalf of great Turkish Nation as per the authority granted by Internal Service Code, and seized full control of the country.”²⁰⁴ The military coup was declared to the whole country with this statement.

After the military coup, first executions were taken on November 9, 1980. After first leftist Necdet Adalı, rightist Mustafa Pehlivanoglu was executed. Erdal Eren, who was sentenced to death penalty on March 19, 1980, only when he was 17 years old, was executed on December 13, 1980 at Ulucanlar Prison as per the decision approved by NSC although the sentence of death was nullified by Supreme Court two times.²⁰⁵ Kenan Evren made the following statements during the speech at his Muş visit on October 3, 1984:

²⁰² Sungur Savran, “1960, 1971, 1980: Toplumsal Mücadeleler, Askeri Müdahaleler”, *Onbirinci Tez*, V. 6, 1987, p. 132-168.

²⁰³ See. *Hürriyet* Newspaper, 11 September 1980; *Milliyet* Newspaper, 11 September 1980.

²⁰⁴ For the declaration read on the radio, see. http://web.archive.org/web/20120201190012/http://www.belgenet.com/12eylul/12091980_01.html.

²⁰⁵ Prime Ministry Permist and Justice Commission Report for the Execution of Erdal Erden, TBM Minutes, Available at: https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/MGK_/d01/c001/mgk_01001023ss0079.pdf.

"Suppose that after arresting him, I will bring him to trial, but I will not execute him, and, instead, take care of him throughout his life. I will feel this traitor, who pulled a gun on our young soldiers, who die for this country. Would you give consent to this?"²⁰⁶

The Constitution of Republic of Turkey, which is the basis of constitution of today's Turkey, was drafted by Advisory Council by the command of military government after 1980 coup, and was approved as a result of the plebiscite held on November 7, 1982, with 91.37% votes in favor of, and 8.63% votes against the constitution. Two colors were representing the votes. Blue represented "No", and white represented "Yes". During his speeches, Kenan Evren was instilling the public with the idea that they should not give 'blue' vote²⁰⁷ and 'blue' color was censored on various newspapers.²⁰⁸ It was claimed that transparent ballot papers were used in order to keep people voting 'No' under pressure, but this was not the only reason, which explains why Constitution was accepted by a vast majority of the public. Another factor behind the acceptance of Constitution was citizens' concern for their lives due to the war environment before the military coup.²⁰⁹

Statist regulations of the 1982 Constitution bears the potential of undermining parliamentary democracy and its legitimacy. The parliament, which consisted of deputies elected by the public, was replaced by assigned persons. The parliament, which owes its legitimacy to its representation, handed over its authorities to NSC, which is the representative of the military government, and Advisory Council assigned by this government. Increased authorities of the head of executive body undermined the autonomy of legislative and judicial bodies and eliminated the three fundamental principles

²⁰⁶ Yıldırım Türker, We didn't forget Eren, Radikal Newspaper, Available at: <http://sendika62.org/2006/12/erdali-unutmadik-yildirim-turkerradikal/>.

²⁰⁷ For Kenan Evren's speeches for introducing the constitution, see. http://web.archive.org/web/20120610233714/http://www.belgenet.com/12eylul/evren_051182.html.

²⁰⁸ Hasan Cemal, *Demokrasi Korkusu: 12 Eylül Günlüğü*, Doğan Press, 2010, p. 3.

²⁰⁹ Ertuğrul Özkök, Şimdi Anladınız mı %92'yi?, Hürriyet Newspaper, 14.11.2006.

of democracy. Internal state regulations of 1982 Constitution is evaluated within the context of these four observations: "regression of legislative body", "superiority of executive body", "incapability of party government", and "elimination of judicial independence." 1982 Constitution cast a cloud over "parliamentary legitimacy" (legislative superiority), which is the premise of democracy.²¹⁰

The 12th September military regime fundamentally changed the basic legal order, limited the political participation required for a pluralist democracy, brought unacceptable restrictions to basic human rights and freedoms, weakened the independence of the judiciary and judicial certainty, and alienated the concept of the supremacy of law. In other words, "Society was forced to wear very tight clothing." Wanting to have control over all the aspects of society, the regime brought militarism to an extreme. The "State" was put before the "human." A legal order aimed at supervising all spheres of life was created. The military administration passed 378 laws before and 258 laws after the adoption of the 1982 Constitution. These laws are fundamental laws, such as Martial Law, the Law on Higher Education, the Law regarding the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors, the Law on Higher Military Administrative Court, the Law on Military Judges, the Law on the State Council, the Law on Judges and Public Prosecutors, the Law concerning the NSC, etc.²¹¹

After the military coup, 1 million 683 thousand people working in public institutions, who were declared to be anarchists, were blacklisted, 230 thousand people were judged in 210 thousand judicial suits commenced by State Security Court, death penalty actions were litigated for 7 thousand persons, and 517 persons were sentenced to death penalty. 50 persons, who were sentenced to death, were executed. Court files of 259 persons, for whom the capital penalty was requested, were sent to TBMM. Passports were not given to 388 thousand

²¹⁰ Emel Uzun, "Demokrasi Retoriği: VIII. Cumhurbaşkanı Turgut Özal'ın Konuşmalarında Demokrasi", Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences Department of Public Relations and Publicity, Ankara, 2008, p. 54.

²¹¹ Zafer Üskül, Turkey's Democratization and the European Union, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Fall 2002, p. 2.

persons. 30 thousand persons were dismissed from their works as 'suspects.' 140 thousand people were expatriated. 30 thousand people went abroad as political refugees. 300 people died suspiciously. 171 people's deaths were proven to be as a result of torture. 937 films were banned as 'objectionable'. 23 thousand 677 associations were shut down. 3 thousand 854 teachers, 120 university instructors, and 47 judges were discharged from their duties. During the same period, four thousand lawsuits for 4 thousand years prison sentence were filed against 400 journalists. Journalists were sentenced to 3 thousand 315 years, 6 months imprisonment. 31 journalists went to prison. 300 journalists were attacked. 3 journalists were killed as a result of an armed assault. Newspapers could not be published for 30 days, and 303 legal cases were filed against 13 big newspapers including Hürriyet, Milli Gazete and Middle East. 39 tons of newspapers and magazines were destroyed. 299 people in total died in prisons. 144 people died suspiciously, 14 people died during hunger strikes during the same period, 16 people were shot while 'running away, 95 people died as a result of the gunfight, 'natural death report' was issued for 73 people, and 43 people were reported to have 'committed suicide.'²¹²

Savaş Genç, who is a professor at Heiderberg University Institute of Political Science, made the following statements during the interview:

“The Turkish Republic was founded by the soldiers. The military in Turkey preferred the 'this country is ours, so we protect it' alternative instead of institutionalizing democracy and developing it within the framework of its own control mechanisms. Therefore, they always had to intervene in the process by assuming a savior role, whenever they thought that democratization or Kemalist secular system was under threat. The fact that institutions are not strengthened, and democracy's inability to protect itself is the problem of the military and public, who fail to make a claim on

²¹² The report published as a result of the study conducted by Grand National Assembly of Turkish Republic Parliamentary Commission Investigating Military Coups and Memorandums: No. 376, Vol 1, Page 15.

democratization. Having saved democratization from the bayonet of the military by going out to the streets on July 15, the public did not give any reactions although 2.5 million ballot boxes were stolen in the last plebiscite. Military domination cannot be eliminated, because democratization is abused and independent institutions in the country do not take courageous steps to stop this process. We can see the same thing in the 1980 military coup.”²¹³

"So many military coups took place in the history of Turkey; 4 successful, 3 failed military coups from 1960 until today. You cannot see military groups so often in another country. Therefore, soldiers in Turkey interiorized the idea, issue of a military coup in their genes."²¹⁴ Mahmut Akpınar explains the reasons behind this situation as follows:

“The reasons of interruption of democracy can be explained under a few articles.

1. Politics-bureaucracy conflict. Military bureaucracy has been in conflict with judicial bureaucracy most of the time.
2. A depth of ideological division and power struggle through various means other than transparent and democratic politics.
3. Lack of democratic culture.
4. Not establishing separation of power, check-balance system in a healthy manner.

In addition to this, it can be suggested that militaries are the most important and organized legacies of imperial powers to western values after the post-colonial period. In Middle-eastern countries and countries, which became a colony of a western power, military is an effective means to re-adjust the balance of the countries or have the politicians mind their manners. All military coups in Turkey took place after we joined NATO. It would be naive to say

²¹³ The interview with Savaş Genç, 13.09.2017.

²¹⁴ The interview with Henri J. Barkey, 17.07.2017.

that these military coups were not under the influence of NATO. When Turkey changed its trajectory, or oriented towards relations, which conflict with the interests of Western countries, or when internal disturbances became unmanageable by politicians, the country's direction was 'corrected' with military coups. The military assumed the mission of the authority, which adjusts, balances the politics in Turkey, and keeps the politicians on a specific line of principles or forces to assume this role. However, the course of events changed after e-memorandum was declined, and Turkish Armed Forces were removed out of ²¹⁵ the process with the military coup attempt on July 15, 2016. As the policy in the country was adjusted through the means of Turkish Armed Forces for many years, in the last case, Turkish Armed Force was adjusted with a set of questionable and complicated events, and the military itself was forced to change.”²¹⁶

JP, which was removed from political arena with 1980 military coup, was re-established by Dr. Vecdet Öz and his friends in 2015.

3.2.3 Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP)

As mentioned above, old political parties were closed just after September 12, 1980 military coup and the aim was to "establishing a new political order" with 1982 Constitution, which came into force with a plebiscite. Within the context of this new political order, new political parties started to be established in the spring of 1983 in the process of "return to democracy." Nationalist Democracy Party (MDP), which is said to be the representative of September 12th, People's Party (HP), which claims to be the advocate of social democracy,

²¹⁵ Details of e-memorandum are given in Chapter 5.

²¹⁶ The interview with Mahmut Akpınar, 09.07.2017.

and ANAP were three parties which were permitted to participate in the elections.²¹⁷

ANAP was established by Turgut Özal, who prepared 24th January 1980 economic measures package, taken during JP government on 20th May and also continued during September 12 period, and who took office as deputy prime minister responsible for the economy during 12 September period. ANAP was a significantly personalized party, which organized around Özal. Using "middle class" concept, which covers social layers, such as civil servants, farmers, and tradesmen, ANAP gave an impression of a middle-class party, and was, therefore, supported by major business circles. ANAP, which was able to establish a strong and extensive party organization in a short time thanks to its young and dynamic team and effective support from various sections in an environment where old party organizations were disrupted as a result of the prohibitions after the 1980 military coup, was a political party, which had a moderate political discourse before elections, focused more on economic issues, opposed bureaucracy and worked on "the state is for the nation" theme.²¹⁸

In Turkey, conservatism, religion, nationalism, and liberalism constitute the sociological bases of liberal-conservative politics, which is expressed as centre-right. These values, which right-wing in Turkey relies on, started to become a political identity after DP under the leadership of Adnan Menderes came to power. The centre-right ideology in Turkey, which emerged as a reaction to CHP's negative attitudes towards religion and social values, and developed within the framework of a populist opposition rather than the ideological attitude of a specific class, always put economic growth in the center of its political discourse. This discourse was sloganized by DP as "blessed horizons", by JP as "Big Turkey", and by ANAP as "Stepping into a new era."²¹⁹

Turgut Özal, the founder of the party, explained the reason why the party's name was chosen as "Motherland" as follows.

²¹⁷ Armaoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 108.

²¹⁸ Armaoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 110.

²¹⁹ Zeki Duman, *Turgut Özal*, Kadim Publication, Ankara, 2010, p. 184.

"Motherland is a unifying name. Today, Turkey needs unifying movements and symbols. In the 1950's, Turkey needed democratization. This need started in the 1940's. DP emerged out of this need, and the party took this name for this reason. In the 1960's, the country needed justice. And JP was established out of this necessity and that's why it was named so. Democratization was skipped, justice was skipped, and Turkey was on the verge of secession. Now, the unity of the country must be symbolized. Motherland is what implies this unity the best. Now, it is time to protect the country. That's why our party's name will be Motherland."²²⁰

The intermediate regime of September 12 not only suspended democratization, but also disrupted freedom of thought to a considerable extent, and victimized various sections of society with oppressive practices. During this period, especially leftist intellectuals were punished, and nationalist groups who supported the state also got their share. The press was censored, hundreds of writers and scholars were imprisoned, a large number of university teachers were dismissed, and leaders of political parties were taken under custody. Speaking Kurdish was prohibited even at home. In such an environment and process, which is under the influence of military domination to a great extent, Özal came to power as a result of the elections which were held without important political due to military's political ban.²²¹ ANAP, founding members and social base of which consists of conservative and nationalist sections, did not show the same sensitivity to civil and political freedoms, as they did to economic and religious freedom; because according to Özal, political problems

²²⁰ Quoted in. Şeyda Belhan, "Anavatan Partisi'nin Kuruluşu ve İktidara Gelişi", *Dokuz Eylül University, Institute of Atatürk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution Postgraduate Thesis*, Izmir, 2005, p. 70-71.

²²¹ Vahap Uluç, "Liberal-Muhafazakar Siyaset ve Turgut Özal'ın Siyasi Düşüncesi", *Yönetim Bilimleri Journal*, Vol: 12, Issue: 23, 2014, p. 127.

can be solved only by dealing with economic problems. In this context, he is of the opinion that democratization can be realized in societies, where free market conditions are well-established. However, it doesn't mean that Özal ignored democratization and freedoms completely. For instance, Özal, who thinks that individual is born with certain fundamental rights, laid emphasis especially on freedom of thought. Preventing ideas, which must be expressed, resemble the pressure created by the water boiled in a pressure cooker. Problems are avoided when the cooker is opened, but when it is not allowed to breathe, it damages its surrounding area.²²²

Özal advocated restricting state's scope of authority and interventionist approach of bureaucracy, on the one hand, and drew attention to the necessity of adopting "loyal to the state- socialist" understanding with conservative and nationalist values, on the other. He also defended social justice principle for reducing the imbalance in income distribution between different sections of society.²²³ As evident from the classic understanding of state, which is centered on the state, Özal laid emphasis on the individual between state-society relationships, with a strong opposition to statism. Conceiving an understanding of individual, which is in the center of life, giving his/her own decisions, taking initiatives and open to outside world, Özal believed that state must not constitute an impediment for an individual.²²⁴ Within this framework, he strictly refused "paternal state" understanding in the political culture of Turkey. During his presidency period, he made the following statements on this subject:

"Some citizens continue seeing state as a father figure. This is very wrong. In a modern country, state is no longer regarded as a father figure. This belongs to the past. Because when you regard

²²² Uluç, *Ibid.*, p. 127.

²²³ Uluç, *Ibid.*, p. 116.

²²⁴ Hasan Cemal, *Özal Hikayesi*, Bilgi Press, Ankara, 2004, p. 320.

me as a father, as I often say, I may take a bat and beat you, and you cannot say anything..."²²⁵

Thinking that the ANAP had a different position and ideology than other political parties, Mustafa Taşar argued that the ANAP was not established as a continuation of another party and it broke new ground in the Turkish political history by bringing together different thoughts and ideas under a single program and roof.²²⁶ ANAP, which is the first party that succeeded in coming to power in the first election after its establishment in the Turkish political history, left the power that it took over from a military coup administration to an elected civilian power without giving rise to another coup.²²⁷

The ANAP explained as follows what kind of a political party it was:

“ANAP is a political party that is of the belief that the establishment of the national will and the national sovereignty will be possible only within the free democratic order; considers human fundamental rights and freedoms indispensable; believes in nationalism and commitment to national and spiritual values; aims for reaching the level of contemporary civilization in the direction of the principles and revolutions of the great leader Atatürk who is the founding father of Republic; values social justice and equal opportunity through the vision of "what matters is the happiness of the individuals and society"; strives for the acceleration of economic development, the elimination of unemployment and poverty; considers the main principles of the National Education to raise the youth who are committed to the modern and advanced Turkey ideal and who adopts national and moral values, are equipped with

²²⁵ Uluç, *Ibid.*, p. 117.

²²⁶ Belhan, *ibid.*, p. 76.

²²⁷ Later, this success will be realized in 2002 by the AKP under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

scientific knowledge and who is a civilized person who cares for love, respect and tolerance against all others and aims for attaining a democratic, political great and strong Turkey ideal.”²²⁸

Apart from all these, predicating its policy mostly on the principles of conservatism, ANAP did not avoid expressing this approach in its discourse under the leadership of Turgut Özal. Yavuz Gökmen, who is known for his close relationship with Özal, suggested that the primary factor that drove Özal to adopt a conservative and authoritarian attitude was the manners of his religious mother, who was a dominant character in the house.²²⁹ His conservative identity was always there since the first years of his life. Özal, who said “When I die, bury me in Istanbul, I would like to be under the spirit of Mehmet, the Conqueror forever”²³⁰, tried to show his faith in spirituality with the conservative policies he pursued.

Basically, Özal often talked about three fundamental freedoms; "liberty of free thought", "freedom of thought and faith", and "freedom of enterprise." According to Özal, liberty of free thought refers to the freedom of one expressing his/her opinions without any hesitations. According to him, "Truth comes from the clash of ideas".²³¹ Freedom of religion and conscience is also one of the universal freedoms for Özal. In a speech, he expressed the following about freedom of religion and conscience:

“This is a freedom concerning many people. I am of the belief that the existence of this freedom bestows a sense of peace. Peaceful people work well. Without peace of mind, they will be in constant chaos and you cannot expect any efficiency from them. This is

²²⁸ For more information see. Mustafa Taşar, *ANAP from 1983 to 2000*, 3. Edition, Ankara, 1996, p. 310-312.

²²⁹ Yavuz Gökmen, *Özal Sendromu*, V Press, Ankara, 1992, p. 26.

²³⁰ Uluç, *Ibid.*, p. 120.

²³¹ Sait Yazıcıoğlu, *Islamic Thought of Ozal and Religious Freedoms* (Ed. İ. Sezal & İ. Dağı), Kim Bu Özal, Boyut Press, Istanbul, 2001, p. 201.

nonsense. Our society must not have any disagreement over this issue”.²³²

Being a former engineer and economist, Turgut Özal explained how he was acquainted with religion as follows:

"I started to learn about religion when I was at the first grade of Technical University. There were people who performed the salaat. I followed them. 'Teach me,' I told them, and they got me a book. We tried to obtain religious information from esteemed teachers, who were dismissed during 1930 reform. They helped me get into touch with them step by step. We tried to learn religious knowledge from them. I learned to perform five-time prayer at Technical University. I used to fast at home in the past. But, I learned to perform five-time prayer, religious principles and Sufi aspects of religion from these teachers.”²³³

Özal clearly stated that the bonds that hold the nations together are religious ties, the factor of religion must step in where individual ideologies fail and it must be used in suppressing the reactions that may occur in society.²³⁴ Miss Hafize, Özal’s mother, and a Nakşi follower was laid to rest at the Süleymaniye Mosque by the grave of Sheikh Mehmet Zahit Kotku Efendi through a special decree to fulfill her will when she died in 1988.²³⁵

Considering the conditions of that period, it is observed that Turgut Özal did not avoid actions, which require courage. For instance, after he was elected as President, he went to Kocatepe Mosque with media members and offered his Friday prayer. This event is narrated at the website of the party as follows:

²³² Mehmet Barlas, *Memories of Turgut Özal*, Birey Publishing, Istanbul, 2001, p. 322.

²³³ Barlas, *ibid.*, p. 89.

²³⁴ Osman Ulagay, *To transcend Özal*, Afa Publishing, Istanbul, 1991, p. 125.

²³⁵ Hasan Cemal, *Story of Özal*, Bilgi Publishing, 8. Edition, Istanbul, 1992, p. 155.

"Everyone was wondering if Özal was to go to Friday Prayer as the President of a secular country. But, as usual, he went to Ankara Kocatepe Mosque and offered his Friday Prayer with his comfortable attitude, which challenges taboos. On that day, there was a conflux in Kocatepe, the public burst into tears of joy."²³⁶

Özal was known as a conservative and religious person during his duty period as the Prime Minister, and even the President of Turkey. The fact that he is a member of Naqshbandi Tariqa is the most important indicator of this. He often referred to the Quran and Hadiths in his speeches. Another significant indicator of this character is the fact that he gave his first shot at politics at NSP, which adopted Views of Ummah Movement (or National Vision Movement). As a result of Özal's conservative attitude, activity scope of religious groups increased during his period, and many activities, which were carried out secretly until then, were no longer in disguise. Religious section of society started to show up in many areas; political, economic and social. Islamic foundations, associations, organizations, and holdings started to be established.²³⁷

During his speech in 1989, when Head Office Building of the party was launched, he made the following statement about his own conservatism:

“Our conservatism is not orthodoxy as someone might think or suppose. Our conservatism is the respect for our traditions, history, and beliefs, and preserving those traditions and customs, which suit to our time best. The way the concept of conservatism is portrayed as orthodoxy by some purposeful and demagogy circles and presenting the defenders of this mentality as a symbol of humiliation are unacceptable for ANAP. It is also an attribution, which cannot be accepted considering the realities of our country. As ANAP, we

²³⁶ Turgut Özal Album, Available at: www.anap.org.tr, p. 3.

²³⁷ Akkır, *ibid.*, p. 66.

regard conservatism as the preservation of a set of values, which constitute the origin and basis of sharing a common fate in the geography of the past and today, and owning a historical accumulation and state tradition of thousands of years.”²³⁸

In the general elections held on November 6, 1983, ANAP constituted a majority and came to power as a single-party government by winning 211 seats in TBMM with 400 parliament members with 45.14% vote rate. Although ANAP owes its success in elections to the fact that parties, which were established as the continuation of old political parties, were not allowed by NSC to participate in elections. This success can also be attributed to several factors, namely effective use of mass media, moderate discourse that lays emphasis on economic issues, positive effect of their themes such as "middle class, practicality," on the society, impression of being a "civil party," embracing classic rightist tradition with the claim of unifying four tendencies, avoiding anti-communist discourse, which was the common characteristic of right parties before September 12, influence on social democrat voters, and establishing the most effective and extensive organizational network.²³⁹ With these "four tendencies", Turgut Özal aimed at bringing former Justice Part, CHP, Nationalist Movement Party, and NSP members under the roof of ANAP. In all of his speeches, Özal said that he will unite previous political tendencies in his party, and he invited the defenders of the same four tendencies to unite in his party.²⁴⁰

One of the criticisms that could be directed to Turgut Özal is his attitude when banned politicians returned to the political arena in 1987. During the process of transition to civil government, when lifting the ban imposed on former politicians as per the 1982 Constitution was in question, ANAP government held a plebiscite on this issue. Although Prime Minister Özal propagated for the continuation of the bans, the plebiscite held on September 6,

²³⁸ Quoted in Ramazan Akkır, p. 74.

²³⁹ Cemal, *ibid.*, 1992, p. 186.

²⁴⁰ Available at: <http://www.tha.com.tr/turgutozal/sayfa84.htm>

1987 ended with the majority of votes for lifting the bans with a very slight difference. Turgut Özal's running a campaign for the continuation of political bans, which were imposed by a military regime, before the plebiscite, drew harsh criticisms towards ANAP, particularly Özal, with regards to "democratization." Another attitude of Özal, which was widely criticized, was his defending 12th September military coup with a "reasonable" justification. According to him:

“May 27 happened, March 1971 happened, and finally, September 12, 1980 happened. Whether it was right or wrong may be debated. But, I believe that September 12 was among the necessary moves.”²⁴¹

While some argue that “*no initiatives were taken to change anti-democratic laws taken over from the military government*,”²⁴² others observe that he led the democratization process despite several problems: “One must not assume that he was a libertarian democrat. Özal only opened these roads by destroying things in accordance with the conjuncture, but did not or could not build a libertarian democratic constitution on them.”²⁴³

After the ban was lifted, Süleyman Demirel became the head of TPP, Bülent Ecevit became the leader of DSP, Necbettin Erbakan became the head of WP and Alparslan Türkeş became the leader of Nationalist Work Party.

1987 General elections is the first election, to which former leaders, whose political bans were lifted, participated as the leaders of their parties after 1982 military coup. The winner of the elections was ANAP, although the number of its votes decreased compared to previous elections. As a result of these elections, while Süleyman Demirel, one of the former politicians, was able to

²⁴¹ Cemal, *ibid.*, p. 308.

²⁴² Ahmad, *ibid.*, p. 276.

²⁴³ Gökmen, *ibid.*, p. 248.

enter into the parliament, Bülent Ecevit, Necmettin Erbakan, and Alparslan Türkeş lost their seats in the elections.²⁴⁴

Turgut Özal stood as a candidate in Presidency Elections in 1989. Özal explained the reason why he decided to become President in an interview he gave to journalist Ertuğrul Özkök in 1993 as follows:

"There are several reasons. The party, which I founded, developed, and which I am a member of, has come to a certain point. There will always be a need for change. There is a wrong tradition in Turkey. I've never seen anything different. They always continue as the leader of a party, until it loses or it is gone, that is, without any reasons. They even lose in the elections but still stay. I came to the conclusion that this must happen in a normal process, that is, not by losing in elections, but leaving through a different process. Presidential Office was held by four retired generals in the previous periods. We know the reasons of each, and how it all happened. This must be corrected. We also must correct this, and show that a civilian can also reach to this position."²⁴⁵

Consequently, Turgut Özal became the 8th President of Turkey after the Presidential election held on October 31, 1989.²⁴⁶ This date is also a turning point for ANAP because ANAP gradually lost its popularity across Turkey after this date. It lost its title as the first party, in 1991 elections, which was the first election it participated without Özal. ANAP, which was able to take part in coalition governments, could not even enter the parliament in 2000, and as a result of this, it decided to unite with DP in 2009.

Generally, it can be said about ANAP and Turgut Ozal that he, Prime minister (1983-1989) then president (1989-1993), showed that he had vision.

²⁴⁴ Mehmet Kabasakal, Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler, *Okan University*, Istanbul, 2013, p. 134.

²⁴⁵ Ertuğrul Özkök, “Özal Anlatıyor”, *Hürriyet Newspaper*, 21.04.1993.

²⁴⁶ Bülent Erandaç, “1989’da Özal’a, 2014’te Erdoğan’a”, *Takvim*, 14.02.2014.

Embodying the combination of economic liberalism and Islamic values that bested overtly Islamist parties in gaining voter support, he reoriented Turkish politics more significantly than anyone else since Atatürk. Economically, he replaced the inward-oriented, import-substitution policy pioneered in the 1930s with an export-led growth strategy, so adjusting to the global trend toward privatization.²⁴⁷ Education also changed significantly under Özal. Private universities began to be founded, starting with Bilkent University (1984). Academically enriched high schools known as Anatolian lycées grew greatly in numbers. Combining science and mathematics with foreign languages, they provided large numbers of Turks from non-elite backgrounds for the first time with foreign-language education. The high schools for training mosque functionaries, the imam-hatip (prayer leader-preacher) schools, also expanded in number, and many girls were enrolled in them.²⁴⁸ These developments can also be noted as achievements of the ANAP for Turkey.

When we look at not only the ANAP but also the other centre-right wing parties, we see that democratization could not be realized in the full sense even though they were in a position of positive contribution to Turkey. Erik J. Zürcher said regarding this issue:

“The main reason I think is that the state played and plays such a dominant role in the Turkish political system and in Turkish society as a whole. Ultimately, inter-party competition is not only about controlling a state that controls the everyday life of the citizens to an extraordinary degree. The close relation between dominant party and state can make it very difficult to accept dissent as a legitimate part of the political game. Another element is that dominant center-right parties always had the support of somewhere between 40% and 55% of the electorate. This plurality of small majority led them

²⁴⁷ Armaoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 128.

²⁴⁸ Findley, *ibid.*, p. 355-356.

to constantly use a discourse of enemies and dangers (in Turkey and outside) to consolidate their own constituency behind them.”²⁴⁹

According to Mahmut Akpınar:

“First and foremost, democratization needs intellectuals and masses that will protect and sustain it. We must look at this issue not just from the angle of the center-right parties, but in a more general perspective. Today, it is regrettably observed in Turkey that neither the intellectuals nor the masses have the consciousness and courage to protect democracy against the risks. It is also clear that our education system does not ensure democracy and the rule of law is constant and effective. Since Turkey’s democratization is often interrupted, democracy education has left its place to an authoritarian understanding of education in times when coup management is at work. Why we frequently drift away from democratization will be better understood when we take into consideration the patriarchal, paternal culture and obedience which are hereditary in Turkish society and a perception of the state that is sacred and hard to criticize. I am convinced that these breakdowns explain why our current democracy does not go beyond the ballot boxes and why a pluralistic and participatory democracy has not been evolved.”²⁵⁰

3.3 Conclusion

When political literature in Turkey is analyzed, two facts are observed. The concept of "conservatism" in Turkey does not bear the same implications as the concept of conservatism in the West. While the concept of conservatism is

²⁴⁹ The interview with Erik J. Zürcher, 28.06.2017.

²⁵⁰ The interview with Mahmut Akpınar, 09.07.2017.

generally perceived as religiousness and commitment to traditions in Turkey, it is a political ideology which is against radical changes, and especially in favor of preserving class distinctions in the social structure in the West.

As it can be inferred from the study, conservatism is a widely used concept in Turkish politics. Therefore, it is appreciated by the public. In Turkey, centre-right parties generally used conservative discourse. It was first DP which acted according to the wishes of its political base by pursuing policies, such as including religious education within the scope of a formal education system, encouraging religious knowledge and publications, increasing the number of mosques and relieving the pressure on religious sects, which are illegal as per the constitution.

After multi-party system was adopted in Turkey, DP, which came to power by advocating democracy, personal rights and freedoms, freedom of press, right to strike, liberal economy etc., fundamental rights and freedom, became successful with its practices during its first period (1950-54); reached to a vast majority of votes in 1954 elections, but prove of solving severe domestic and international problems, which emerged during their second period (1954-1957). Starting its third period (1957-1960) with loss of votes, DP preferred to solve political, economic and social problems by imposing restrictions on rights and freedoms instead of reconciliation, and aimed to silence opposition with legal regulations, neutralizing the press, and keeping economy, universities and judicial institutions under full control. It virtually breached all the bonds it established with social groups and institutions, which it had collaborated during their opposition period. This caused DP's social base to melt away gradually, and strengthening of the opposition. During this period, Turkey did not gain the benefits it expected from the multi-party system. These facts show that during the 1950-1960 period, in which DP held power, Turkish Democracy was only going through its childhood.

As a result of the democratization efforts in Turkey to happen as a result of the DP's work in 1950, relations with the US and Western states made significant improvements. After 1959, Turkey applied for membership of the

European Economic Community. Although a short interim period was experienced after the May 27, 1960 coup, the 1961 Constitution and the democratic order were put back on track. In the subsequent process under the influence of some military intervention in Turkey, the democratic system suffered disruptions, but these periods of disruption have not been long-lasting. Especially in the period after the 1980 military coup, Turkey has entered into a close relationship with the EU. As a result of this union's pressure, democratization movements are accelerated.

We can say that centre-right parties have two common characteristics: First of all, the political understanding pursued by centre-right parties rely on liberal economic policies, respect for societies' beliefs and values, and nationalism. Secondly, most of the achievements attained by centre-right parties depend on their leaders to a considerable extent. Interestingly enough, centre-ring parties are associated with their leaders. No one but Adnan Menders comes to one's mind, when DP is considered. Also, ANAP is so much identified with Turgut Özal that after Özal became President, vote rate of ANAP decreased considerably and the party could never achieve the glorious days of the past.

A glimpse at the political history of Turkey shows that parties move away from democratization once they reinforce their power. This is valid almost for all parties. It can be said that elections are held democratically, but parties start to ignore the principles of democracy soon afterward. One of the major problems of Turkish politics is restricting powers and duties of administrative staff with periods. We can see this in DP and ANAP cases. Even if a person has tendencies of a dictator, he/she cannot disclose them within a period of 7-8 years. Therefore, it is seen that Turkish politics needs such an order.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE PLACE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE “VIEWS OF UMMAH” MOVEMENT IN TURKEY

4.0 Introduction

“*Milli Görüş Hareketi*” (Views of Ummah) is the movement that started with the foundation of “*Milli Nizam Partisi*” (National Order Party, hereinafter referred to as NOP) under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan at the beginning of the 1970s. In the competitive party systems, under the name of “*Milli Selamet Partisi*” (National Salvation Party, hereinafter referred to as NSP), Views of Ummah has four times coalition partnerships from 1974 to 1978, and then it has great successes in local and general elections under the name of “*Refah Partisi*” (Welfare Party, hereinafter referred to as WP) in the 1990s. Hence, all these successes provide decisive coalition partnerships and crown its popularity in the political history of Turkey.²⁵¹

Before going into any detail, I find it beneficial to give the meaning of National Vision (*Milli Görüş*) Movement. “*Milli Görüş*” is translated into English as “National Vision”. For this reason, the majority of foreign sources call Milli Görüş Movement as National Vision Movement. But, what Necmettin Erbakan, pioneer of the movement, implies with “national” is the “ummah.” There are two reasons behind his avoiding the word “ummah.” Firstly, political conjuncture is not suitable for using the word ‘ummah.’ Secondly, the party drew the votes of society's nationalist section, which has a significant potential for votes by using the word “national” and was able to receive both conservative and nationalist people's votes. Therefore, I find it suitable to refer the movement as “Views of Ummah” in my study.

It has two fundamental principles, which distinguish it from Views of Ummah, namely radical Islamism and anti-globalism/sine qua non. From another perspective, this can be interpreted as a reactionary challenge to West's hegemony over the Islamic world. Within this context, Necmettin Erbakan

²⁵¹ Özdemir, *ibid.*, p. 166.

usually belittles the West and often emphasizes that source of Western civilizations' development is actually Islam.²⁵² The West came across Islamic civilization thanks to Crusades and built its own civilization on it. Therefore, Islam is superior to the West, and it is possible to find the source of all kind of developments in Islam. Development of Islamic civilization was ceased as its members moved away from immaterial spirit, and this spirit must be revived.²⁵³

Since the beginning of its representation in NOP as politics, Views of Ummah has the feature that it never changed its political discourse and kept on increasing its mass public support permanently. In the 1990s, WP was particularly successful in big cities. In municipal elections in 1994, WP won the mayor's seats in both Ankara and Istanbul (the two largest cities in the country) by getting more than 25 percent of the votes in Istanbul and more than 21 percent in Ankara. WP's success in big cities continued in the parliamentary elections of December 1995. In the five largest and most industrialized cities (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Adana, Bursa), WP averaged 16.8 percent in 1994 and 17.7 percent in 1995.²⁵⁴

The great growth and political success that Views of Ummah achieves in ten years from the mid-1980s to mid-1990s is the result of its massifying campaign. As a political organization which tries to change its identity of being a religious sect party to a mass party without changing its discourse, the WP managed to get votes from about all sections of the public in ten years mentioned above. Thanks to its dominance for Islam, the WP benefited the political vacuum resulted from the political crisis for centre-right after Turgut Ozal period (former prime minister and 8th President of Turkish Republic) and managed to increase its votes. The aim of this chapter is to find out the reasons

²⁵² Christos Teazis, *İkincilerin Cumhuriyeti: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, Mızrak Publication, Istanbul, 2010, p. 55-56.

²⁵³ Osman Bölükbaşı, From National Outlook To Conservative Democracy: The Transformation Of Islamic Elites In Turkey After The February 28 Process, *Journal of the Human and Social Science Researches*, Volume.1, Issue: 2, 2012.

²⁵⁴ Gülgün Tosun and Tanju Tosun, 27 Mart 1994 Yerel Seçimlerinden 24 Aralık 1995 Genel Seçimlerine: Siyasal Coğrafyaya İlişkin Gözlemler," *Journal of Public Administration*, 29/1, 1996, p. 33-34.

of how a political party established by an Islamist movement became so successful in a secular country like Turkey, and discuss the positive and negative effects of this movement on the democratization of Turkey.

4.1 National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*, NOP)

In Turkey, where the conservatism is associated with Islam and the main elements of conservatism concept are kept in the background, the first breaking point is the foundation of the NOP for the political organizations, which has religious awareness.²⁵⁵

The prime and effective role and initiative at the foundation of the NOP, which is the political organization of Views of Ummah, belongs to Sheikh Mehmet Zahid Kotku, the leader of Iskenderpasha religious sect and the powerful man of Naqshbandi Tariqa. Since 1937, when his family moved to Istanbul, Necmettin Erbakan was one of the important members of Iskenderpasha sect.²⁵⁶ Despite his secular-based education life, Erbakan showed a perfect loyalty to Sheik Kotku, and never left the sect. Hence, he brought power to Views of Ummah by his sheikh Kotku.

Moreover, the presidency of Necmettin Erbakan, when he was the president of Union of Chambers in 1968, wasn't recognized officially by the Minister of Commerce of JP Government, and JP Leader Süleyman Demirel vetoed the candidacy of Erbakan for JP in that period. These two events provoked the start of Views of Ummah. After Demirel's veto, Erbakan became the independent candidate for Konya (a city of Turkey), and he was elected easily in the 1969 general elections of Turkey. Soon after the general elections, Erbakan decided to found a new party, and then the NOP was founded by 18 politicians in the leadership of Erbakan on January 16, 1970.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ Çağatay Okutan, "Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi: Muhafazakar Demokrat mı, Hıristiyan Demokrasinin Müslüman Versiyonu mu?", *Dokuz Eylül University Institute of Social Science Journal*, 8 (1), Izmir, 2006, p. 315.

²⁵⁶ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, Ankara, 10.06.2016.

²⁵⁷ Fahrettin Poyraz, "Milli Nizam Partisi'nden Ak Parti'ye İslami Hareketin Partileri ve Değişimi", (Ed.) Uzun, T., Orion Press, Ankara, 2010.

The original political discourse of the Views of Ummah consists of two factors; moral and spiritual development, and economic development or heavy industry move. The doctrine of the NOP in diplomacy presents considerable information about its new goals and priorities in political Islam discourse and the reflection of a paradigm shift to diplomacy. The doctrine of the NOP is the basic and general framework for all the follow-up parties founded by Erbakan and his comrades.²⁵⁸

The NOP, which is the political representative of Views of Ummah, has an inclusive doctrine. It is Islamic and conservative in cultural discourse, egalitarian in the economy and social policy, and eclectic and pragmatic in the discourse of industrialization via government enterprise.

On May 20, 1971, just one year after the foundation, the Constitutional Court considered the Pan-Islamism, which is the base of the NOP, as a reason to close the party.²⁵⁹

4.2 National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, NSP)

After the closure of the NOP, until the political atmosphere in Turkey returned to normal, Erbakan took refuge in Switzerland, and the Islamist group under the leadership of Erbakan wasn't punished when he was back in Turkey. Moreover, they were allowed to found a new party, the NSP, on October 11, 1972, but in this new political page, the NOP intendants tried to behave more carefully due to the former decision of Constitutional Court. Hence, after turning back to Turkey, Erbakan didn't take part among the founders of the NSP.²⁶⁰

The NSP had some proposals, such as wide-spreading the capital accumulation geographically and returning the economic concentration trend. It also defended the state-controlled industrialization for the benefits of

²⁵⁸ Efecan Inceoğlu, Türkiye'de Siyasal İslamcılığın Evrimi, Ankara University Social Science Institute Department of Political Science, *Master Thesis*, Ankara, 2009, p. 59.

²⁵⁹ About closure of MNP see, http://www.bilgealtun.com/FileUpload/ks317150/File/mnp_nin_kapatilma_davasi_gerekceli_karari..._5.doc.

²⁶⁰ Özdemir, *ibid.*, p. 168.

smallholders in the countryside by assimilating the large industry capital with the alliance of ‘West-Jewish-Mason’. Politically, the NSP was of the opinion of the NOP, which was the founder party of Views of Ummah, but this time it aimed to spread its discourse to socio-economic and cultural classes that it represented via the organizations throughout the country. In this point, the NSP wasn’t separated from the NOP. However, it has the aim of forming its ‘core base’ by tending to the Anatolian handicraftsmen and merchants socio-economically, and to the groups which try to increase the effectiveness of Islam in the social sphere, socio-culturally.

On October 14, 1973, the NSP which took part in the elections under the leadership of Süleyman Arif Emre was the 3rd biggest party with 11.8 % vote rate and had 48 deputies in TBMM. Just 6 days after the elections, Erbakan was elected as party leader in the meeting of General Administrative Board.²⁶¹

On February 7, 1974, the NSP formed a coalition government with CHP which was elected as the 1st party with 33% vote rate. However, this coalition government lasted just ten months, and then the NSP continued its politic life as a new coalition partner till the elections in 1977. The NSP participated in a new election on June 5, 1977, but decreased its vote rate from 11.8% to 8.6%. 3 years later, because of the 1980 coup d’etat, it was closed like other political parties and took place as a successful but closed party in Turkey’s politic history.

4.3 Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, WP)

4.3.1 The Foundation of Welfare Party

1980 coup d’etat caused a great crisis in Turkey. The democracy was suspended, and all the political parties were closed. Since 1983, the closed parties began to open one by one, and instead of the NSP, the WP was founded as the new representative of Views of Ummah in Turkish diplomacy.

Ihsan Çolak, who is a scholar at Columbia University, defined WP as follows:

²⁶¹ Poyraz, *ibid.*, p. 139.

“WP is a political party, which emerged and developed with claims of criticizing the existing system, promising a fair income distribution, being a party, which has nothing to do with corruption and bribery mechanisms, in which all other parties had criminal records, ending the growth of holdings by feeding on unearned income distribution through state, giving the first response to the voters, who wanted to give a lesson to right and left centre parties and test them and representing Islamic and conservative ideology, which is claimed to be excluded from political field.”²⁶²

The successful leadership of Necmettin Erbakan was the main factor for election achievements and rise of the WP. In fact, after the general elections in 1987, the WP had its top vote rate with 7.14% under the leadership of Erbakan. In 1989 local elections, the WP was among the parties which increased their vote rate although its ballot decreased. According to the results of this election, with 8.74% vote rate, the WP got 74 mayorships, especially the eastern cities of Konya, Sivas, and Urfa. As observed, the WP had a floating vote in eastern cities of Turkey at the beginning because this mass was its target, and it never changed its ‘Just Order’ rhetoric on this target group from its foundation to the closure. This shows the cultural and socio-economic classification of this mass.²⁶³

The general election in 1991 was an important turning point for the rise of the WP. In this election, Views of Ummah passed the election threshold of 10% which was the outcome of the 1980s and managed to put 62 parliament members in TBMM with 16.88% vote rate.²⁶⁴ The incremental growth in vote rate and power in political representation of the WP was directly proportionate

²⁶² The interview with Ihsan Colak, 07.08.2017.

²⁶³ Cihan Tuğal, *Pasif Devrim: İslami Muhalefetin Düzenle Bütünleşmesi*, Istanbul Koç University, 2010, p. 106.

²⁶⁴ Available at: <http://www.secimsonucu.com/GenelSecimSonuclari.asp?SY=1995>.

to its ‘Just Order’ rhetoric which was mainly characterized with party’s discourse after the 1980s.²⁶⁵ Since 1990, the order and justice promised by ‘Just Order’ included not only Eastern Anatolia and its countryside but also the metropolises which allow immigrants from the countryside of Anatolia. During this period, the people immigrating countryside to cities were considered as prior vote store for the WP.

Moreover, the 1991 general election was the first one at which Views of Ummah changed its campaign style. The updated strategy of the WP, which turned from a religious-based advertisement into a modern political campaign, included the transformation of its vote base from the countryside to cities, especially the metropolises which have the changes in living standards and heavy social deteriorations due to the immigration. Thus, the WP opened its doors to ‘those who look for welfare’ in Erbakan’s word. It widened mass support by serving ‘Just Order’, which was the name of complex social democracy in Islamist discourse, to not only the Islamist people but also the socio-economically left-leaning slum areas with the conservatives and right-leaning people.²⁶⁶ By the commercials of the WP in national newspapers, television channels, radios and also billboards, it targeted the voters in cities via active women and youth’s branches. This shows that it aimed to be a mass party getting rid of modern – anti-modern dilemma, but without changing its discourse.

Hence, this was Views of Ummah’s most successful period. Let’s see the statements of Yasar Yakıs, the ambassador of Egypt at that period and then one of the founders of AKP, about the reasons why the WP had such a success:

“I think there are more than one reasons for the success of WP. For Turkish society since Ottoman Empire, the state had been considered as a destroyer for his people, a source just to enlist our

²⁶⁵ Necmettin Erbakan, *Adil Ekonomik Düzen*, Rehber Publication, Ankara, 1991.

²⁶⁶ John Esposito and John Voll, *Islam and Democracy*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1996, p.

children to the army and a source for tax. The state wasn't accepted as a merciful parent. Thus, all the political parties never showed this expected mercy to the society. Kemalism never showed mercy to the Turkish society. As a result, the parties benefiting the dissatisfaction of society and turning it into a vote opportunity always won. This was one of the successes of the WP, indirectly Views of Ummah. Secondly, in the aspect of method they used, Views of Ummah was impressed by Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Muslim Brotherhood was founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928s as a movement against the kings, dictators, and the governors of that period. Differently from those regimes, it drew the attention as a regime serving the suburban and the countryside people. Muslim Brotherhood regarded this situation as a great vote opportunity, and in those areas, it made its presence felt by people via ideological operations. In this way, the WP accepted Muslim Brotherhood's methods, and it served humanitarian aids to those who have financial problems in slums and countryside such as food items (sugar, pasta) and medical service (treatment in hospitals). As a matter of course, it managed to get mass support. No wonder, there are many more reasons besides these two, but these are the most remarkable ones."²⁶⁷

Likewise, Ersonmez Yarbay, the former parliament member of the WP, has commented about the reasons for successes of the WP:

“At that time, the other parties had instability in politics and they were very detached from the public. However, the WP had a rapid rise by benefiting this situation via integrating with public and having stability in politics. Moreover, people who had Islamic sensitiveness were under an ever-growing pressure, and other parties were deaf to this. The WP tried to stand up for their rights unlike

²⁶⁷ The interview with Yasar Yakis, Ankara, 11.06.2016.

other parties, and this contributed to the rise of WP. This ideology had a response in Turkey. It took place in Turkish political history with NOP, then NSP, and then WP.”²⁶⁸

In this case, it can be suggested that handling the poor communities in the country with tact and articulating the feelings of these people are among the reasons why WP became successful.

4.3.2 The Identity of Welfare Party

With its discourse and action, the WP had the characteristics of a party which was in step with the NOP and reflected the discourse, policy, and World-view of the NOP, the first political party of Views of Ummah. As stated previously, the WP carried political Islamist tradition in its staff and discourse without any change. Hence, it was observed that the WP never changed the discourse of Views of Ummah, but had some strategic changes and updating in methods of spreading the discourse to a different populace. Defining its World-view as Views of Ummah, the WP was both nationalist and Islamist party.²⁶⁹

Focusing on the social basis of the WP, it was clearly observed that it was based on traditional religionist cliques, the poor communities in metropolises, and the dispersed people who immigrate from the countryside to cities. The traditional religionist cliques, one of the elements of WP’s social base, showed a definite economic performance in spite of all the difficult conditions. However, they could not debureaucratize and find a place for their identity in any public sphere, so this gets them to support the WP.²⁷⁰

In WP’s party program, the title of ‘Foreign Policy’ mentions that the WP established good relations with all Muslim countries and neighboring countries of Turkey. Also, according to WP’s party program; it was possible to improve

²⁶⁸ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, Ankara, 10.06.2016.

²⁶⁹ John Esposito and John Voll, *ibid.*, p. 108.

²⁷⁰ Özdemir, *ibid.*, p. 169-170.

existing relations with the countries with which Turkey has historical and cultural bonds, and this provided material and nonmaterial benefits for the country according to the program.²⁷¹ When it was analyzed, it was observed that unlike other parties, it aimed to make a strong union among the undeveloped Islamic countries.²⁷² In particular, the Middle Eastern, central Asian and Muslim countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia in the Far East had great importance for the WP.²⁷³

Likewise in Foreign policy, the WP managed to draw attention by having different methods in Internal Policy. At this point, it was seminal to check on other subjects of its party program. Firstly, it placed a particular importance on religious education in national education and emphasized that it is the basis of moral development. The WP strictly discussed on the subject that in national development moves, the Turkish nation must have the conditions to move its moral potential and fasten these moves as immediate as possible.²⁷⁴ Secondly, they stated that the needs of justice mechanism and courts would be met, and they were in favor of revising the legal guarantee institution for judicial independence. In addition to this, the Party Program laid emphasis on the fact that the family is the foundation of the nation, and moral education and development of individuals start from the family. Differently from former Views of Ummah parties, women first began to have roles in public and political spheres in Internal Policy of the WP period. With the rise of Islamic move, women who were formerly housebound had the chance to be socialized and take part in politics for the benefits of their parties and communities in 1980s' Turkey. For this purpose, women's branches and bodies were established within a party or communities.²⁷⁵ The WP had a great role in these social and political

²⁷¹ The Party Programme of Welfare Party, Eser Press, Samsun, 1986, p. 31.

²⁷² Election Bulletin of Welfare Party, Turkish Grand National Assembly Library, 24 December 1995.

²⁷³ Yavuz, *ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁷⁴ Election Bulletin of Welfare Party, Turkish Grand National Assembly Library, 24 December 1995.

²⁷⁵ For more information see Gudrun Kramer, "Islamist Notions of Democracy", *Middle East Report*, No. 183, 1993.

changes in the 1980s, and it had the greatest move for women after 1980. On one hand, it objected to the head-scarf ban and led supporting head-scarf freedom in universities, but, on the other hand, it motivated women in accordance with party program by nudging them to politic activities. The women serving in women's branches within the WP managed to head their party to lots of local authorities in the local election on March 27, 1994. The contribution of women to the WP's campaign by visiting door-to-door caused corrosion at the ideology of the party about women because it started with an Islamic discourse, and defended the opinions of those thinkers who were strictly against women's taking part in the public sphere. However, women's success, indirectly the WP's, helped it improve its idea about women at a remarkable amount.²⁷⁶

Although WP was established by Views of Ummah, which is often accused of being Islamic and follower of sharia, it never avoided using clear religious patterns and messages. With its campaign, discourse and slogan, the WP always tried to design a religious and local-dominant identity. It used very assertive religious discourse such as '*the head-scarf is our national costume*' and '*if other parties have their voters, we have our believers.*' As observed clearly, WP never held off using a campaign which aimed to strengthen in-party organizations via religious-based motivation.²⁷⁷ It is seminal to check on its party program to explain this issue. Like former Views of Ummah parties, the WP's program discussed religion and secularism under the title of 'Fundamental Principles', and religious education under the title of 'National Education'. It was observed that although the WP gave a wide coverage to Islamic discourse in its program, it gave less coverage to secularism and freedom of thought and faith. The program which included just a few sentences about secularism and freedom of thought and faith emphasized that it found all repressions primitive and contrary to freedom of thought and faith. According to it, secularism is not anti-religious,

²⁷⁶ Özdemir, *ibid.*, p. 173.

²⁷⁷ Mücahit Küçükylmaz, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Katılım Tek Partiden Ak Parti'ye Siyasal İslam ve Demokrasi Tartışmaları*, İklim Publication, Ankara, 2010, p. 106.

instead, it must be improved and activated as a principle to save all those freedoms from any violation.²⁷⁸ Under the title of ‘National Education’, the program emphasized the necessity of meeting the needs of religious education by training literate religious educators, helping religious officials reach welfare, and increasing them to a sufficient number. Moreover, it stated that the religious education is the basis of spiritual improvement and a great element which help the Turkish Nation be known well with its spiritual characters of which new generations are in the service, and make them successful in works for the Turkish nation.²⁷⁹

The element which never changed from the beginning in the discourse of Views of Ummah is the pan-Islamist World-view fed with strong anti-zionism. At this point, the WP’s discourse about Nationalism was considered in Pan-Islamist perspective. Erbakan, the master of the discourse, represented the nationalism of ‘Islamic great eastern civilization’ in the maturity stage of Islamic discourse. In the context of functional solidarity, it can be mentioned about a Pan-Islamist mindset in Turkey or worldwide. According to Lütfi Kibiroğlu:

“In WP's discourse, emphasis on Turkishness was centered on the Muslim nation, which carries the flag of Islam. As the Union of Muslim Countries, we had a dream. In D8, Turkey would be the 'big brother of' less developed countries in Islamic geography, and weapons and commodities to be manufactured with heavy industry maneuver would be given to the countries in this geography for defense against the west and Zionists. As National Movement, we held this view.”²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ The Party Programme of Welfare Party, Eser Press, Samsun, 1986, p. 42.

²⁷⁹ The Party Programme of Welfare Party, Eser Press, Samsun, 1986, p. 53.

²⁸⁰ The interview with Lütfi Kibiroğlu, Former Mayor of Eminönü and Felicity Party Istanbul Deputy Candidate, 08.04.2016.

In one of his speeches, Erbakan mentioned about a Turkey-centered Islamic Union in these words:

“Turkey is at the center of World. The right of leadership in forming a just World naturally belongs to Turkey which has a unique history representing justice. I hope Turkey will surely be the leader in forming a just World with its geography, history, people and all its resources.”²⁸¹

According to the leadership of the WP, there were three spheres of confrontation in Turkish society: ideological (left versus right and Islamist versus both Marxist and capitalist), ethnic (Turk versus Kurd), and religious (different sects of Islam such as Sunni versus Alevi). The liberal wing of the party sought to harmonize these three zones of conflict by opening a series of communication channels and public spaces to socialize differences through interactions. Bahri Zengin, who was kept at a distance by the Erbakan-led conservatives due to his liberal views, played a key role in the opening of new channels of interaction between the different segments of society. He viewed the WP as space in-between identities. Bahri Zengin, who was also known as a leader of the *Yenilikçi* (innovationist) group, emphasized the importance of social peace and the need to bring different factions – westernized “open” women and traditional “covered” ones, Kurdish and Turkish nationalists, Kemalist intellectuals and Islamists – together on a common ideological ground.²⁸²

²⁸¹ Başbakan Prof. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan’ın TBMM Grup Toplantısında Yaptığı Konuşmalar, Premiership Publication, Ankara, 1997, p. 142.

²⁸² M. Hakan Yavuz, “Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Party in Turkey”, *Comparative Politics*, October 1997, p. 75-76.

4.3.3 The Rhetoric of Just Order

The discourse of Views of Ummah was never updated from the beginning but changed its focal point according to the conjuncture, and associated functionality with pragmatism balance in Islamic discourse.²⁸³ At this point, the focal point of the WP's discourse had concerns about social policies differently by the NOP and the NSP. This was because of socio-economical destruction resulted from the neo-liberal-oriented structural transformation in the Turkish Economy along Ozal period after the 1980 coup d'etat. The conjuncture from 1985 to 1995, in which the mass immigration from the countryside to cities was the most determiner factor for social change, was accepted by Views of Ummah as the predominant factor for the discourse. Hence, the suburbans of metropolises were aimed more particularly than the rural population which was affected negatively by structural economic transformation.²⁸⁴ In this regard, the rhetoric of 'Just Order' was not only a social policy program but also a catalyzer for the mass support for the WP.

The scope of the WP's discourse was constituted with any subject to social sciences and a method whose content was filled with a complex justice myth and reference came from compulsory rules of Islam. The rhetoric which the party always constructed with this method and updates was 'Just Order'. The two publications of the party which were written up by Necmettin Erbakan in 1991 made up the general theme of 'Just Order', and this rhetoric was knitted around this general theme.²⁸⁵

The first discourse which was tried to stuff in 'Just Order' brochure of the WP was criticizing interest rate lobby with anti-zionist power eclectically. As usual, the basic reference here was again the compulsory rules of Islam. In 'Just Order' brochure, the existing World order was emphasized with this determination:

²⁸³ Jenny White, "Pragmatists or Ideologies? Turkey's Welfare Party in Power", *Current History*, Vol. 96, p. 28.

²⁸⁴ Yavuz, *Ibid.*, p. 77.

²⁸⁵ White, *Ibid.*, p. 30.

“The Zionists take the World imperialism under their control. They exploit the humanity via usurious capitalist order. They keep their political dominance on Earth via the imperialist states.”²⁸⁶

According to the WP, the manufacturing and welfare were not shared fairly because of the order formed by Zionists. It defined this situation as ‘Slavery’ and gave five factors for it as ‘interest, unfair tax, mint, Exchange, and credit cards’.²⁸⁷

In accordance with the pragmatism of Views of Ummah, the eclectic structure of the discourse was legalized by saying that ‘Just Order’ adopted the beneficial sides of capitalism and communism, but rejected the destructive ones.²⁸⁸ The literature and presentation model of ‘Just Order’, which was enriched with metaphors, simple logic sampling, and Islamic patterns, besides being doctrinaire, was at such a level that it was easily understood and accepted as impressive by the people who have lower or mid-level intelligence and perception threshold. Let’s have a look a slice of statements in ‘Just Order’:

“In the order of Views of Ummah, there won’t be interest, and all the unfair taxes will be removed. Monetary value will be accepted as the right extent, and hard currency will be used. The unrequited money will not be minted, and money will not be devalued. Everyone who yields by doing useful works with money will get credit fairly. Hence, everybody will get the opportunity to buy three loaves of bread with the same money that he buys just one formerly. With the same fund, he will produce three times more than today. Three times more people will work, and all the prices will decrease to one third. The people will have three times more financial

²⁸⁶ Adil Düzen, Refah Partisi Press, Ankara, 1991, p. 3

²⁸⁷ Adil Düzen, *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁸⁸ Adil Düzen, *Ibid.*, p. 12.

capability of purchasing. The cheapest production will belong to Turkey, and exportation will increase. The needs of Muslim countries will be met in Turkey by establishing a common market, so Turkey will become one of the strongest countries in the World. Our nation was incapable owing to artificial reasons today, but hopefully, he will stand up as a great and unique wrestler, and serve the humanity soon!”²⁸⁹

When people were asked what the Just Order stands for their answers included justice, a secure social and economic environment, the protection of state property, an end to nepotism and corruption, cooperation between state and nation, protection of the unity of the state, and an end to undue Western influence over Turkey. These common responses indicate that the Just Order was seen as a way, not of bringing about an Islamic political system, but of addressing Turkey’s immediate social and economic problems. The protection of the state and its property were also seen as the main objectives of the Just Order, as many people believed that their economic protection presupposed a powerful state.²⁹⁰

When focused on the election results in the 1990s, it was observed that the poor who immigrated from the countryside to cities preferred to be called as conservative and Muslim.²⁹¹ Here, this section got what it wanted in the WP’s ‘Just Order’ rhetoric. Thus, the WP proposed an institutional framework for social movements which were in search of changing silenced and depressed people for the better and redefining social, cultural and political interactions.²⁹²

Just Order project also involved a series of Islamic elements, such as interest-free banking. WP’s Just Order rhetoric was based around a sense, which was different from the position of most of the centre-right parties, who lay more

²⁸⁹ Adil Düzen, *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁹⁰ Yavuz, *ibid.*, p. 73-74.

²⁹¹ Available at: <http://www.secimsonucu.com/GenelSecimSonuclari.asp?SY=1995>.

²⁹² Yavuz, *ibid.*, p. 74-75.

emphasis on individuality and market, but less emphasis on social justice. It was also distinctly different from the position of social democratic parties in the left wing, which lay more emphasis on democratization, human rights, and social justice, but less on a private enterprise system.²⁹³ The ‘Just Order’ project emphasized solidarity, alliance, justice and the communitarian traditions, which are seemed in all sections of Turkish society, and claim the necessity of using the modern technology to form a better society in future. In addition, it did not prevent the hope of modernity and improvement but presented in a different context. The ‘Just Order’ project, which was based on the main themes of rapid economic development and equitable distribution of national income, consisted of different but related fields such as ‘policy, economy, science, religion, and morality’.²⁹⁴ The policy, one of the fields, emphasized the necessity of getting political power which aimed to reorganize the national income for better social organizations. The economy focused on social justice and elimination of bank interests in the economic field. Science encourages the freedom of expressions, and rejects all kinds of obstacles for scientific advances wherever they are. Religion and morality propose a more spiritual lifestyle which is based on Islamic principles in order to minimize moral corrosion in society. Morality is claimed to be the basis of hard work, community services, fellowship and so the social peace.²⁹⁵

While the WP’s policies were very conservative in form and were articulated in Islamic concepts, they were quite revolutionary in content. When 172 people were asked to identify the three most common characteristics of the WP in March 1995, over 70 percent said honesty, justice, and equality. Other commonly cited characteristics were resisting corruption and bribery, protecting tradition and mores, helping the needy and poor, sincerity, unity, and solidarity, and elimination of prostitution and social immorality. As the party was rooted in

²⁹³ Ziya Öniş, “The political economy of Islamic resurgence in Turkey: the rise of the Welfare Party in perspective”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 18, 1997, pp. 754.

²⁹⁴ Altan Tan, “Refah Değişiyor” (The WP is Changing), *Yeni Zemin*, May-June 1994, pp. 65.

²⁹⁵ Muzaffer Ercan Yılmaz, “The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey: The Case of the Welfare Party”, *Turkish Studies*, 13 (3), 2012, p. 368.

a search for a conception of the community to cope with the collective problems of justice and identity, it sought to revise shared understandings of “morality” as well as to address social and economic problems.²⁹⁶

In the interview with Ersonmez Yarbay, who was former Ankara deputy of the WP from 1996 to 1999, gave these informations about ‘Just Order’:

“‘Just Order’ was a system proposed by Erbakan against monopolization. It aimed to remove unfair income distribution and form non interest economy. Mr. Erbakan emphasized ‘Just Order’ rhetoric till his death. This system aimed to decrease the sentimental value of money in care of public and remove interest. As members of the WP, we represented the poor in society. These poor demanded the removal of interest, however just their demand was not enough to manage it entirely. Thus, there was not much improvement about interest problem and ‘Just Order’. Yet, this is a worth-stressing issue. Another destructive problem of World is absolutely monopolization and unfair income distribution. ‘Just Order’ can be a solution to these problems if it is improved.”²⁹⁷

Finally, it can be suggested that the implications of Just Order were widely disputed by different circles, but the party itself did not show this with its actions. However, whatever the implications were, Just Order was successful in providing a utopia to masses, who were desperate with the current conditions and the system, abandoned hope in other political parties, and who were damaged and excluded from modernization process economically.

4.3.4 The Electoral Strategy and Campaign of the Welfare Party

The organization model of the WP is defined as ‘Rosary Model’; the provincial organizational committee has thirty-three members modeled as the

²⁹⁶ Yavuz, *ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁹⁷ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, Ankara, 10.06.2016.

thirty-three beads of the traditional Muslim rosary. According to this model, the WP placed a party member for each province, and this member placed other party agents to each district, street, and even apartment. By this way, inspectors check other organizations about local party activities.²⁹⁸ Moreover, if someone needs financial aid because of a handicap, the local party organization never hesitates to extend help. Politics for the WP not only offered services and helped needy people, but also defined the symbols of Turkish society and shaped Muslim political imagination and social life. By establishing hegemony over the symbolic structure of Turkish society, the WP sought to become the hegemonic political force.²⁹⁹

One of the most important features of the WP which separates it from other parties was the strong bond between voters and the party members. Being in touch with society, the notable party members used to test the waters of society and help them solve their problems. We can give an example of this: Black Sea Region is paternalistic conservative region. After the collapse of Soviet Union, so many Russians came to the Black Sea region not as refugees but to sell something, such as carpets and furniture. Also, so many prostitutes came to the Black Sea region. The women in this region were very strongly complained with this situation. In such a case, only Islamic ethics could be brought to readjust the society. Other things were not very effective to change. So, in 1994 elections, campaigns were started by WP. They learnt how to make a social research from the USA and they used the American companies. This was very dramatic because other political parties were just saying “You must vote us!” without any research. But, WP members visited houses one by one not only in the Black Sea region but everywhere. They asked very detail questions, such as “What are you complaining?”, “Which newspapers are you reading?”, “What kind of TV programs are you watching?” etc. With these questions, WP understood that women in the Black Sea region were complaining about prostitution. So, candidates of WP used this in the elections. They did not say

²⁹⁸ Ruşen Çakır, *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 10.04.1994.

²⁹⁹ Yavuz, *ibid.*, p. 77.

“We will prohibit prostitution”, because in this case, Turkish men will not vote them. But, they cleaned out the Russian Bazaar and controlled the prostitution in hotels. So, the number of the prostitutes decreased.³⁰⁰ This was a very clever and smart way to solve this problem.

When researches conducted on this subject were analyzed, it was seen that paternalism was quite dominant in Turkish society. As a natural result of this, individuals shaped their preferences and voted according to the decisions of their family or prominent figures of a sect. Savaş Genç, explained the effect of this condition on Turkish politics and democratization as follows:

“Turkish society has never been an organized society. Its organized state is also the organized state of paternalism, such as Bayburt Natives Association or Federation of Erzurum Natives (Bayburt and Erzurum are cities in Turkey). This is also because the common characteristic of Turkish society is their reluctance to read and tendency to receive information from televisions at the rate of 75%.³⁰¹ Looking at this general picture, it is really difficult to expect anything other than traditional voting preferences. The fact that vote rate of AKP and WP is quite low among educated people is remarkable.”³⁰²

Thought team of WP analyzed this situation quite well, designed their election strategy accordingly, and was able to receive the votes of the public.

Advertisements published/broadcast in national newspapers, televisions and billboards showed that WP explicitly aimed to reach the voters in the cities, and reflected the "modernizing" side of the party. It has been observed that rural-urban migration increased in Turkey especially in the 1990's, and WP aspired to

³⁰⁰ The interview with Masanori Naito, 18.12.2016.

³⁰¹ Metropol Research Company, August, 2017.

³⁰² The interview with Savaş Genç, 13.09.2017.

receive the votes of this section of the society.³⁰³ Beyond vote expectations, party's advertisements intended for urban people was its attempt to "whitewash," legitimize itself and reach reconciliation. As a matter of fact, WP found a base in metropolitan cities for the first time in 1991 elections and started to reach big cities by keeping its traditional voters.³⁰⁴ The significance and success of the campaign was due to WP combining its program with a successful campaign strategy. As discussed in the title above, the name of this program was "Just Order."

When WP's advertising campaigns starting from 1991 elections are analyzed, it is seen that, as distinct from other parties, these advertisements were built on the images, concerns, exclusion, and oppression of economically deprived, culturally and economically excluded persons, who were unhappy with the existing system, instead of leader image.³⁰⁵ The way party realized the fact that economic poverty and identity crisis go hand in hand for the "oppressed" sections of the society in Turkey and reflected this in their advertisements made them different from examples of advertisements for other political parties in Turkey. During the interview, Lütü Kibirođlu's following statement supports this agreement: "Our party's message was directly intended for reaching the economically deprived section, that is, a majority of the society."³⁰⁶ With this campaign, WP sympathized with the problems and wishes of this section and promised that these problems will be solved by WP government with an attitude, which was far from elitism.

Being close to the public, understanding their language and talking like them was what distinguished WP from other parties. When the language of WP's advertising texts are analyzed, it is seen that it was used in accordance with the common members of the society; their language, profiles, and

³⁰³ For more on rural-urban migration, see. Ertuđrul GreŖçi, "The Phenomenon of the Urban - Rural Migration in Turkey", *DođuŖ University Journal*, 11 (1), p. 79.

³⁰⁴ Serdar Ŗen, *Refah Partisi'nin Teori ve Pratiđi*, Sarmal Publication, Istanbul, 1995, p. 81.

³⁰⁵ Ŗen, *Ibid.*, p. 81.

³⁰⁶ The interview with Ltf Kibirođlu, 08.04.2016.

discourse. The everyday language was used effectively, expressions with social and cultural codes, such as "may you have a fruitful day," "turning my wife's gold into cash" "no money in and outside the house," "being unable to meet ends meet" were frequently included in the advertising text.³⁰⁷ In this way, texts were made to be more sincere and intelligible to a standard reader.

The WP made a very effective campaign not only in domestic but also in abroad especially in Europe and established strong bonds with Turkish people there. Here are the statements of Ersonmez Yarbay about this:

“Thanks to our European Views of Ummah Organization, we had very strong bonds with our citizens who were workers in most European countries especially Germany. We often had meetings with those people, and we clearly observed their support. They gave financial support to Movement many times. This absolutely showed that the movement was adopted sincerely by the society. Besides, The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH) sent social aids to needy citizens abroad, and this gave us a chance to be known by Muslim communities there.”³⁰⁸

According to Hakan Yavuz:

“One of the main reasons for the WP’s success is the relative autonomy of its district organization to utilize local resources, devise its own strategies, and adopt the local language to win elections. The other parties have centralized campaign strategies and lack flexibility in verbal communication and face-to-face exchanges. For example, when representatives of the WP visit a family after the burial ceremony, they bring a human touch that differentiates the

³⁰⁷ Tanju Tosun and Gülgün Tosun, “18 Nisan Seçimlerinde Oy Kaymalarının İstatiksel Yorumu”, *Milliyet*, 30 April 1999.

³⁰⁸ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, Ankara, 10.06.2016.

party from the callous and faceless image of other political parties. In the March 1994 elections, the TPP organized only twelve coffeehouse meetings in the Maltepe neighborhood of Istanbul, while the WP held forty-three and one or two meetings on almost every night in coffeehouses or in private houses. Moreover, after the elections, the WP continued bimonthly meetings.”³⁰⁹

Again, Ersonmez Yarbay emphasized that one of the most important factors for his party’s success was ‘Rosary Model’. He stated:

“The WP had to be everywhere that human beings lived. For this reason, we had party agents in every city, county, district, avenue, street and even apartment, and we always checked their activities. Everyone worked to reach the best rate by dealing with the people one to one. For instance, there were ballot boxes in elections. Let’s say that each box has 200 voters. During the election, we began sending a party representative to each box in order to keep in touch with the voters. Let’s think that there are one hundred thousand boxes, and in this case, we aimed to reach two hundred thousand representatives with one extra helper party member for each box. As the WP, we put up candidates everywhere in every election. This was one of the most important reasons for success. We had candidates in every city and district even if we knew we would fail. In the regions where we could not find any candidate, we had assigned-candidates. For instance, if we don’t have any candidate in Tunceli (a city of Turkey), we assigned one of our members there as a candidate. We defended that if we were on the right side, then our thoughts would be everywhere. It was not important to win or lose. The important point was to emphasize our right thoughts.”³¹⁰

³⁰⁹ Yavuz, *ibid.*, p. 78.

³¹⁰ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, Ankara, 10.06.2016.

The points explained by a parliament member of the period seemed to support the discourse in WP's election bulletin. Nominating candidates for each region and municipality 'even if it is known that the election will not be won' was a strategy, which was not adopted in Turkey before.

4.3.5 Elections in 1994 and 1995

The turning point in the evolution of WP into major political movement came with the municipal government elections of March 1994, during which the party managed to capture the mayorships of the two key metropolitan areas of Istanbul and Ankara. Local elections, as a result of which metropolitan municipalities of Istanbul and Ankara were won, were a triumph for political Islam.³¹¹ The countrymen in big cities, who could not get used to cities and had moral corruption because of detachment from religion, considered the WP as a shelter and protector. The heavy campaigns of the WP in slums increased its success, and thus the WP began governing one-third of the whole country thanks to big cities that it got in elections.³¹² This is absolutely the greatest success for Views of Ummah in general and the WP in particular.

In the local elections in 1994, the questionnaires were heavily used, especially by the press, to mold public opinion. Via the questionnaires, the most striking campaign was organized against Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the WP's candidate. Firstly, the WP was ignored by the press, and the true questionnaire results about vote rate were understated to the public when it was noticed that the WP got decisively into running with other parties to win the elections.³¹³ Afterward, it was aimed to cause the WP to lose its votes via a disparaging campaign. The press used factionalizing and threatening discourse against the

³¹¹ Tanil Bora and Kemal Can, "Bunalım Donemine Girerken", *Birikim Journal*, 81, January, 1996, , pp., 36-42.

³¹² Şadiye Ay, "Political Islam in Turkey", *Mevzuat Journal*, (83), 2004, p. 7.

³¹³ "Zülfü yine birinci, Refah dördüncü", *Sabah*, 1 Mart 1994.

WP.³¹⁴ However, focusing on the results of local elections in 1994, it was clearly observed that all these disparaging works weren't respected by the society.

The winner of 1994 local elections in Turkey was indisputably the WP. It got the two metropolitan municipalities; the biggest city Istanbul and the capital Ankara. The voting rate of the parties in 1994 was as below:³¹⁵

The Welfare Party: 22,40 %

The Motherland Party:21,79 %

The Social Democratic Populist Party:19,68 %

The True Path Party:15,88 %

In just several months, the WP, Erbakan's party, introduced many services in its municipalities that it got in local elections in 1994. Thanks to this, the WP participated in the general elections on December 24, 1995. For this election, Erbakan visited the cities one by one, and had impressive discourses in meetings with the experienced politician Aydın Menderes, son of former Prime Minister Adnan Menderes. In this way, he managed to impress most of the voters, and thus made his party winner.³¹⁶ WP's rise to the status of a nationwide political movement, as opposed to a party confined mainly to its inner Anatolian roots, was consolidated further by the general elections of December 1995.³¹⁷ Coming to the first position in this election, the WP reached its greatest success in its history with 21% vote rate.

In the electoral declaration published before the elections, the WP clearly emphasized its future policies. Some of the policies are mentioned below:

The WP;

- upholds just the truth despite the other political parties which uphold power, and thinks power superior to truth.

³¹⁴ "Anketler sandığı etkiliyor mu?", Sabah, 16 Şubat 1994; "Anketlerin hepsi değişecek", Sabah, 18 Şubat 1994.

³¹⁵ Available at: <http://www.secimsonucu.com/GenelSecimSonuclari.asp?SY=1994>

³¹⁶ Henry Barkey, "Turkey, Islamic Politics, and the Kurdish Question", World Policy Journal, 23 (Spring 1996), p. 43-52.

³¹⁷ Öniş, *ibid.*, pp. 743.

- sides with full independence instead of a “puppet state” of the Western world.
- upholds the “Just Economic Order” despite the ‘heavy usurious and capitalist order’.
- prioritizes “servant state” model which respects to individual rights and freedoms despite the oppressive regimes of police states.
- fights against unemployment via the project of ‘Just Order’ and productional campaign with ‘foursquare’ staffs.
- applies the economical formulas of Views of Ummah instead of IMF-supported economic programs or solutions.
- removes financial difficulties of society and let it reach the welfare via economic policy.
- ends command democracy and brings real democracy to Turkey by preventing the oppression of the Muslims.
- founds a real ‘Democratic Constitutional State’.³¹⁸

In the interview with Alaattin Sahin, graduated from Faculty of Political Science in Ankara University and member of Board of Overseers in Sifa University, he told how he was impressed by the WP’s election campaign in these statements:

“After Ozal’s death, I voted for the WP in 1994-1995 because the center-right parties didn’t have promising future to society. It had a different sound in Turkish policy. However, other parties did not mention any improvement. One of the factors for my vote was that the people who were bound up with the WP were possibly more honest. In 1994-1995, the WP’s campaign made the public participate in politics. Istanbul was an example of that situation. The WP representatives had strong bonds with people. Women first took

³¹⁸ For more information see: Election Bulletin of Welfare Party, Turkish Grand National Assembly Library, 24 December 1995.

place in politics in a religious-based platform. As is known to all, women are shy in conservative societies, and they don't easily take part in the public sphere or politics. However, women had a chance to do politics thanks to the WP's women's branch."³¹⁹

Even though the WP got the plurality in the general election of 1995, it could not form the government alone, so it was forced to form a coalition. The president Suleyman Demirel gave the duty of forming the government to Erbakan, but no other party wanted to associate with the WP. Because of the WP's despair in forming the government, Demirel gave the duty to the second party, the TPP.³²⁰ However, Tansu Ciller, the leader of TPP, suffered the same fate that Erbakan faced, and he returned the duty to President Demirel. Eventually, the duty was in the hand of Mesut Yılmaz, the leader of the ANAP, and the coalition was formed between ANAP and TPP. The ANAP-TPP coalition government was to reach absolute majority vote which was 276 out of 550 for a vote of confidence, but they could not reach the majority, because the DSP did not participate in voting. Although there was an obvious failure of coalition parties for vote of confidence, still they got it unconstitutionally. Thereupon, the WP applied to the Constitutional Court, and on May 14, the Constitutional Court decided in favor of the WP. This created a need of new vote of confidence for the coalition parties, but the cancellation of new voting caused the fall of the ANAP-TPP coalition government in the end.³²¹

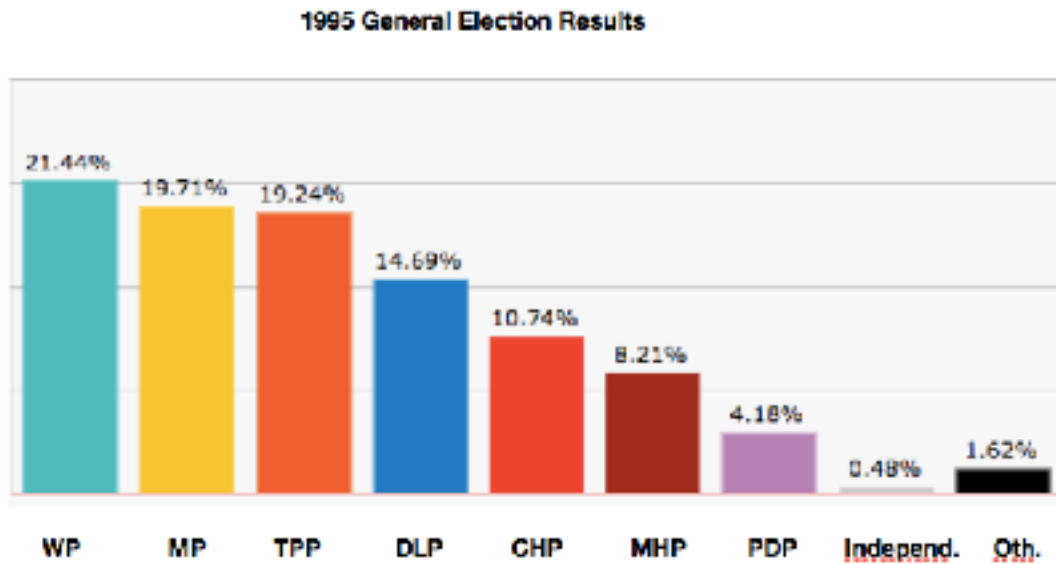
After the fall of ANAP-TPP coalition government, Erbakan started negotiations with Tansu Ciller, the leader of TPP, and fortunately, these two parties managed to form a new WP-TPP coalition government under the presidency of Erbakan. With the new coalition, some changes in the speeches of Erbakan were observed. The fifth party convention of the WP, held on October

³¹⁹ The interview with Alaattin Şahin, Izmir, 05.04.2016

³²⁰ Özdemir, *ibid.*, p. 175.

³²¹ Süleyman Kocabaş, *Refahyol Hükümeti Sonunun Perde Arkası*, Vatan Publication, Istanbul, 1997, p.

13, 1996, clearly showed the changes in the party. Unlike previous party conventions, the party executives were more prudent. Going up to the rostrum as the Prime Minister for the first time in his life, Erbakan delivered a quite gentle speech unlike his former speeches in the period when the WP was an opposition party. In his speech, he did not mention ‘Just Order’ or other projects and proposals of the WP but focused on a political consensus with a Secular front. He also told that he was a real follower of M.Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey and the first president, and had good relations with Turkish Armed Forces. He emphasized that the WP rescued the Turkish society from the political vacuum resulted from Ozal’s death in 1993.³²²



4.3.7 February 28 Process and Closure of the Welfare Party

February 28 process was the general name for the sequence of events which ended the coalition leadership of the WP and prognosticated the breaking in the 1980 coup d’etat perception of military elites about the legitimacy of civil authority. On the other hand, it was the last intervention of supreme military bureaucracy to political corporations and governments in the history of coups

³²² Özdemir, *ibid.*, pp. 176-177.

and military dominations in Turkey.³²³ Today, it is still discussed whether the February 28 process was a post-modern coup, a military memorandum or a high-dose intervention to democratic civil authority.

Before mentioning the practices of the WP in the ruling, the factors preparing February 28 process are also important to discuss. The main factor initiating the process was the WP's victory in general elections in 1995 with 21.38% vote rate, and then Erbakan's leadership in forming the coalition government with Tansu Ciller, the leader of TPP, on June 28, 1996. Even as a coalition partner, the WP was the first ruling party which adopted Islam as a political ideology in Turkey's democratization process starting in 1908. In brief, this main and initiative factor must be studied intensively to understand the process better.

WP's Islamic roots and anti-secularist image brought it into tension with the Turkish military, who were accorded a 'guardianship role' in relation to Turkish secular principles under the Constitution.³²⁴

It is obvious that the speeches and activities of the WP and especially Erbakan before February 28 were initiators for the process. A considerable part of 'Just Order' rhetoric was related to 'D8' project. Erbakan wanted to realize this project against the West block in the cooperation with Muslim countries in terms of culture and economy.³²⁵ He started his visits abroad with the countries ruled with Islamic regime, so he visited Egypt, Libya, and Nigeria respectively. During the meeting with the Libyan leader, Qaddafi had apprehensive and harsh criticism on Turkey's internal and foreign policy, revolutions and political culture, but the WP committee remained unresponsive and defenseless against these criticisms.³²⁶ Therefore, in Turkey, the WP was harshly criticized by the opposition party, public, and press for the passivity in Libya. WP's Islamic roots

³²³ Nuh Yılmaz, "Bir Postmodern Darbe Portresi: 28 Şubat", Edit. Abdurrahman Babacan, *Binyılın Sonu*, Pınar Publication, İstanbul, 2012, p. 211.

³²⁴ Kevin Boyle, "Human Rights, Religion and Democracy: The Refah Party Case", *Essex Human Rights Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 4.

³²⁵ Öniş, *ibid.*, pp. 754.

³²⁶ Boyle, *ibid.*, p. 16.

and anti-secularist image brought it into tension with the Turkish military, who were accorded a ‘guardianship role’ in relation to Turkish secular principles under the Constitution.

As stated above, one of the most effective events for the February 28 process in WP-TPP government was the ‘D8’ project, which was included in the electoral declaration of the WP in 1995 elections. It was considered as an alternative to G-8 and planned to establish with Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey.³²⁷ The former governments in Turkey generally declared their dependence to Western block as a first step, and had their official visits to Western countries. However, Erbakan first visited Eastern countries, such as Iran, Pakistan, Singapore, and Malaysia, which caused severe criticisms and discussions in Turkey. The external media organs weren’t unresponsive to this event, and especially the USA criticized the Iran visit and the treaties that were planned to conclude with Iran.³²⁸

The internal policy also had hand in the process initiating February 28. Sometimes, the notable members of the WP used over-ambitious statements in their speeches, and this caused harshness in the political discourse of WP.³²⁹ Thus, the WP became a focus of anti-secular actions. In this context, the speech of Sukru Karatepe, the mayor of Kayseri, on November 10, 1996, was an obvious example for radical Islamic discourse, and this speech was cited as evidence for closure case of the WP. In a province basis meeting of the WP, Karatepe claimed that Turkey wasn’t ruled with real democracy, and the dark dominant forces manipulated the public. According to his speech:

“Never think I am secular by judging my clothing style. I took part in a ceremony today –implying the commemoration of Atatürk- just because it’s my official duty. Of course, the prime minister, other

³²⁷ Available at: <http://www.ethosfelsefe.com/ethosdiyaloglar/mydocs/ethos3-beyhan.pdf>.

³²⁸ Ali Bulaç, *Göçün ve Kentin Siyaseti (MNP’den SP’ye Milli Görüş Partileri)*, Çıra Press, İstanbul, 2009, p. 275.

³²⁹ Bulaç, *ibid.*, p. 278.

ministers, and deputies have some obligations, but you have no. As a member of the WP, I must try to change this order even if I am on my own on Earth. This out-dated order accepts the people as slaves, and so it must absolutely be changed. Muslims! Never leave this belief, passion, and hatred. Changing this order is a binding duty for us...”³³⁰

When the pressures on the WP increased, it had the fear of entrapment by the secular front and had its first contra operations on the press which criticized the WP all along. The WP had urgent measurements, and it planned to publish a three-point decree about the press, which was to come into force in one month. According to this decree, it was stated that government no longer is not going to give loans to press, the payment date of former loans is no more delayed, and promotion ban is placed. This decree was considered as a “blow to freedom of the press”, and it caused severe reactions of the press. Moreover, the WP interrupted the advertising and promotion because it assumed that the press does injustice, terminates with extreme prejudice, and snitches via falsified news all along.³³¹

The WP continued its attempts to impose Islamic policy via Islamic symbols and activities throughout its power. Some of these activities became prominent in the process initiating the closure of the WP. Here are some of these:³³²

- Previously, some donations in Turkey were manipulated to some definite foundations, and these foundations were related to the military or secular front. However, in his power, Erbakan interrupted the traditional methods and tried to manipulate these donations to other foundations close to the Islamic front.

- He gave feasts to some leaders of tariqas in his residence. However, the military elites and the secular front were strictly against these tariqas.

³³⁰ Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xE7dJ17psXQ>

³³¹ Özdemir, *ibid.*, p. 177.

³³² Mehmet Ali Birand, *Last Coup 28 February*, Doğan Press, Istanbul, 2012.

- In one of Supreme Military Council Meeting, he signed the decree with an annotation about the soldiers who were drummed out of the army due to reactionary activities. However, the military elites aimed to sack all those soldiers once.

- In one of his speeches, Erbakan said that the ‘imam-hatip’ high schools were the base court of the WP and Views of Ummah, but there were some who were strictly against the religious education in Turkey.

- In another speech, Erbakan made some comments about next elections and said that “let’s wait and see how to come in power- whether with ‘bloody’ or ‘bloodless’”. However, this statement was accepted as an obvious ‘challenge’ to militarist and secular front.

Probably, the final straw for initiating February 28 process belonged to another mayor of the WP.³³³ The former mayor of Sincan, a district of the Capital Ankara, organized a night for ‘Jerusalem’ and invited the Iranian Ambassador Mohammad Reza Bagheri. In this organization, the walls of the hall were full of the posters of the notables in Islamic Jihad Movement, Hamas, and Hezbollah, such as Fethi Sikaki, Yahya Ayyas, Abbas Musevi and Musa Sadr, and among these posters on the stage, a theatre play was performed. The main theme of it was Israel’s occupation of Jerusalem, protest against Israel and support to occupied Palestine.³³⁴ After the play, the mayor Bekir Yıldız and the ambassador Bagheri made speeches about secularism, shariah, and Israel, and in their speeches, Bagheri told, “God will absolutely punish those who cooperate with Israel” by implying the military elites of Turkey, and Yıldız stated, “The Islamists will inject the shariah to secularists by force”.³³⁵ As a result, these statements increased the tension, and the next day the CHP organized a protest march in Sincan. However, the members of CHP and media were attacked by sympathizers of the WP. All of these induced a crisis in public, especially in military bureaucracy and media. Thus, the command echelon of army decided to

³³³ Bulaç, *ibid.*, p. 279.

³³⁴ Birand, *ibid.*, p. 231.

³³⁵ Available at: <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/1997/02/03/siyaset/sincan.html>

take an action against the Islamist front especially the WP and drove 20 tanks and 15 armored vehicles on the highway of Sincan on February 4. Yet, the Presidency of General Staff emphasized on the official declaration that their aim was to equalize the tank tracks, not a show of strength.³³⁶

Here, it was very helpful to hear the comments of Ersonmez Yarbay, former deputy of the WP, and Yasar Yakıs, former ambassador of Egypt and one of the charter members of AKP. Yarbay interpreted the provoking events for the February 28 process:

“With the disintegration of Soviet Union, the World became mono-polar, and in a mono-polar World, NATO considered the Muslims as an enemy to save itself from disintegration. Thus, a general project was begun by NATO forces to develop secularist movements in Muslim countries. Within this project, Turkey had a great importance, because it was both secular and a member of NATO and the February 28 plot was brewed to stop the rise of the WP. Then, religious-based things such as using religious symbols or religious education were banned. NATO wanted to raise the sensitiveness of public against the Islamic developments, and it tried to stop the rise of the WP by using some organizations such as the army, the MP, the CHP, non-governmental organizations, Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey and also the press. Unfortunately, Turkey saw lots of undefined murders during that period. The ‘Imam-Hatip’ schools were closed, and the faculties of Theology were decreased in number. In the end, the WP was closed.”³³⁷

According to Yaşar Yakıs:

³³⁶ For more information see. Hulki Cevizoğlu, 28 Şubat Bir Hükümet Nasıl Devrildi, Ceviz Kabuğu Press, Ankara, 2003, p. 15.

³³⁷ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, Ankara, 10.06.2016.

“Erbakan offended and perhaps threatened the secular part of the public while presenting his plans and religious aims. However, the army was very powerful at that time, and naturally the army was very brave to take actions against Erbakan. This was an important reason for February 28. I knew that because I was an ambassador in Cairo at that time. The military elites began cooperation with Israel immediately when Erbakan was the prime minister. Erbakan used to denigrate and criticize Israel on all occasions, and he often emphasized what kind of state he wanted to found. At the time when the female students with head-scarf weren’t allowed to enter universities, he threatened the chancellors and the teachers by saying ‘One day you will salute these girls’. Since the army was very powerful at the time when Erbakan was prime minister, the military elites purposively developed the relations and had cooperation with Israel. In Egypt, some asked me the reason why Turkey became a strategic ally to Israel suddenly. In fact, this situation influenced the relations with Egypt negatively, and I always struggled to improve the relations. I witnessed that the army did this to cause a loss to Erbakan. This was just one of the reasons. Another one is that the army was the protector of secularism in Turkey all along. Briefly, the discourse and the actions of the WP provoked February 28. As I stated, the other factor was the army being the most important protector of secularism.”³³⁸

The statement of Alaattin Sahin, a member of Board Overseers in Sifa University, was like a summative assessment for us to understand the fall of the WP. According to him:

“Obviously, the wrong discourses of the WP provoked February 28. The WP did politics on ‘head-scarf’ and ‘Imam-Hatip’ high schools

³³⁸ The interview with Yaşar Yakış, Ankara, 11.06.2016.

which the secular front was strictly against. For instance, in a caucus, Erbakan used some harsh statements such as ‘the WP will be in power and form ‘Just Order’’, ‘Let’s wait and see whether the transition period will be rough or smooth. We will come into power whether bloody or bloodless’. In another caucus, he told that the Imam-Hatip schools were their base courts. These discourses are among those which provoked the process.”³³⁹

All these factors drag Turkey to the February 28 process, and also prepared the end of the WP. Turkish Armed Forces used The NSC and increased the attempts of imposing its policy on government with the help of President Suleyman Demirel. In the end, a new period started in the history of Turkish policy with the official declaration of NSC on February 28, 1997. With this declaration, the army enforced an ‘Action Plan against Reactionary Forces’ to the government. Under these conditions, Necmettin Erbakan had to resign the prime ministry.³⁴⁰ On 16th January 1998, WP was dissolved and its leaders were banned from political life for five years by The Turkish Court. The remaining 153 party members continued as elected representatives to the TBMM in their individual capacities. Only two members of the Constitutional Court dissented from the judgment (Judges Hasim Kilic and Sacit Adali). Their reasoning was based on the European Convention on Human Rights.³⁴¹

According to Bill Park:

“Turkish coups are not all the same. Some are led from the top, some from the lower ranks, and some fail because most of the military does not support them. The Republic of Turkey was born out largely out of the politicization of military officers. It was always upheld by a politicized military, and civilian institutions have

³³⁹ The interview with Alaattin Şahin, İzmir, 05.04.2016.

³⁴⁰ Cevizoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁴¹ Boyle, *ibid.*, p. 6.

been insufficiently strong, effective or legitimate to resist military involvement in politics. 28th February was an example of one of these.”³⁴²

The European Court of Human Rights concluded the decision about the closure of the WP on July 31, 2001. The court accepted that a shariah-based state, violent and jihadist discourses of executives and multilateral judicial system proposals are against the ECHR. The court also reminded that the interpretation on the Secularism Principle of the Constitutional Court is made by considering the history of Turkish law, and the Turkish society tried the theocratical regime in Ottoman period, but then ended the theocratical order by founding the Turkish Republic. Moreover, it had a conclusion that the theocratical threat in Turkey is in its recent times, and it means this threat may rise again in a close future by considering the reality that most of the Turkish population is Muslim.³⁴³

The decision of the Constitutional Court was discussible or reproachable, but there was a reality that the WP is finally closed. Everyone had to be respectful to this decision, but it was obviously problematic in terms of the fundamental principles of law and constitution. The attitudes can be different for the given party, yet the crucial point is that as libertarian citizens, this situation caused anxiety about whether Turkey is a state of law. Moreover, the decision showed that the Constitutional court had a totalitarian perception of secularism and democracy, rather than authoritarian, and this straightened the anxiety.³⁴⁴

³⁴² The interview with Bill Park, 22.08.2017.

³⁴³ Mehmet Turhan, “Avrupa İnsan Hakları Sözleşmesi ve Siyasi Parti Kapatma Davaları”, *Journal of Ankara University Faculty of Political Science*, 57-3, p. 142.

³⁴⁴ Sinan Başaran, “Refah Partisi’nin Kapatılması Üzerine Hukuki Bir İnceleme”, Available at: <http://www.libertedownload.com/LD/arsiv/09/03-m.sinan-basaran-refah-partisinin-kapatilmasi-karari-uzerine-hukuki-bir-inceleme.pdf>.

4.4 Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*, FP) and Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*, SP)

The NSC's declaration dated February 28, 1997, and the lawsuit filed for closing WP forced the authorities involved in Views of Ummah Movement to establish a new party. Consequently, the Virtue Party (FP) was established under the leadership of Ismail Alptekin on December 17, 1997.³⁴⁵ After WP was closed down, independent deputies joined FP. After this, Recai Kutan was elected as the leader of FP on May 14, 1998.

It can be easily suggested that FP, which represented Views of Ummah Movement Party, tried to give the impression of a party, which is in favor of integrating with the West, supporter of liberal economy, and democratic constitutional state, in order to guarantee its existence.³⁴⁶ We can also see from its Party Program that FP pursued quite a different path from that of its predecessor WP. In the Party Program, it was stated that it was necessary to keep the state out of commercial activities and such activities must be carried out under the control of the private sector. The state must undertake its actual functions. All public and semi-public commodities and services, such as security, justice, education, and health, and needs of the free market economy, must be made as the controlling, regulating and guiding body in order to encourage private enterprise.³⁴⁷

While the party tried to establish a basis for its legitimacy in the political area, the leading members of FP made statements, such as "We did not recognize the state, did not pay attention to its sensitivities" for WP period, which was intended for confession. It also created an identity as a political formation, the victim of February 28, which wanted an election for salvation from the February 28 process and military domination.

³⁴⁵ Çiler Dursun, "Televizyon Haberlerinde Siyasal İslamcı Partinin Temsili: 1999 Seçimlerinde Fazilet Partisi", *Selçuk University Faculty of Communication Journal*, Issue: 3, 2004, p. 7.

³⁴⁶ Çağatay Okutan, "Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi: Muhafazakar Demokrat mı, Hristiyan Demokrasininin Müslüman Versiyonu mu?", *Dokuz Eylül University Institute of Social Sciences Journal*, 8 (1), Izmir, 2006, p. 317.

³⁴⁷ Virtue Party Election Bulletin, Leading Together For Turkey Democracy Human Rights and Freedom, Peace, Justice, and Development Program for Leading for Turkey, 1998, p. 15-16.

Giving priority to strengthening civil society and relations with non-governmental organizations, FP emphasized the fact that democracy could be strengthened by empowering non-governmental organizations within the context of the relationship between democracy and NGO's, and social participation and the country could become more powerful with a stronger democracy. Arguing that representative democracy would be replaced by a direct democracy in the next century, FP aimed to act in coordination with the state with the contribution of non-governmental organizations, which they described as one of the significant mediums for solving economic problems, employer-worker's representatives and allow them to develop alternative solutions.³⁴⁸

Mehmet Batuk, former deputy of FP, made the following statements about his party's understanding of democratization:

“Our party accepts that there is no will over the national will and this will belong to the nation unconditionally. TBMM, which is selected with free votes of the public, is the highest institution where National Will manifests itself. FP believes that political parties are indispensable aspects of democracy, and all organs of the state must show maximum effort for maintaining the presence of political parties. Our party believes that Turkey's integration with modern, democratic world is only possible if democracy is applied fully and in the strictest sense. We believe that our country, which is located in a highly strategic geography that hosted various civilizations throughout history, can live in peace and harmony with a tolerance between individuals of different beliefs and opinions, only by achieving a fully democratic regime.”³⁴⁹

³⁴⁸ Özdemir, *ibid.*, p. 182.

³⁴⁹ The interview with Mehmet Batuk, 08.04.2016.

The Congress, which was organized by Virtual Party in 2000, and the presence of two strong candidates showed the first example in Views of Ummah Movement in terms of competition.³⁵⁰ The congress, in which Reformists and Traditionalists competed, was a test of democratization for Views of Ummah Movement. The congress, in which two candidates competed freely in accordance with democratic values, was important and valuable for FP and Views of Ummah. The deputy Ersönmez Yarbay explained this as follows:

“During that period, a dispute started in FP, and the party was divided into two groups, namely Reformists and Traditionalists. Traditionalists advocated ideas dedicated to the thinking system of Views of Ummah, in favor of cooperation with Islamic countries and against EU. Reformists had ideas like 'we must adopt democratic principles, one-man administration, establish close relationships and dialogue with EU, and cooperating only with Islamic countries is not a solution.' Reformists also objected to party rule and its administrative structure, because until then, there used to be always one candidate in the congresses of Views of Ummah parties. A second candidate was not permitted. In 2000 congress, Necmettin Erbakan was banned from politics, and his candidate was Recai Kutan. On the other hand, the candidate of Reformists was Abdullah Gül. For the first time in the history of Views of Ummah, elections were made with 2 candidates. In this election, Abdullah Gül lost although he had received a significant number of votes. This was actually a considerable success. Afterward, just like the previous Views of Ummah parties, FP was also closed by the Constitutional Court on the grounds that they were acting against secularism. After FP was closed, Gül and his friends established a

³⁵⁰ Cevizoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 19.

new party. Erbakan and his friends formed a separate group. First SP, afterward AKP was established.”³⁵¹

Despite WP, which reached to an advantageous position against other centre parties with Just Order rhetoric, anti-western foreign policy oriented towards Islamic countries; an ideology that fictionalized conservative nationalist discourse with Islamic concepts, idiosyncratic arguments such as fraternity of Muslims. FP, which emerged as the product of February 28th process, is a party, which oriented towards West as distinct from other Views of Ummah parties; particularly, its forerunner WP laid emphasis on the necessities of liberal economy by avoiding Just Order rhetoric, adopted liberal values instead of religious discourses, and gave priority to human rights and democratization. However, FP was also condemned to the same fate as WP, and the party was closed.³⁵²

We see that FP suffered a significant loss of votes during local and general elections held on April 18, 199. A vast majority of voters voted for DSP and MHP, and FP could not avoid its ill fortune despite winning 111 seats in the parliament by receiving 15.4% of votes.³⁵³ Following the general elections, after Merve Sefa Kavakçı came to the oath-taking ceremony with her scarf on, Supreme Court of Appeals Prosecutor Vural Savaş presented a case to Constitutional Court for closing FP.³⁵⁴ Constitutional Court closed FP as per the 103rd article of the Law on Political Parties for acting against the fourth clause of Constitution's 68th Article. Constitutional Court's verdict on the subject is as follows:

“The Leader, Deputy and some Mayors of the party provoked the public to hatred and hostility against public officers in a manner that

³⁵¹ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, 10.06.2016

³⁵² Cevizoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 25.

³⁵³ Sabri Sayari, “Towards a New Turkish System?”, *Journal of Turkish Studies*, Vol. 8, Issue 2, 2007.

³⁵⁴ Birol Yeşilada, “The Virtue Party”, *Journal of Turkish Studies*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, 2002, p. 73.

disturbs the peace of the country by describing head-scarf ban imposed on public offices and universities as tyranny and despotism, which prevents using rights and freedoms with the claim that secularism is defined wrongly. However, further to that, they turned head-scarf subject into a demonstration, which was applauded by all parliament members, at Grand National Assembly of Turkish Republic, where the will of the nation is realized, through Merve Kavakçı and Nazlı Ilıcak, who openly supported her during and after the elections. In this way, defendant party severely violated the principle of secularism, which has an important place in the Turkish Republic, which went through a theocratical state experience, by carrying turban or head-scarf, which was used by the defendant party as a strong political symbol, creating an actual condition. The fact that defendant party participated in this protest against the principle of secularism, which constitutes the basis of democracy, rights, and freedoms, with its leader and all of his deputies, is the most obvious proof that FP has become the axis of such actions.”³⁵⁵

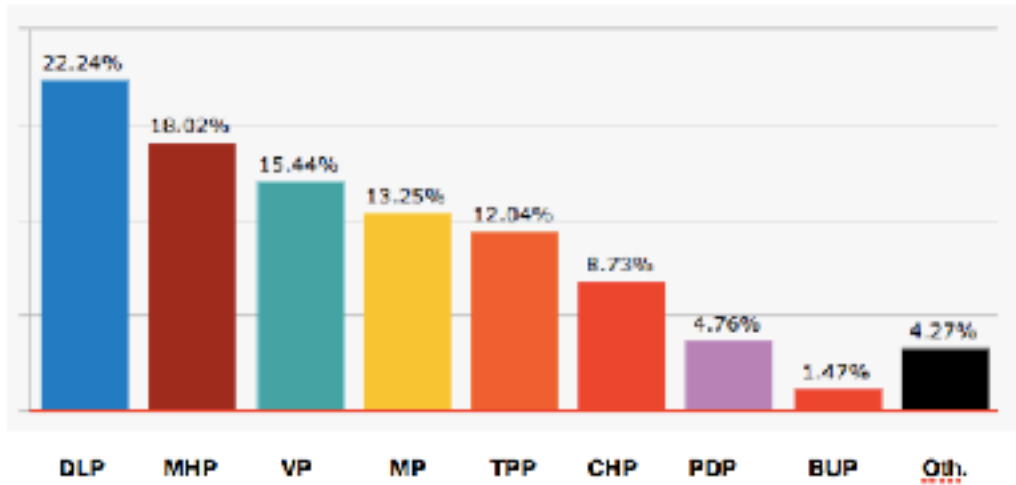
FP was closed down due to two essential reasons. The first is the party expressing the head-scarf problem, and the other is Merve Kavakçı case.³⁵⁶ Therefore, according to Constitutional Court, the way Merve Kavakçı, who caused the closure of the party with her statements and actions, came to Grand National Assembly of Turkish Republic with her head-scarf on, parliament member Nazlı Ilıcak assisted Merve Kavakçı, and statements of Bekir Sobacı, another deputy of the party, about head-scarf, prove that this party is the axis of anti-secularist actions.

SP, which was established by Recai Kutan in 2001 after FP was closed, continued the activities of Views of Ummah movement. Almost half of 105

³⁵⁵ Esas Sayısı: 1999/2 (Siyasi Parti Kapatma), Karar Sayısı: 2001/2, Karar Günü: 22.06.2001, AMKD, Sayı: 37/2, s. 1498-1499.

³⁵⁶ The interview with Mehmet Batuk, 08.04.2015.

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deputies of FP, who became independent parliament members after the party was closed, decided to join SP.

The SP represented the “National View” of political Islam as formulated by the late Necmettin Erbakan. As the establishment of political parties using religious symbols was still banned by the constitution, it could never say it represents political Islam. That’s why it used the concept of “National View,” which argued that Turkey’s fundamental identity is its Muslim identity. This view argued that the secular nation-state identity endorsed with the establishment of the Republic did not reflect the views of Muslims living in Turkey. Erbakan argued that both right wing and left wing parties in Turkey were the product of “foreign” ideologies. He used to say: “They are foreign, we are national.”³⁵⁷

It would not be wrong to say that SP was the most unsuccessful party among Views of Ummah parties from its establishment until today. Figures also support this argument. SP, which could not enter TBMM in 2002 General Elections with 2.5% vote rate, could not achieve its objectives in 2007 elections

³⁵⁷ Behlül Özkan, “Felicity Party can ‘strike a blow against AKP-MHP alliance in Turkey’s 2019 elections’”, *Hurriyet Daily News*, 12.03.2018.

with 2.34% vote rate. After this, they caused disappointment with 1.27% vote rate in 2011, 2.06% in June 2015, and 0.68% vote rate in November 2015.³⁵⁸

When SP's Party Program is investigated, the following statements are seen under democracy heading:

“SP wants the felicity of everyone and understands that this can be possible only with peace and fraternity, liberty, justice, welfare, and dignity. Human, social specie, has the right to manage political and social organizations he/she established with other humans. Sovereignty is used with popular vote directly or through the free voting of individuals and through their representatives, who are elected under equal promotion conditions. Right to use sovereignty, which is granted by the nation to TBMM, cannot be completely or partially assigned to any other person or institution.”³⁵⁹

The great success of AKP was the most important reason why the party could not enter TBMM and did not receive the support of the public to the extent that they targeted, because AKP has succeeded in receiving the vote of the majority of right and conservative sections since it was established.

4.5 Conclusion

Views of Ummah Movement and WP, which came to the forefront of Turkish political history as a different color and voice, with a considerable support from the public, was in a different position in the democratization process of Turkey compared to other parties, in both negative and positive sense.

As is seen in this study, Views of Ummah contributed a lot to Turkish democratization. It must be considered as a great success that the WP behaved as a spokesperson for the people who were under pressure due to their Islamic

³⁵⁸ Available at: <https://secim.haberler.com/2011/>.

³⁵⁹ Felicity Party, Party Program, 04.05.2014.

sensitiveness, and took as a duty to lend a hand to them when other parties were deaf. Views of Ummah managed to reach those needy ones who lived in slums and countryside, so got a great political support.

Views of Ummah Movement had an important tendency, which lied behind its rise and determined its middle class policy. This is its "just economic order" approach, which embraced poor people living in urban areas, residents of the slums and new immigrants deprived of social security, especially through the municipalities they took over after 1990. Although it was not put into action, with this approach, the movement established bonds with these masses through charity actions such as food, cloth, fuel, and health allowances for the poor sections of society. Effective municipality services provided improved the life quality of people considerably. Support to the party increased quickly when urban income was shared (even if it was not unequally) with large masses. According to some people, Just Order rhetoric was a completely utopian discourse, and was never put into action and implemented.

As is also understood from the study, WP's election strategy and the campaign also had a positive role in process of democratization in Turkey. This model, which would set an example for its successor parties, was quite remarkable; especially with "rosary model" as the party's organizational model, a responsible person was assigned to each district, and this person assigned responsible members for each street, road and even apartment in the district. In this way, the party tried to reach all layers of society. Therefore, they listened to the opinions and wishes of almost all sections and tried to evaluate them. In addition to this, nominating candidates in all regions, municipalities even if it is known that winning the election is impossible was a strategy, which was never adopted in the history of Turkish democracy.

Views of Ummah used to be hand in hand with its citizens not only in domestic but also in abroad thanks to its organizations, especially 'European Views of Ummah Organization'. Also, it lent a hand to the Muslims throughout the World and won their hearts thanks to 'The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH)'.

Women for the first time had a chance to take part in policy on a religious-based platform thanks to the women's branches of the WP. As stated above, the women were in the background in conservative societies. However, they did politics in a conservative base with the encouragement of the WP. This was one of the most important acquisitions which the WP and Views of Ummah contributed to democratization process of Turkey.

As it is mentioned in the study, it was obvious that representatives of Views of Ummah Movement had a negative effect on the democratization of Turkey due to the policies they pursued especially during the February 28 process. The way Necmettin Erbakan expressed his religious goals in a manner that would offend a section of society and invited leaders of religious congregations and sects to iftar meals at Prime Minister's residence, regarded Religious Vocational High Schools as their backyards were among these discourses and policies. These policies damaged Views of Ummah in specific and democratization of Turkey in general.

Finally, another aspect I would like to point out is that although Views of Ummah Movement received a significant public support, yet its period of power was not strong and permanent. Due to its radical attitude, the party gave the impression of an organization, which can be cast out from the power with methods beyond politics. Therefore, the authentic bourgeoisie, which needed an environment of confidence, ceased to regard WP as their representative.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY (*ADALET VE KALKINMA PARTISI*, AKP) AND IT'S IMPORTANCE IN TURKISH POLITICAL LIFE

5.0 Introduction

The AKP is a social conservative party established on August 14, 2001. Some of the founders and prominent names were those who were close to the now-defunct Virtue Party (FP) or who didn't join the Felicity Party (SP), which was established after the closure of the FP, which was considered to be the continuation of the FP.³⁶⁰ The party tried to attract a lot of politicians who were previously affiliated with other political opinions during the establishment of the party as well as in later years.

Just after its establishment, the AKP entered the parliament as the single-government party with 34% of the vote it garnered in the November 2002 elections.³⁶¹ AKP was the first party in Turkey that became the ruling party in the first election after its establishment. In the July 22 early parliamentary elections in 2007, it got the largest percentage of votes (47%) after Democratic Party in Turkey. Both elections caused a very different picture as of the period of the multi-party political regime after the Second World War.

The AKP, which stated that it did not follow the tradition of the Views of Ummah after its establishment, defined itself as "conservative-democrat". Despite the fact that it came from the roots of the Views of Ummah, it introduced a new rhetoric and phrase into the Turkish politics with the definition of "conservative-democrat". With its conservative viewpoint, it followed policies different than its predecessors. There were radical changes in both domestic politics and foreign policy. Although they come from the tradition of the Views of Ummah, they stated that they did not adopt the classical conservative way of thinking, they were extrovert, they championed a progressive change and transformation and they were opposed to authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. The AKP elites emphasized that "conservative

³⁶⁰ <http://www.aksam.com.tr/arsiv/aksam/2003/08/14/politika/politika7.html>.

³⁶¹ Available at: <https://secim.haberler.com/2011/>.

democracy" is an area of reconciliation against polarization, which does not reject the existence of the interaction and relationship between these ideologies, against the ideologies that divide the world into sharp fault lines.

AKP, in its first years, affected the democratization process positively. Great achievements were made in the early years of AKP in terms of the democratization of the country. When we compare this between past and the first period of AKP, AKP did more developments in different fields, such as the promotion of the human rights standard, social equality, and reduction of military authority. The objective of this chapter is to reveal the process of establishment of the AKP, which succeeded to garner the most votes in all the elections it participated since the day it was established, and its effects on Turkish democratization. At the same time, the conservative democratic identity of the party, the 2007 presidential election, and e-memorandum, which have an important place in Turkish politics, and to explain what happened in this process are among the other objectives of this chapter.

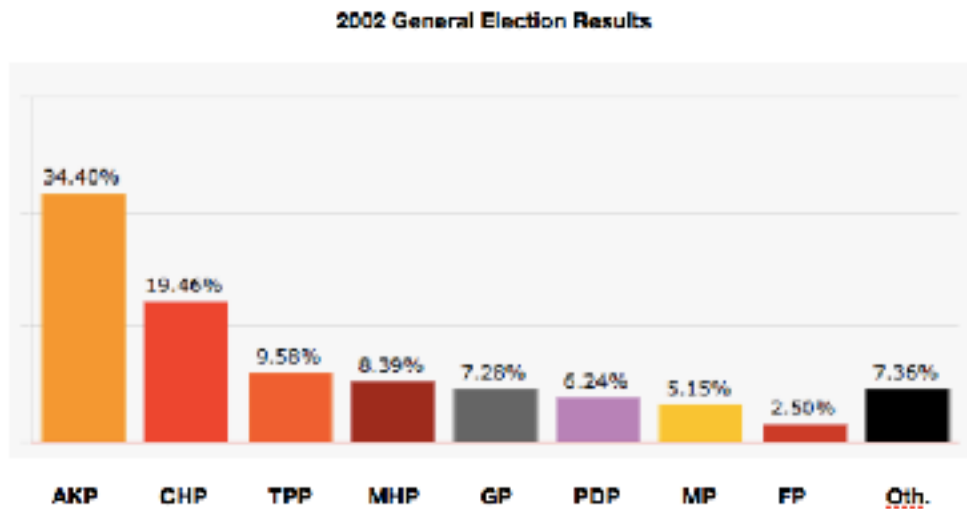
5.1 AKP: From It's Establishment until 2007 Presidential Election

From the remnants of the WP, Erdoğan teamed up with Islamist cohorts who shared his practical approach. The coterie of young Islamists was more politically sophisticated than Necmettin Erbakan. In 2001, Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül established the AKP. *Ak* in Turkish means "white", suggesting clean government. The party chose a light bulb as its logo. AKP was cast as a party of enlightenment. Erdoğan asserted, "AKP is not a political party with a religious axis," but a mainstream conservative party. AKP was envisioned as modern and inclusive.³⁶²

The AKP was born from the ashes of a banned political party (the Virtue Party) by a leader who was imprisoned for 'inciting hatred and enmity' and barred from running for a parliamentary seat in the November 2002 elections. In these elections, the AKP captured 34 % of votes and 363 seats in the parliament, a landslide victory, while its nearest contender, the CHP, could only get 178

³⁶² Phillips, *ibid.* , p. 10.

seats with 19 % of the votes, while pro-Islamic SP received an all-time low 2%.³⁶³



The AKP, as mentioned before, came from the tradition of the Views of Ummah. However, all the founding members of the AKP rejected this tradition from the moment they established the party in 2001 and said, "We have taken off the shirt of the Views of Ummah."³⁶⁴ In fact, it was possible to say that this change began much earlier. It has begun to change with the verdicts of the Views of Ummah tradition, over conservative, even religious conservative, and most importantly, the anti-Western politics WP has taken in the 1994 congress of the 4th Congress. The strict, over-conservative, even religious-conservative viewpoint and most importantly, the anti-Western politics of the Views of Ummah started to change with the decisions WP took at its 4th congress in 1994.³⁶⁵ It is mentioned in the previous chapter that the process of change became even more radical with the establishment of FP. Abdullah Gül's nomination at the FP's congress against Necmettin Erbakan and garnering nearly half of the votes demonstrated that the "reformists" received a considerable support.

³⁶³ Results of General Elections, <https://secim.haberler.com/2011/>, Access Date: 19.05.2017.

³⁶⁴ Teazis, *ibid.*, p. 80.

³⁶⁵ Teazis, *ibid.*, p. 80.

The reconfiguration of Turkish politics in the AKP's first five years in office raised the question of whether the AKP represents a new synthesis in Turkish politics.³⁶⁶ AKP officials argued that the AKP does not have an Islamist agenda. The party, Ihsan Dağı argued, represents peripheral Islamic social and cultural conservatism, but it is pursuing a modernizing agenda. The AKP elites had occasionally explained that they have abandoned the tradition of the Views of Ummah and carried out its policies in this direction. For example, it would be wise to compare the AKP and Views of Ummah Parties' approach to secularism, because one of the most talked about problematic areas was the relationship of religion and politics in the modern Turkish Republic. At the heart of this discussion lied the meaning of the principle of secularism and Turkey-specific practices. It can be maintained that discussions on secularism became tenser with the passage to multi-party political life and from time to time, the parties of the debate found themselves in a sharp polarization.³⁶⁷ In fact, the main reason for the February 28, 1997, "postmodern coup" and the April 27, 2007 e-memorandum before the presidential election was secularism. It can be seen that there were serious differences in the way the AKP and Views of Ummah parties handled the issue of secularism in the party programs and discourses. Under the heading of fundamental rights and freedoms in the AKP's program published in 2002, it was expressed that the party perceives Ataturk's principles and revolutions as the most important means of bringing the Turkish society above the level of contemporary civilization and they are regarded as an element of social peace.³⁶⁸ In relation to fundamental rights and freedoms in this framework, the following relevant articles can also be counted among the party objectives: Our Party considers religion as one of the most important institutions of humanity and secularism as the indispensable condition of democracy, as a guarantee of freedom of religion and conscience. It was against the

³⁶⁶ Phillips, *ibid.*, p. 10.

³⁶⁷ Mustafa Erdoğan, *Democracy Laicism Official Ideology*, 2nd Edition, Liberte Publishing, Ankara, 2000, p. 260.

³⁶⁸ Phillips, *ibid.*, p. 10.

interpretation and abuse of secularism as the adversary to religion. In fact, secularism allows all members of religions and beliefs to perform their worships and explain their religious convictions and enables them to live their lives in this direction, but it also guarantees the rights of the non-believers to lead their lives as they wish. In this respect, secularism is the principle of freedom and social peace. Our Party rejected the exploitation of the sacred religious values and ethnicity for political considerations.³⁶⁹ As can be seen, the AKP emphasized the commitment to Ataturk's principles and reforms in the "Development and Democratization Program". It was emphasized that secularism cannot be interpreted as the adversary to religion, but secularism is the principle of freedom and social peace. Based on the problems encountered at the time of the NSP, WP, and FP, which were all closed down by the Constitutional Court, it was emphasized that the religious values must not be exploited for political considerations. In fact, these statements were aimed at convincing those who were skeptical of the AKP.

In the program of the SP, it was stated that the discussions emanating from religion and secularism must be overcome and what needs to be done is the definition and application of secularism according to universal norms. The program of the FP further stated that the principle of secularism to be defined and implemented in accordance with universal principles, as in the developed countries, it was regarded as an indispensable element of social peace and democracy. The program also included the following issues related to secularism: The state should not be a party to religion, beliefs, and affiliations as a requirement of secularism. For this reason, the state cannot be engaged in any practice that encourages or prohibits any beliefs, worships, and regulations related to any religion.³⁷⁰ As a general rule, just as the state cannot impose any kind of pressure with regards to religion, faiths, and affiliations, it is also obligated to prevent any acts of pressure, imposition and violence arising out of certain segments of society. The state removes obstacles to people's choices of

³⁶⁹ Available at: www.akparti.org.tr, 18.02.2015.

³⁷⁰ Teazis, *ibid.*, p. 96.

religion and faiths and the associated requirements.³⁷¹ Therefore, when we look at the programs of the parties mentioned, it is understood that both had adopted the notion that secularism was seen as a necessity of democracy and this principle should be interpreted with a democratic understanding. In this perspective, according to the views of both parties, the state must approach all beliefs equally, and a repressive approach must be avoided.

When the AKP was established and became one of the important actors of Turkish political life, the Views of Ummah from whose roots the AKP rose and Turkey was in a deep crisis. While the crisis experienced by the National View tradition was the reason of the birth for the AKP, the crisis experienced by the country opened the way for this party to guarantee a single-party government.³⁷² The 2001 economic crisis caused the community to do what it did in previous crises. The society liquidated the politicians that they thought were responsible for grievances in the country by acting with a voting reflex that would lift the economic and political risks altogether. As a result of these two reflexes, in the elections of November 3, 2002, all the parties represented in the Assembly failed to pass the national election threshold.³⁷³ What the people wanted was a strong single-party governance that would prevent the shrinkage of the welfare. Thus, the weaknesses of the ruling coalition governments in recent years enabled the AKP to establish a single-party government and the other parties were disqualified from the political arena.

It attracted prominent figures from the nationalist conservative sections, but the core of the party consisted of figures from the Views of Ummah. The aim was to create an inclusive mass party.³⁷⁴ After the troubled political atmosphere of February 28, the reformist movement under the leadership of Erdoğan and Gül was aimed at replacing their politics based on the ideology of conservatism

³⁷¹ Felicity Party's Program, http://www.esam.org.tr/pdf/ler/siyasi_dokumanlar/5_sp/sp_2001_program.pdf, Access Date: 14.11.2016.

³⁷² Teazis, *ibid.*, p. 96.

³⁷³ Ali Bulaç, "AK Party and Conservative Democracy", <http://www.koprudergisi.com/index.asp?Bolum=EskiSayilar&Goster=Yazi&YaziNo=824>, 2006, Access Date: 09.11.2015.

³⁷⁴ Available at: www.akparti.org.tr, 18.02.2015.

with a moderate conservatism expressed by Adnan Menderes and Turgut Özal.³⁷⁵ For this reason, the AKP frequently expressed that it did not come from the tradition of Views of Ummah, it built a new style of politics, and it built on conservative democracy. Instead of directly referring to Islam as done by its predecessors, the AKP limited its relation to the Islam within a democratic framework. Unlike the Views of Ummah, which had the most obvious conservative attitudes, it tended to be a central party in the sense of inclusiveness.³⁷⁶ If we look at the diversity of the voter base of the party, this change can be seen clearly. It has a voter base including Islamists, center-right, ultra-nationalist and some left-wing voters.³⁷⁷

One of the founders of the party and the first foreign affairs minister in the AKP government, Yaşar Yakış expressed what kind of a Turkey they imagined while founding the party:

“We dreamed of creating a Turkey where no one should be incarcerated from reciting a poem during the political campaigns.³⁷⁸ We deemed entering the EU as the most important modernization project since the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey. We aimed to raise the freedom of thought and expression to international standards. We were going to make politics financially auditable and transparent. We aimed at creating a pluralistic society, not a majoritarian one, and we were going to prove that coming to power doesn't mean absolutism of the will of the majority. We would have created mechanisms to deal with citizens' opinions on their

³⁷⁵ A. Gürkan, “Effects of Social Policy in the Formation of the Justice and Development Party's Conservative Democratic Identity,” *OPUS Magazine*, Issue 1, 2011, p. 6.

³⁷⁶ A. Gürkan, *ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁷⁷ Bulaç, *ibid.*, 2006.

³⁷⁸ Yaşar Yakış is referencing to the incarceration of Erdoğan for reciting a poem in 1997.

neighborhoods. We would prevent the political parties from distributing income.”³⁷⁹

Despite its electoral victory, the AKP has remained vulnerable to secularist opposition directed not only by the main opposition party, the CHP, but also the military and some civil sectors that see the AKP as a pro-Islamic movement with a secret agenda to undo the Kemalist/secularist reforms. Given the closure of two pro-Islamic political parties by the constitutional court since 1998, from which the AKP leadership was sprung, the portrayal of the AKP as an Islamically-oriented party has created an unsettling problem of legitimacy for the party generating insecurity in its relations with systemic forces. This has, in fact, been the Achilles heel of the AKP.³⁸⁰

According to Bulaç, the CHP defined itself as a social democrat, but it was a partisan and protectionist party. Its voter base consisted of the well-off as shown on the Lorenz curve used to explain the social inequality. JP and TPP were liberal parties supported by the large capital owners and landowners, but its voter base consisted mainly of low-income earners. It was a political paradox.³⁸¹ The reason was "identity ambiguity", which was very common here in Turkey. The problem was related to the self-perception and how he/she identified himself/herself with others, or how he/she segregated himself or herself from others. The AKP benefitted from this gap and asserted itself in the political arena with its identity as a conservative democracy.

5.1.1 Conservative Democrat Identity of AKP

The politicization of religion as a monolithic, partisan and homogeneous entity by the Views of Ummah parties was rebutted by the 12 September

³⁷⁹ The interview with Yaşar Yakış, 11.06.2016.

³⁸⁰ İhsan Dağı, "The Justice and Development Party: Identity, Politics, and Discourse of Human Rights in the Search for Security and Legitimacy," *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and AK Parti*, Ed. H. Yavuz, Salt Lake City: Utah University Press, 2006, p. 89.

³⁸¹ Ali Bulaç, "AK Party and Conservative Democracy", <http://www.koprudergisi.com/index.asp?Bolum=EskiSayilar&Goster=Yazi&YaziNo=824>, 2006, Access Date: 09.11.2015.

military coup.³⁸² The same was still true for Turkey in the 1990s. The WP experience and the February 28 incidence contributed to the creation of an atmosphere whereby the “religious segments” came to terms with the need to get rid of the locking tutelage of the Views of Ummah tradition and the relations between religion and politics needed to be discussed on a “healthy” manner. The most striking point in the relations between religion and the politics was the belief that this must be dealt with an “internal” motive, not an external center. This questioning has led to the "new conservative democratization" at the level of ideology and identity, and the establishment of the AKP at the level of action.³⁸³

Founded in 2001, the AKP defined itself as a "conservative democrat", saying that it didn't continue the tradition of Views of Ummah. Even though they came from the tradition of the Views of Ummah, we tried to disseminate the message that they changed. They tried not to base their discourse on religion. While Erdoğan said that “They have taken off their shirt of Views of Ummah”, Erbakan expressed that “the AKP elites are without any shirts and imitators.”

Erdoğan expressed that the Views of Ummah was the widespread thought of the previous period and the new era needed a new way of thinking:

“The national View is a brand that was founded by Erbakan and his friends. We tried to disseminate this way of thinking in the rallies and political campaigns. Just as the social democrats had a discourse based on the social democracy, they also tried to create and disseminate the National View. That is how the events unfolded.”³⁸⁴

³⁸² Bulaç, *ibid.*, 2006.

³⁸³ Ahmet Yıldız, “AK Party's neo-conservative democracy: Naming Problem in Turkey Politics, Liberal Thinking, Spring 2004, p. 7.

³⁸⁴ Hakan Türk, *Who is R. Tayyip Erdoğan?*, Akademi Tv, Istanbul, 2003, p. 31-32.

The AKP has been trying to position itself in Turkish politics since the elections of November 3. In this context, a book titled "AKP and Conservative Democracy" was written by Yalçın Akdoğan, who was one of Erdogan's advisors.³⁸⁵ This book aimed at preparing a theoretical and ideological foundation and background for the AKP and also putting forward the political position and identity of the AKP. In the book, it can be seen how the AKP defined itself and where it stood on the political spectrum. In the same vein, the AKP organized on January 10-11, 2004 an international symposium entitled "Conservatism and Democracy", which was also supported by the Liberal Thought Society in Istanbul. The AKP and the conservative democratic identity were discussed at the symposium. In this symposium, just as the book written by Yalçın Akdoğan, the roots of the AKP, where it stands in the Turkish politics and his search for identity, were discussed.

According to the AKP elites, AKP did not do identity politics, but it was a political party of an identity.³⁸⁶ The AKP defined itself as conservative in terms of Turkey's cultural heritage protection and democrat in terms of the protection of modern institutions and values. It is important to point out that identity politics had a polarizing character in society by politicizing the definitions of religion, sect and ethnicity that should be included in the collective and shared values of society and the AKP's taking a dim view of the identity politics was an important point in terms of democratic organization of religion-politics relations.³⁸⁷ The adoption of a conservative democrat or a Muslim democrat was also important in this perspective. However, this definition contained some ambiguities. The fact that the protection of modern institutions and values was not enough to define democratization was also a point to be taken into consideration. Indeed, the protection of modern institutions and values was an indication that refers to neo-conservatism, but not conservatism. Claiming that they were in favor of a limited and defined political power, the AKP had

³⁸⁵ Yalçın Akdoğan, *AK Party and Conservative Democracy*, Alfa Publishing, Istanbul, 2004.

³⁸⁶ Yıldırım, *ibid.*, p. 66-70.

³⁸⁷ Yalçın Akdoğan, "New Political Style Searches," *Radikal*, October 8, 2003.

established the philosophy of "the limit of the human mind" to the substructure of this discourse. However, it was not either related to the contract theories that explain the rationale of the origin of society.

Ihsan Dağı defined the AKP as an evolution of the Views of Ummah movement, which was based on an Islamic identity, as a practical and pragmatic rethinking of the boundaries of Islamic politics that were evident in current global and national conditions.³⁸⁸ However, the AKP defined conservatism with reference to the DP. They defined themselves as the continuation of the DP tradition, not the Views of Ummah. The analogy between the AKP and DP or Özal's ANAP, despite describing itself with a reference to the DP and voicing that it is the continuation of the DP tradition, actually involved a methodical error, because social life is dynamic and it constantly changes, and so does the politics. No political movement can be defined by purely discursive parameters; sociological origins and relations are very important at this point. DP emerged entirely from an elitist sociology.³⁸⁹ The sociological relationships that the founders of the party enjoyed proved it. Adnan Menderes came from a land-based family and he was the provincial chairman of the CHP. The AKP's leadership, however, came from the lower and middle strata. They were mainly from the Black Sea Regions, Central Anatolia, and Eastern Anatolian Region. Despite their similar discourses to those used by the DP, their sociological origins differ.³⁹⁰

The AKP emphasized that they did not want to pursue politics based on Islam and argued that they aimed to move religion from the political arena to the social life. Erdoğan emphasized that they wanted to position the AKP's political identity as "conservative democracy", saying "My individual reference is Islam and my political reference is a democracy."³⁹¹ Indeed, conservative democracy

³⁸⁸ Ihsan Dağı, "AK Party: Muslim Democrat or Conservative Democrat?", Zaman, 09.01.2004.

³⁸⁹ The interview with Yaşar Yakış, 11.06.2016.

³⁹⁰ Yıldırım, *ibid.*, p. 66-70.

³⁹¹ Muhammer Ferik, *Years with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan*, e-book project, Istanbul, 2015.

is a concept that was first expressed in Turkish politics at that time. Let's examine with what references this concept was defined. "The Conservative democratic approach will bring a new breath to Turkish politics in accordance with the genes of conservatism and its historical codes, but it must lean on the social and cultural traditions of the geography where we are doing politics," Erdogan said in his speech at the first group meeting at the Parliament in 2003.³⁹² The concept of "conservative democracy," pronounced for the first time by Erdoğan, had been the subject of controversy, as it was a concept not included in the political science literature. The response of the AKP to these discussions is presented in Akdoğan's book as follows: "What the AKP tried to do with the concept of conservative democracy is not aimed at bringing a new definition or type of democracy, but it just wants to find a ground on which to do politics. To create such a concept is important in a few respects: to normalize politics and to place it on a realistic ground, to produce a self-contained conservative party and a form of participatory politics.³⁹³ The term "normalization of politics" refers to a modernity that does not exclude the tradition, a universalism that accepts the local, and a non-fundamentalist change. By "producing a self-contained conservative party", it was aimed at breaking down the perception that the conservatism is a feature of the center-right parties like DP, JP and ANAP and turn it into the main body and driving force.³⁹⁴ However, the elites of the party claimed that the AKP was the continuation of the DP to collaborate the conviction that it is different from the tradition of the Views of Ummah. Here is a positioning outside the tradition of the DP, JP and ANAP. By "producing a form of participatory politics", they refer to the fact that the AKP encompasses people from different political traditions and argue that they would not pursue "politics of identity" on the grounds that the parties adopting this principle cause bottlenecks in the Turkish political life. Because by placing a single religious understanding, sect or

³⁹² Ergün Yıldırım, "AKP: Sociological Representation of a Political Plan", *Birikim*, Issue: 163-164, November-December 2002, p. 66-70.

³⁹³ Akdoğan, *ibid.*, p. 18-19.

³⁹⁴ Dağı, *ibid.*, 09.01.2004.

ethnicity at the heart of the movement and causing a division “us versus them” cause polarization in Turkey, this reference underlines the way of doing politics for society.³⁹⁵

In his speech he made in the "International Conservatism and Democracy Symposium" in 2004, Erdoğan emphasized what he meant by "neo-conservatism". First of all, he emphasized the importance of a party's declaring its political identity. Distinguishing conservatism from status quoism, which is the safeguard of existing relations, he defined it as the preservation of possessed values and acquired gains. He emphasized that the notion of "Conservative Democracy" is not aimed at a traditionalism that does not accept modern progress and it is necessary to synthesize traditions and modernity and it would be wrong to refuse the locality and advocate universalism. To sum up, he defined conservative democracy as "a modernity that doesn't exclude tradition, a universality that acknowledges locality, a rationality that does not reject meaning and a non-fundamentalist change."³⁹⁶

Mahmut Akpınar interpreted what the AKP means by conservative democracy as follows:

“Discourses and slogans are a kind of formula for political parties. Conservative democratic rhetoric is the result of an effort to guarantee the support of the conservatives, pious and nationalists, as well as those with democratic concerns, alongside liberals. The content of the message must be read correctly. In fact, being democratic and a pure democracy require the defense of the rights of religious people, Kurds, Alevis and other segments of the society. However, the conservative democratic concept voiced by the AKP is, in my view, primarily addressed to the conservative majority. It may also be an attempt to emulate conservative parties in the West.

³⁹⁵ Ihsan Dağı, “AK Party: Muslim Democrat or Conservative Democrat?”, Zaman, 09.01.2004.

³⁹⁶ International Conservatism and Democracy Symposium, AK Party's Political and Legal Affairs, Camev Publishing, Ankara, 2004, p. 12-17.

Similar concepts were used by Turgut Özal, too. He said that he brought the four tendencies together, protecting the rights of the pious.³⁹⁷ Conservative religious emphasis in the AKP was limited in scope in the beginning, but later they grew in scope to cause democratic concerns. More precisely, they were given by the AKP so much priority as to quell concerns related to democracy, universal values, and law.”³⁹⁸

In response to the same question, the political scientist İhsan Çolak from Columbia University said the following:

“I personally asked this question to Erdoğan in 2002. I also said that the concept of conservatism is perceived differently in the West and in Turkey. It is perceived in the West as the conservation of the establishment, established values, established order and political order. In Turkey, the conservatives have problems with the established order. Will we conserve the state, established order or values of the people? If the values of the people are to be conserved, the values of the state are often in conflict with those of the state. I asked him how we could reconcile them. He told me that we would protect the values of the people. In my own opinion, they just wanted to receive the appreciation of the West. There are Christian Democrats in the West and they want to do the same thing in Turkey. They want to curry favor with the West.”³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ "Four Tendencies" is a concept that Turgut Özal unveiled when founding ANAP. They are democratic left, liberal right, nationalist right and Islamic right. In other words, they are the viewpoints represented by CHP, JP, MHP and MSP, the four biggest parties before the 1980 coup. ANAP was established with the intention of combining these four tendencies under the same umbrella, and succeeded to some extent.

³⁹⁸ The interview with Mahmut Akpınar, 09.07.2017.

³⁹⁹ The interview with İhsan Çolak, 07.08.2017.

Akdoğan listed the parameters of the conservative democratic identity as follows: "Conservative democracy is not revolutionary, but it is based on the understanding of change that protects the values and achievements in a tactical, gradual, and traditional manner. The established order must be protected from extremism, radicalism, and social engineering. It attaches importance to the legitimacy based on constitutionality, universal norms, and sovereignty. It is for a limited and defined power. According to conservative democracy, the field of politics is based on reconciliation. Differences in the social arena can only be represented in the political arena through compromise and tolerance. A balance must be established between idealism and realism. It is unacceptable for the state to limit itself within a dogmatic area with an ideological preference. The state must return to the area where it carries out its original functions and it must be small, dynamic and structured and controlled by its citizens."⁴⁰⁰

Sarıbay said that the name of the AKP is Islamic, its policies are liberal, its attitude is a Democrat, and its path is Western.⁴⁰¹ At the root of the AKP's pursuing right-wing policies lie the Islamic cadres. But, they don't want such facts to be known and they claim that they have changed and are distant from the policies of the Views of Ummah. Their famous phrases were, "We have taken off our shirts of the Views of Ummah", and "We have changed." They claimed that this change can be understood when we analyze the differentiation seen in the administrative staff, the organization and voter base and the electorate.⁴⁰² However, it was possible to see clearly the traces of political Islamist tradition on those specified above. Akdoğan mentioned in length about the political Islam and Views of Ummah and the position of the AKP within this context and he tried to position the AKP outside of the Views of Ummah tradition and prove that they are not the continuation of the Views of Ummah. In this context, the AKP insisted on avoiding an Islamist discourse during the

⁴⁰⁰ Akdoğan, *ibid*, p. 15-16.

⁴⁰¹ Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, "AKP Doomed to a lack of Identity", *Vatan*, October 13, 2003.

⁴⁰² Ruşen Çakır, Interview with Abdullah Gül, "No one should expect us to change our life style," *Vatan*, September 28, 2003.

foundation period, but it adopted a discourse that was deemed legal by the system and seemingly found empathy from the people.⁴⁰³ Adopting nationalist conservatism in cultural and political terms, promoting a free market economy and liberalism in terms of economy and putting special emphasis on the traditions and also democracy and the West, the AKP displayed a quite eclectic attitude.

While the conservative character of the AKP was a result of socio-cultural experiences, the democratic identity was the party-specific attractiveness that will increase maneuverability in the political and social spheres in line with the experience gained through the historical development. On the conservative side of the AKP, it claimed that a gradual transformation will bring welfare and the radical changes that the totalitarian ideologies shape will lead to poverty, but on the democracy side, it claimed that the political possibilities of reconciliation must be preferred over the politics of conflict.⁴⁰⁴ In this context, the AKP choose the conservative stance to establish stability in politics, and the democratic attitude was chosen to establish justice on the representation.

While the AKP's involvement in the Kemalist-secular framework was the main reason for the insistence of the democratic discourse, this caused tension with regards to the secularism in terms of the Kemalist politics.⁴⁰⁵ The AKP, which tried to give a sigh of relief to the politics and its electorate with discourses of social reconciliation, opposed exclusionary secularism, which expressed the exclusion of religion from the public life; instead of this, it advocated the passive secularism which refers to the phenomenon that the religious elements are more visible in the public life of the Islamic - conservative and liberal circles who can live their lives without any interference

⁴⁰³ Yasin Aktay, "Conservative Balance in Islamism", *Political Thought in Modern Turkey*, Volume: 5, İletişim Publishing, İstanbul, 2004, p. 350.

⁴⁰⁴ Akdoğan, *ibid*, p. 59.

⁴⁰⁵ International Conservatism and Democracy Symposium, AK Party's Political and Legal Affairs, Camev Publishing, Ankara, 2004, p. 30.

by the state authority.⁴⁰⁶ Preferring the passive secularism on the political arena was an effort to “oppose” what it didn’t want, rather than what it wanted to “conserve”. It promoted a natural and evolutionist change and it was against the social engineering. Thus, the AKP defined the conservative democracy as a line encompassing the “social center” and it managed to turn the state-public relations into party-individual relations.⁴⁰⁷

Erdoğan, the then Prime Minister, expressed his thoughts with regards to the conservative democracy declared as party identity:

“Conservatism represents a very democratic perspective rather than a solid and frozen ideology. Democracy, as a tool for the national will, presents the legitimacy of the political power to the general acceptance of the people. Politics is a compromise area. An effective state is not one that defines, shapes, or imposes preferences on its citizens; rather a state that the citizen defines, controls and shapes.⁴⁰⁸

As it can be inferred, the AKP's political perspective was based on compatibility rather than opposition to the Kemalist politics, as it was in the right politics tradition. The AKP, on the one hand, met the needs of its electorate base. On the other hand, it was able to soothe the uneasiness of the secular voters who were suspicious of it.⁴⁰⁹

According to Demir Murat Seyrek, Head of the European Foundation for Democracy:

⁴⁰⁶ Ahmet T. Kuru and Alfred Stepan, “Secularism as an Ideal Type and Scale: Comparing Turkey, France and Senegal. “Democracy in Turkey, Islam and Secularism, (translated by Hande Tatoğlu), Istanbul Bilgi University Publishing, Istanbul, 2013, p. 108.

⁴⁰⁷ Ergun Özbudun and William Hale, “Islamism in Turkey, Democracy and Liberalism, phenomenon of the AKP”, (translated by Ergun Özbudun and K. Göksel), Doğan Press, Istanbul, 2010, p. 64-65.

⁴⁰⁸ Program of the 59th Government, *Resmi Gazete*, 25058, 24.03.2003.

⁴⁰⁹ Akdoğan, *ibid*, p. 64.

“As a matter of fact, what is meant by the conservative democrat or Muslim democrat is an “a la Turca” version of the “Christian Democrat” concept in the West. Especially in the first years of the AKP, it emerged as rhetoric against the "Islamist" thesis from the West. Just as a "Christian democratic" party is possible, so is a “Muslim democrat” party and they wanted to send a message that they are the pioneer on this issue. This rhetoric was welcomed in the beginning. However, when they started backtracking in the field of democratic reforms, the concept the AKP used lost its meaning. Trying to be a member of the EPP (Christian Democrat) group in the European Parliament and, consequently, being a member of the English Conservative group of ALDE (Liberal Group) was an indication of this. Although ALDE (Liberal Group) wanted to accept the AKP as one of its members, especially until the Gezi Park Protest in 2013, the AKP chose to define itself with conservative parties in other groups. I think that the "Muslim democrat" rhetoric is more meaningful than the "conservative democratic" rhetoric because there is a “conservative democrat” tradition coming from the DP in Turkey.”⁴¹⁰

Within the context of conservative democracy, the AKP managed the secularism and Islam tension between the Islamic-conservatives and Kemalist secularists with a two-stage balance policy.⁴¹¹ By using discourses that would shape the future of the country and then consolidating its power, in the first stage, it presented the demands that would comfort the Islamic way of life as an issue of basic rights, not an issue of religion and beliefs. In the second stage, conservative democracy was addressed as a part of a social entity and tradition, contrary to the traditional approach taken by an ideological approach.⁴¹² Thus,

⁴¹⁰ The interview with Demir Murat Seyrek, 20.09.2017.

⁴¹¹ Özbudun, *ibid.*, p. 87.

⁴¹² Ergun Özbudun, William Hale, *ibid.*, p. 67.

in the first stage, the religious individuals and in the second stage the Islam which was under pressure from the within the political order were moved to the public area. To give an example, the then Prime Minister expressed the following with regards to the headscarf issue which had always been a problem in Turkey: “Let’s assume that the headscarf is a political symbol. Is it a crime to carry a political symbol? Can the symbols be banned? Where on Earth can such practices be found?”⁴¹³ As can be concluded, Erdoğan saw the turban issue not as a religious issue but as a human rights issue and sought the solution in this way.

According to Ersönmez Yarbay:

“As we were afraid of the reactions against our using the word “Muslim”, we tried to hide our Muslim identity under the concept of conservatism. If the use of the word Muslim was not forbidden, we were going to use the phrase Muslim democrat, not conservative democrat. We would have ceased to use the word democratic as soon as we came to power. The word democrat is just being paid lip service. That’s to enter and win elections. Elections are held where there is a democracy. Then, you need democracy to come to power.”⁴¹⁴

The AKP's conservative rhetoric was determined by concerns about political legitimacy. Thus, the conservatism rhetoric was just aimed at finding a name to a political movement.⁴¹⁵ There were three interlocutors of the AKP's conservative rhetoric as a search for political legitimacy of a movement that came from the political Islamic tradition. The first interlocutor was the electorate with an emphasis on "indigenous" sensitivities. The second interlocutor was the “western” ideology, that’s the “external public opinion, giving a warm message to them. It goes without saying that the most important

⁴¹³ Zaman Newspaper, 15.01.2008.

⁴¹⁴ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, 10.06.2016.

⁴¹⁵ Özbudun, *ibid.*, p. 97.

interlocutor is the Kemalist center. The message was they have nothing to do with the “political Islam”. This message has two aspects. One is for the secularism and the other is for the transformative attitude based on the refusal of laicism.⁴¹⁶

5.1.2 Effects of the Period on the Democratization of Turkey

AKP, in its initial years, affected the democratization process positively. Great achievements were made in the early years of AKP in terms of the democratization of the country. When we compare this between past and the initial period of AKP, AKP did more developments in the field of promotion of the human rights standard, social equality, and reduction in military authority. These are the elements AKP has as democratic values. To give an example of freedom of speech, non-governmental organizations were allowed to hold meetings and demonstrations outside their own field. To give an example of social equality, the Kurdish language was released in TV and the obstacles in of the way of Kurdish education were removed. About the rule of law, within the framework of judicial independence, military courts had restricted the right of civilian people to trial, and the State Security Courts were abolished, which were looking at crimes against the state. In short, the steps towards decentralization, which have been under discussion since the Republic, were taken by the AKP. In this context, Europeanization project has contributed to Turkey's democratization and modernization. AKP had these elements as democratic values. With these elements of democracy, Turkey was developed in the first period of AKP as compared to other periods. In this chapter, I will explain the related developments.

Altan Tan, who was a member of the WP's Central Decision Board and then a deputy from HADEP which was a Kurdish nationalist party, explained the establishment philosophy of the AKP as follows:

⁴¹⁶ Ahmet Yıldız, *ibid.*, p. 10.

“The philosophy of the AKP is about liberties, democracy, and compliance with the criteria of the EU and in the aftermath of 28 February. AKP focused on issues, such as transparency and establishment of the democratic criteria in tenders, politics, and staffing.”⁴¹⁷

The US-based research organization Freedom House publishes each year a freedom report in three separate issues. Focusing on democratic freedoms, freedom of the press and freedom of the Internet, these three reports summarized the developments in freedoms during the year as well as an index where each country has scored on a set of criteria. The annual reports titled Freedom in the World, which have been published since 1973, are the oldest and most popular publications of Freedom House. The indices accompanying the reports consist of two main parts; Civil Liberties, and Political Rights. According to reports, after the AKP came to power in 2002, Turkey has made significant achievements on both civil liberties and political rights. However, since 2005, the rise in the field of civil liberties has ended and a horizontal course has begun. Civil liberties and political rights started to deteriorate in 2011 and 2014 respectively, and this trend continued to accelerate until the end of 2016.⁴¹⁸

Erdoğan took bold steps after becoming prime minister in 2003. Using the AKP’s parliamentary majority, Erdoğan limited the powers of NSC, abolished the death penalty, barred torture, and allowed greater cultural rights for Kurds in the fields of education and media. The AKP adopted a broad platform of human rights reforms by overhauling its penal code for the first time in seventy-eight years. It also amended the Turkish constitution, bringing it more in line with European standards. Erdoğan was rewarded for his reforms by realizing a major

⁴¹⁷ Interview with Altan Tan: Erdoğan-Bahçeli Alliance and Kurds, Available at: <http://medyascope.tv/2018/03/12/altan-tan-ile-soylesi-erdogan-bahceli-ittifaki-ve-kurtler/>, Access Date: 14.03.2018.

⁴¹⁸ Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2018/turkey>, Access Date: 07.03.2018.

foreign policy objective. The European Commission issued its 2002 “Regular report from the European Commission on progress towards accession,” which recommended a date for Turkey to begin negotiations.⁴¹⁹

In my interview with Yaşar Yakış, I asked him that what kind of meetings and discussions you did on democratization in the course of the establishment of the party. According to him:

“At our initial meetings, we were complaining that the greatest deficiency was that democracy was not implemented as we understood it as the founders of the party. We complained that the judicial system was not independent. We had an example to prove that. In our judicial system, when the courts read their rulings, they start to read the ruling by stating that they are making decisions in the name of the Turkish nation; for example, “the 14th Criminal Court of First Instance has ruled in the name of the Turkish nation that ...”. In other words, the judge makes decisions in the name of the Turkish nation. But, a court ruling in the name of the Turkish nation sentences and bars a political leader from entering the parliament reciting a poem available in the course books of the students. The party under his leadership managed to get two-thirds of the parliamentary seats. This is a paradox. It shows that we have not a democracy of the western standards. The fight for democracy cannot be won overnight. We cannot achieve it by including it in the course books. Democracy can be established if people adopt and appreciate it. We decided in our meetings that the people must be informed well of their rights during our election campaigns and people must be aware of the rights they should enjoy.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁹ Phillips, *ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴²⁰ The interview with Yaşar Yakış, 11.06.2016.

Right after the November elections, Erdoğan declared that their priority is not to resolve the ‘headscarf’ problem, as expected by many both from Islamic and secularist circles, but instead to speed up the process to get Turkey into the EU. Erdoğan toured the European capitals before the Copenhagen European summit of December 2002 to secure a specific date to start membership negotiations with the EU. The EU Council, however, postponed its decision on Turkey until its 2004 summit at which a decision would be taken to start, without delay, the accession negotiations with Turkey provided that Turkey fulfills the Copenhagen political criteria.⁴²¹ This was a challenge for the new government since Erdoğan stated that the Copenhagen political criterion was not only part of the requirement for Turkey’s entry into the EU but an objective to be reached regardless of EU membership. As a result, since its formation, the government has introduced fundamental reforms on the Kurdish issue, human rights in general, and civil-military relations with 7 harmonization packages passed by the parliament, and even seemed ready to make a compromise to resolve the long-standing Cyprus dispute.⁴²²

Yakış stated that they acted in a firm belief that the democracy was a necessity and went on to say:

“As I was then responsible for the external affairs of the party and the relations with the EU, I myself penned the party program’s chapter on the external affairs. I wrote that Turkey must carry out all the Copenhagen criteria so that the EU would not have any excuse to refuse Turkey. I stand by my thoughts. I believed that Turkey must join the EU, but if Turkey is not granted memberships on the grounds arising out of the EU, then Turkey must use this process as a means and tool to regulate its own internal structure. Thus, Turkey will have the first quality democracy and more fundamental rights and freedoms must be granted to its citizens. If we establish

⁴²¹ Özbudun, *ibid.*, p. 105.

⁴²² Ihsan Dağı, *ibid.*, p. 97.

transparency, the corruption will be rooted out. If Turkey achieves all these, then it won't matter if Turkey becomes a member of the EU. Therefore, we aimed to create more democracy, more fundamental rights and freedoms, and a more transparent market economy. They are also an essential part of the EU criteria. But, being a member of the EU and fulfilling those conditions is basically different. I am convinced that the fulfillment of these conditions will make Turkey a more democratic and prosperous country.”⁴²³

As a result of this, the EU invited Turkey to start accession talks in 2005 in recognition of the AKP's commitment to economic and political reform. The AKP's willingness to stand up against the military ingratiated it with politicians and bureaucrats in Brussels. The AKP was the first governing party since 1960 to oppose the military's interference in politics and denounce its heavy-handed tactics. Brussels viewed the military as the antagonist to realizing European values of human rights, minority rights, and basic freedom in Turkey. For EU officials, the AKP was new, modern, and reformist.⁴²⁴

The governance structure in Turkey was not specific to 2002 when the AKP was established. It was a rooted and established structure since May 27, 1960, military coup. Under this governance structure, military and civil bureaucracy, judiciary and high bourgeoisie in harmony with it and the media under the influence of both the bourgeoisie and bureaucracy were the partners of the power.⁴²⁵ Although the share and the power of the partners changed from time to time, the political parties coming to power thanks to the popular will of the people had a number of serious barriers before being competent enough to govern the country alone. It can be learnt from documents and evidence that emerged later, some serious intervention plots made by some groups of

⁴²³ The interview with Yaşar Yakış, 11.06.2016.

⁴²⁴ Phillips, *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴²⁵ Özbudun, *ibid.*, p. 108.

generals, journalists, businessmen, writers, and bureaucrats failed because unity was not achieved in the chain of command. The failed plots allowed the AKP to maintain an economic stability, increase its self-confidence, and after a certain period of time, take initiative in the political arena. The fruit-bearing initiatives on the EU and the resulting reforms strengthened the AKP's hand with each passing day. And the public was hopeful and confident of the Copenhagen Summit. In this period, the changes were made in favor of the civilians in the structure of the NSC and the civilianization of the General Secretariat was carried out."⁴²⁶

One of the greatest achievements of the AKP in Turkey has been in the area of reduction in the power of the military tutelage and civilianization. The first thing done in this regard was the removal of the state of emergency. As an extraordinary administration procedure, the state of emergency was applied from the 1980s in Turkey's eastern and southeastern provinces due to terrorism, and in later years, the number of the provinces where the state of emergency was applied was reduced and the state of emergency in the last three provinces was removed on November 30, 2002. In fact, while considering the length of the state of emergency practices in Turkey, it was important to end the state of emergency, because in the Republican period, the state of emergency or martial law was in place in nearly half of the period. Therefore, it was crucial that state of emergency was removed in 2002 all across Turkey. It can be maintained that one of the most important obstacle before the democracy in Turkey is the state of emergencies.⁴²⁷ Therefore, the removal of the extraordinary state, which has been in place for many years, can be regarded as an important milestone in the beginning of the wave of democratization in symbolic terms.

Ersönmez Yarbay, one of the deputies of the AKP in its first term in parliament, explained what they have done on the path to the democratization:

⁴²⁶ For more information see. Suavi Aydın and Yüksel Taşkın, *History of Turkey from 1960 to the Present Day*, İletişim Publication, İstanbul, 2004.

⁴²⁷ Özbudun, *ibid.*, p. 111.

“The AKP's birth was essentially about democratization. Our slogan was the struggle against *corruption, prohibitions, and poverty*. We came to power. There was a state of emergency in place in the Southeastern Anatolia. Firstly, we removed the state of emergency. Secondly, as a part of democratization, we undertook and carried out very serious work and negotiations to start full negotiations with the EU. The excessive powers granted to the soldiers were abolished. We need to analyze the AKP under two different periods: the AKP of 2002-2011 and the AKP of post-2011. The AKP of 2002-2011 was a democratic party. It was a party that restricted democracy within itself but brought democratic practices to the country. But, the AKP of post-2011 is totally dominated by the party leader, there are no intra-party discussions and the corruption and prohibitions are rampant. At the moment, the process of 28 February is being applied by those who were victimized. On February 28, while the people with Islamic sensitivities were being oppressed, now the people with secular sensitivities are being oppressed.”⁴²⁸

The second phase of the significant changes in diminishing the military domination and demilitarization has been the abolition of State Security Courts and Special Authorized Courts. As a manifestation of greater emphasis on security in the security-freedom balance, the State Security Courts, which became part of the Turkish judicial system pursuant to the 1973 Constitutional amendments, have always been at the center of criticism.⁴²⁹ Especially the differences in the judicial procedure and the fact that one of its members is a military judge in its formation had increased criticism against these courts. For this reason, these courts were included among the priority subjects of judicial reforms. One of its judicial members is of military origin in State Security Court and Turkey was sentenced since this fact was found to be contradictory to the

⁴²⁸ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, 10.06.2016.

⁴²⁹ Özbudun, *ibid.*, p. 115.

principle of fair trial by ECHR; then the first constitutional amendments were made in 1999 to cease the existence of military judge in court. These courts were then abolished in 2004.⁴³⁰

Another development has been to narrow down the jurisdiction of the military justice. The military judicial system in Turkey is a result of the fact that military influenced the constitution making process. For this reason, in the military judiciary, it was foreseen that civilians will be tried, while on the other hand, the military courts have been held in courts of this jurisdiction for criminal offenses not directly related to the military service. This situation contradicts the essence of the democratic state of law. Indeed, two positive steps had been taken in this context. Firstly, the scope of application of the Military Criminal Code to civilian persons has been narrowed. Secondly, for the crimes committed by the military officials like coup attempts or coup d'etat, the jurisdiction power was brought directly to the hands of regional courts of justice.⁴³¹

Finally, amendments including the ones on the Secretariat General of the NSC were the important developments in the area of demilitarization. As a result of this amendment, the Secretary General of the NSC can be a civilian. Before the amendment, the Secretary General of the Board had to be a military official.⁴³² It is extremely important for the NSC secretary, who leaves very strong marks in the Turkish political life, to be appointed from among civilian persons in terms of civilianization. Thus, the political authorities will be able to draw the NSC to the position of being a subsidiary body in consultation with the point of determining the security policy of the prime minister after these amendments.

The Kurdish issue, which affected the political system, economy, security, self-reliance, and democratization in a negative way and which caused more than 30 years of massive loss, has a great importance. The foreign policy

⁴³⁰ Özbudun, *ibid.*, p. 115.

⁴³¹ Özbudun, *ibid.*, p. 118.

⁴³² Özbudun, *ibid.*, p. 119..

movements and economic and political stability achieved by Turkey made this issue a critical one. AKP was not seeking a Turkey, which is introvert, problematic with its neighbors, lacking the goal of being a regional power, seeking safe harbors in the midst of great turmoil, but not creating alternative policies, or creating yet not realizing policies. Just the opposite, it desired a Turkey having no problems with neighbors, trying to reach up to the land that historically has relatives in outlying areas, trying to improve political and economic relations with the entire world in the extreme, and trying to increase the range of options in foreign trade and solutions to problematic areas like foreign policy, foreign trade, and other potential problems.⁴³³ For this, it did not want to miss another occasion that he had brought before history, and thought that a period when internal problems slowed down had been caught in order to take necessary steps. Having an internal problem in front of all these big targets was a very important problem. The name of this problem was the Kurdish problem.⁴³⁴ AKP looked for the ways to do what can be done to solve this problem before the growth by Turkey, to perform legal regulations, and to prevent historical and chronic failures with the psychological, social, cultural, legal, and economic factors.

It could be proper to base on Kurdish problem and PKK for the question of how the democratization steps were taken within the framework of the AKP's new conservative ideology, because the critics by EU as well as UN against Turkey were related to Kurdish ethnic minority citizens and the response of the state to their demanding of rights.

As it is known, the states have put some policies towards the minorities in a historical process in order to create a homogenous structure. These policies include genocide through mass exile or ethnic cleansing as well as assimilate politics that force minorities to forcibly adopt the language, religion, and customs of the majority. In addition to these practices, the way of depriving political rights and treating foreigners in the form of physical isolation and

⁴³³ Aydın and Taşkın, *ibid.*, p. 470-494.

⁴³⁴ Aydın and Taşkın, *ibid.*, p. 470-494.

economic discrimination had been seen as a formula of this homogenous generation. In the founding of the Republic of Turkey, it was tried to apply some of the same policies towards minorities.⁴³⁵

Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the concept of security politics applied by the governments that produce politics with post-empire reflexes had undergone a radical paradigm shift with the ruling AKP in 2002. Perhaps this process, which is almost certain to be accused of "traitor" when the steps taken in the foundation of the AKP were taken ten years earlier, could be realized in the first period of the AKP.⁴³⁶

In this context, AKP began attempts to soften the predominant military authority in the early periods of power. Staying in the EU's democratic and liberal project had been one of the AKP's most important goals.⁴³⁷ In this framework, AKP first dealt with the NSC, which was over the civilian politics in the nineties. AKP changed the structure and powers of the NSC; transformed it from a decision-maker into an organ of advice. According to Paker: "One of the things that the AKP has aimed under the name of democratization politics is weakening the military power and to deal with the political power of the military."⁴³⁸

Until 2011, the PKK problem was tried to be solved in the first eight years of the AKP without resorting to military power. If there was a problem, this was a problem of democracy and it had to be solved. When the AKP was established in 2002, one of the first topics dealt with under the heading of the legislative regulations of the party program was demilitarization, because according to the AKP, for normal political functioning, obstacles confronting individual and social freedoms had to be eliminated.⁴³⁹ The EU membership process, which

⁴³⁵ For more information see. Islam Can, "Çokkültürlülük Tartışmaları Işığında Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin Çokkültürlü Politikalarını Anlamaya Giriş", *II. Türkiye Lisansüstü Çalışmalar Kongresi Bildiriler Kitabı I*, İstanbul, 2013.

⁴³⁶ Özbudun, *ibid.*, p. 126.

⁴³⁷ The interview with Ertuğrul Günay, 05.05.2016.

⁴³⁸ Evren Paker, "AKP'nin Kürt Sorunu Politikası: Bir Adım İleri, Bir Adım Geri", *Heinrich Böll Stiftung Derneği Yayını*, 2014, p. 13.

⁴³⁹ The interview with Ertuğrul Günay, 05.05.2016.

was the driving force for these reforms of the AKP, had laid the groundwork for the establishment of many positive sanctions. The harmonization process started with the accession negotiations that started in 2005, and many legal arrangements were made in the context of human rights. In the first years of the human rights policy, AKP has worked in the field of public administration reform and has focused on the development and strengthening of human rights. AKP has approached the dissolution of the Kurdish issue in this context.⁴⁴⁰ The PKK problem in the South East and Eastern Anatolia region and the human rights violations against the Kurdish tribe had been among the first issues to be resolved. Accordingly, torture and ill-treatment, arrests related to detention and unsolved murders had been dealt with in a serious manner and necessary arrangements had been made to ensure deterrence. The State Security Courts and special competent courts were abolished after the State of Emergency Act was terminated. In 2003, the Gendarmerie Human Rights Violations Investigation and Evaluation Center was established. In languages other than Turkish, especially on-demand, the opening of radio and television channels broadcasting Kurdish language was allowed.⁴⁴¹ Kurdish language courses were opened. In 2011, Kurdish Language and Literature departments were opened first at Mardin Artuklu University and then Muş Alpaslan University and Tunceli University. Graduate programs with a bachelor's degree and master's degree programs were opened.⁴⁴² These reforms, which were carried out depending on the solution process and the EU membership process, indicate that Kurdish demands were met in the context of human rights.

In addition to the reforms taking place in the political and social spheres, a mobilization was initiated simultaneously for the development of the region. The AKP government initiated one of the largest and most comprehensive development initiatives of the Republican history to compensate the regional

⁴⁴⁰ Özbudun, *ibid.*, p. 129.

⁴⁴¹ Bianet, "YÖK Kürtçe Eğitime Onay Verdi", <http://bianet.org/bianet/azinliklar/132927-yok-kurtce-egitime-onay-verdi>, Access Date: 14.08.2016.

⁴⁴² Bianet, "YÖK Kürtçe Eğitime Onay Verdi", <http://bianet.org/bianet/azinliklar/132927-yok-kurtce-egitime-onay-verdi>, Access Date: 14.08.2016.

underdevelopment and invested 35 billion TL in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Region.⁴⁴³ Significant steps were taken towards the development of projects, such as the Return to the Village and Rehabilitation Project, the payment of damages for victims of terrorism, Southeastern Anatolia Project, Project of Supporting Municipal Infrastructure, Project of Supporting the Infrastructure of the Villages, Social Support Program, and Regional Development Agencies.⁴⁴⁴

According to Yasar Yakış:

“At the EU summit on 14th December 2002, it was decided to start negotiations in 2004. Gunter Verheugen said: “the reforms carried out in Turkey in the last 18 months are more comprehensive than the reforms of the last 80 years.” He says we have done more in 18 months compared to what has been done with 80 years of reform. Our economy has gained a tangible impetus to dream of being the second fastest growing economy in the world until the first seven years of the 21st century. We did democratization at a great pace. At that time, I was the Chairman of the EU Commission on Adaptation and I was able to feel more about it because it was a job I had. But, there was a slowdown after 2011, unfortunately.”⁴⁴⁵

The AKP has made important inroads among the Kurds. In the July 22, 2007 elections, the AKP doubled its vote from eastern and southeastern cities that traditionally voted for pro-Kurdish parties (54 percent in 2007 vs. 27.29 percent in 2002).⁴⁴⁶ One reason for the AKP’s success appeared to be its more open and tolerant approach to the Kurdish issue. However, the influence of religious groups, particularly the Nakshibendi Sufi order, also appeared to have

⁴⁴³ Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, *AKP 2023 Vizyonu: Siyaset, toplum, dünya*, 2012, p. 28.

⁴⁴⁴ Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, *AKP 2023 Vizyonu: Siyaset, toplum, dünya*, 2012, p. 28.

⁴⁴⁵ The interview with Yaşar Yakış, 11.06.2016.

⁴⁴⁶ Available at: <https://secim.haberler.com/2011/>.

played a role. The Nakşibendi, which is the best organized Islamic group in the Kurdish region, criticized the predominantly Kurdish Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi* (DTP)) quite harshly, and this criticism, according to some observers, has begun to have an impact on the party's base.⁴⁴⁷

In the AKP era, regimes and developments towards non-Muslim minorities were also a significant boost in terms of democratization. The AKP's agenda of opening space for religion in society could increase the ability of non-Muslim religious communities to operate more freely.⁴⁴⁸ For example, legislation introduced by the first AKP government would have liberalized the strict rules governing minority-run foundations and would have created a mechanism for returning minority property confiscated by the state. The bill was strongly opposed by CHP members of parliament. Relaxation of restrictions on religious training could also be to the advantage of Christian denominations. The new AKP government was more likely to approve the opening of the Greek Orthodox People seminary—the subject of a chronic dispute between the Patriarchate and the Turkish government—than a government dominated by nationalists. *Agos*, the Armenian weekly, estimated before the July 2007 elections that nearly 60 percent of Turkey's 70,000 Armenians would vote for the AKP. Michail Vasiliadis, the editor of *Apoyevmatini*, a Greek-language daily newspaper published in Istanbul, said, he believes that Turkey's ethnic Greek community, estimated at 2,000 people, was also backing the AKP. A dramatic manifestation of the more nuanced attitude of Christian minorities toward the AKP was the support for the AKP of the Armenian patriarch, Mesrob II Mutafyan. Speaking to the German weekly *Der Spiegel*, the patriarch claimed that the Armenian community would prefer the AKP over the CHP, because the AKP's approach to minorities is coherent and less nationalistic.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁷ Angel Rabasa and Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, National Defense Research Institute, 2008, p. 67.

⁴⁴⁸ Özbudun, *ibid.*, p. 130.

⁴⁴⁹ Rabasa and Larrabee, *ibid.*, p. 66-67.

Apart from these, Alevi Workshops were started in 2009. Many troubles that have been closed up until that time had come, and the demands of the Alevis had been expressed.⁴⁵⁰ In 2011, the Residence and Travels of Foreigners Act was amended in Turkey. "The right to expel Gypsies who are not Turkish citizens, foreigners who are not affiliated with the sovereignty and Turkish culture" was abolished. The use of the word "roman" instead of "gypsy" was mentioned. For the non-Muslims, the present worship services were renewed and prayers were opened. Churches were opened in İstanbul, Trabzon, and Diyarbakır.⁴⁵¹

As it is seen, the problems experienced by different ethnic identities in Turkey were experienced throughout history. Not only the Kurdish problem, which is the most complicated problem, was tried to be solved, but also the victimhoods of Alevis, non-Muslim and Roma citizens.⁴⁵² In this context, the AKP initiated the greatest democratization movement of the Republican history since 2002 and put forward a great struggle by pioneering different segments of the society so that democracy can be implemented with all institutions and rules and ideally implemented.⁴⁵³

Mahmut Akpınar explained the successful policy of the AKP in this early period with these words:

“In the first period, AKP pursued a policy based on reconciliation, with an orientation towards the EU embracing every segment. Nearly every segment (Alevis, Sunni, Kurdish, Turkish, nationalists, Islamists, religious people, communities) supported the AKP for the promise of democracy, law, human rights, and transparency. In addition, the February 28 process highlighted the importance of

⁴⁵⁰ Strategic Thinking Institute (*Stratejik Düşünce Enstitüsü*), 2009 Alevi Report, http://www.sde.org.tr/Files/Reports/sde_alevi_raporu.pdf, Access Date: 28.09.2016.

⁴⁵¹ Selvet Çetin, “Human Rights in the 10-Year Reform Period: Developments and Expectations”, *SDE Analysis*, January, 2013.

⁴⁵² Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi 12 June 2011 Election Declaration, p. 11.

⁴⁵³ Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi 12 June 2011 Election Declaration, p. 10.

these values for everyone. AKP used them well in the first period and succeeded. Political policies based on liaisons in public officials opened the door of the humanitarian state from all segments. The US, EU and the people of the Middle East all supported this process. In this period, the AKP pursued constructive and compromising policies both inside and outside of Turkey. It gave importance to production and tourism. There was a positive atmosphere, and in all these areas, it took a potent action, creating confidence. Unfortunately, in line with the rise of an authoritarian one man and the withdrawal from democratic understanding, everything began to turn negative.”⁴⁵⁴

After the AKP won the November 2002 elections, Erdoğan declared that his priority will be economic stability and EU membership. Also, he downplayed the social issues at the core of the Islamist agenda. Despite its Islamist roots, the AKP realized the advantages of speaking the language of modernity and integration with Europe. EU membership project was supported by business circles and the public at large, and the emphasis on democracy and human rights enabled the AKP to make an attempt to curb the influence of the military in politics and to chip away at the entrenched Kemalist establishment.⁴⁵⁵

The emergence of the AKP as the dominant political party in Turkey was associated with the emergence of new economic and social forces in Turkish society. New social sector—the religious entrepreneurial class—developed after Turgut Özal inaugurated the privatization process of the 1980s and mushroomed in Anatolia. Its members were small and medium-sized entrepreneurs from rural or small-town backgrounds, most of them were based in Istanbul. In one view of Turkish political dynamics, the religious-secularist divide in Turkish society reflected the redistribution of power from the traditional business establishment and its allies in the bureaucracy and the military to this rising social sector,

⁴⁵⁴ The interview with Mahmut Akpınar, 09.07.2017.

⁴⁵⁵ Rabasa and Larrabee, *ibid.*, p. 51.

which found political expression in the AKP. The religious business sector was represented by MÜSİAD (Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association), founded in 1990 as an alternative to TÜSİAD (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association), which represented Turkey's business establishment.⁴⁵⁶ This religious entrepreneurial class was kind of sponsor for AKP.

Islamic groups, including the AKP leaders within the Views of Ummah Movement, had never taken democracy and human rights seriously until the February 28 decisions of the NSC in 1997. Experiencing the pressures of the Kemalist/secularist center on every aspect of their lives, the Islamic groups sought protection within the language and institutions of modernity, where they discovered human rights and democracy useful.⁴⁵⁷ After experiencing the isolation, marginalization and even oppression of 1997 and 1998, they came to face the fact that they were seen and would always be seen as an 'illegitimate' political force, an anomaly to be corrected in Turkish politics by the Kemalist/secularist center.⁴⁵⁸ Thus, they adopted a discourse on democracy, human rights and the rule of law as a means to protect themselves against the power of the Kemalist/secularist center, a strategy that also enabled them to forge broad coalitions at home and abroad with liberal- democratic groups. Through ballot box and the language of political modernity, the AKP tried to secure legitimacy. The AKP leadership developed a similar attitude towards the value of human rights as they saw their political parties closed down, leaders banned from political activities, and associations and foundations intimidated. In response, they moved to embrace the language of civil and political rights that provided an effective leverage against the pressures of the state and a ground to build international coalitions. The AKP adhered to the universality of human rights. Frequent references were made to internationally recognized human rights

⁴⁵⁶ Rabasa and Larrabee, *ibid.*, p. 52.

⁴⁵⁷ Rabasa and Larrabee, *ibid.*, p. 52.

⁴⁵⁸ Rabasa and Larrabee, *ibid.*, p. 52.

conventions not that of particularities of Islam or Turkey.⁴⁵⁹ They recognized that human rights have also globalized transcending national borders and traditions. They did not only adhere to the globalized human rights but also advocate a global implementation of internationally recognized human rights.⁴⁶⁰ In an interview I had with Ersönmez Yarbay, I found that the above ideas of Ihsan Dağı were approved. He has strikingly expressed that WP and AKP, in which he was also involved, were not democracies in themselves, but they used democracy to protect them and to achieve their goals. According to Ersönmez Yarbay:

“The common feature of the Views of Ummah parties is that they sharply defend democratic rights when they are weak. They do not become democratic, but they want the country to be governed by democracy. When they get stronger, they do not like democracy. Necmettin Erbakan informed us that the Party General Assemblies were "the fulfillment of formalities". In other words, "it is necessary to fulfill the formalities required for the law," he said. Now, Tayyip Erdoğan says the same thing. If they have the opportunity, they will remove them, that is, they will abolish the necessity of the general assembly, because they are not reconciled with democracy in their inner realms, what happens in a democracy is a system coming from the west.”⁴⁶¹

5.2 Presidential Election of 2007 and 27 April E-Memorandum

In Chapter 1, I mentioned briefly about the relationship between politics and military in Turkey by giving examples. This relationship has entered a new phase with the 2002 elections, allowing the EU negotiations to begin and the AKP to win more votes in subsequent elections. Thus, the predominant role that

⁴⁵⁹ Rabasa and Larrabee, *ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴⁶⁰ Ihsan Dağı, *ibid.*, p. 95.

⁴⁶¹ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, 10.06.2016.

the traditional army has built on politics has sought a new balance. In addition to some conjunctural influences, this new balance has also affected the willingness of one-party and powerful leadership-oriented government to take more initiative against the military. With this effort, it regulated the civil-military balance in the NSC and made the NSC General Secretary a civilian official. In spite of the contrary opinion of the Turkish Armed Forces, the government acted according to its own opinion in the course of the solution of the Cyprus problem in the framework of the Annan Plan.⁴⁶²

The announcement by the Turkish General Staff on the election of Abdullah Gül as the 11th President via the website on April 27, 2007, was defined as an e-memorandum and as a postmodern tutelage example. In the published press release, it was reminded that "Turkish Armed Forces (*Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri*, TSK) is the advocate of secularism"; it was expressed in a harsh manner that this position would be maintained with certainty. The only property that distinguished this declaration from previous military tutelage statements was the media utilized.⁴⁶³ This postmodern memorandum given in 2007 just before the presidential elections took its place in history as a critical cornerstone in the recent history of Turkey. The process that took place before and after the April 27th e-memorandum expressed a break in terms of Turkish political history.⁴⁶⁴

The military, the chief avatars and defenders of Kemalism, and the AKP, a party with Islamist roots, coexist within the framework of Turkish democracy, but at bottom, there is a tension between each side's strategic objectives vis-à-vis those of the other: The military sought to keep intact the boundaries the Kemalist state places on religion and to create structural barriers to prevent the AKP or a party like it, from undermining the secular state or the military's role in it; the AKP wanted to reduce the political influence of the military and create

⁴⁶² Niran Cansever and Hakan Mehmet Kiriş, "A View on the Interaction Between the AKP and the TAF in the Context of the Relations Between The Military and The Politics in Turkey", *Suleyman Demirel University The Journal of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 2015, p. 377.

⁴⁶³ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, 10.06.2016.

⁴⁶⁴ Available at: <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2003/08/15/p01.html>, 2010., Access Date: 15.10.2017.

more space for Islam in the public sphere.⁴⁶⁵ Tensions between the military and the AKP government mounted after Büyükanıt's selection as chief of the General Staff. In a speech at the end of September 2006 at the Istanbul Military Academy, while Erdoğan was on a visit to the USA, Büyükanıt called attention to the threat of Islamic fundamentalism, a warning echoed by other senior generals and by President Sezer. In an address at the Ankara Military Academy in early October 2006, Gen. Ilker Başbuğ, head of the land forces, told trainees that the "reactionary [Islamist] threat is reaching alarming proportions," accused Islamists of "patiently and systematically" eroding secularism, and defended the army's right to speak out on the issue despite EU criticism of military interference in politics.⁴⁶⁶

The presidential election had increasingly become an area of intense opposition to the AKP and had begun to take place around the discussions of fundamentalism, secularism, and headscarf. In the shadow of these discussions, the rallies organized by the Atatürkist Thought Association with the slogan "Protect the Republic" became the embodiment of those who tried to prevent the will of the nation as the excuse of secularism seeing Chankaya Palace as their "infallible towers". The first of the Republic rallies led by Atatürkist Thought Association President Şener Eruygur and journalist Tuncay Özkan was held on 14th April in Ankara Tandoğan district.⁴⁶⁷ Organizations, such as the Republican Women's Association, the Association for Supporting Contemporary Living, the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Unions, the Confederation of Public Workers' Trade Unions and the Istanbul Bar Association, also supported the rally with political parties such as CHP, DSP, Young Party (*Genç Parti*), and Labor Party. These rallies were also held in other provinces, such as Izmir, Istanbul, Çanakkale, Antalya, and Diyarbakır. Tandoğan rally was an organization that needed to be emphasized because it was the only rally before

⁴⁶⁵ Arab News, "Top Turkish General Warns of Islamist Threat," September 26, 2006.

⁴⁶⁶ Arab News, "Top Turkish General Warns of Islamist Threat," September 26, 2006.

⁴⁶⁷ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, 10.06.2016.

the e-memorandum. The crowds at rallies called out the slogans; "we are the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal", and "Turkey is secular and will stay secular".⁴⁶⁸

These tensions came to a head after the AKP's decision to nominate Abdullah Gül for the presidency. The prominent CHP leader Deniz Baykal personally stated that "they cannot allow a person having a wife with 'headscarf' for the presidential elections to Çankaya" while the segment claiming to be the "keepers of Republic" was preparing for the election by disseminating propaganda that secularism is in danger.⁴⁶⁹ The ruling party announced the name of Gül on 24th April, so Gül became the second candidate in the party after Ersönmez Yarbay, who announced his candidacy 2 days before. In those days, it was claimed by the Former Chief Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals, Sabih Kanadoğlu, that AKP cannot make their candidate with 354 deputies and if the other parties did not attend elections, there would be no qualified majority with 367 deputies; yet everyone was waiting for the elections. 361 deputies participated in the elections held on 27th April with the small support of the first round of opposition and remained below 367.⁴⁷⁰

Gül's nomination provoked mass demonstrations by secularists in major Turkish cities; a warning by Büyükanıt in April; and the so-called e-coup or "midnight memorandum," a statement posted on the Turkish General Staff website declaring that the military is "the definite defender of secularity" and "will manifest its attitude and behavior in an explicit and clear fashion when necessary," which was perceived by many Turks as a veiled threat of a possible military coup.⁴⁷¹ After the CHP and other parties boycotted the first round of voting in parliament, the Constitutional Court, which was dominated by secularists, supported the CHP's petition that the election was invalid because the quorum was not present.

⁴⁶⁸ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, 10.06.2016.

⁴⁶⁹ The interview with Ersönmez Yarbay, 10.06.2016.

⁴⁷⁰ Arab News, "Top Turkish General Warns of Islamist Threat," September 26, 2006.

⁴⁷¹ Arab News, "Top Turkish General Warns of Islamist Threat," September 26, 2006.

In the e-memorandum, speaking about the sensitivity of secularism, the TSK expressed the discomfort of images of girls wearing headscarves during the activities of Holy Birth⁴⁷² and the divine readings. From here, the developments were linked to the presidential election and to the principle of "devotion to the regime, not the so-called," declaration; was completely confused with the internal affairs of the government and became a memorandum.⁴⁷³ The declaration also provided an implicit support for the main opposition party, which appealed to the Constitutional Court for the cancellation of the elections. Ongoing with the concerns of Secularism, the e-memorandum ended with the demonizing; "In summary, Republic of Turkey's founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk said: 'How happy is he who says he's a Turk' all those who oppose this concept are the enemy of the Republic of Turkey and will remain so.", creating enmity that TSK would sustain its intervention with "certain faith."⁴⁷⁴

With the announcement of e-memorandum, the Prime Minister Erdoğan gathered his close colleagues and discussed how they would respond. The vast majority of those who attended the meeting were of the opinion that they should not remain silent. It was stated that the Minister of National Education Hüseyin Çelik, Ali Babacan and Cemil Çiçek, State Ministers, and Adana deputy Ömer Çelik gathered in a house and wrote an anti-statement under the chairmanship of Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül and under the instructions of Erdoğan.⁴⁷⁵ It was also frequently spoken that Erdoğan called the Chief of General Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt that night, but he did not answer the call. At a meeting held on the morning of 28th April, it was decided that the declaration prepared should be shared by Cemil Çiçek with the public as an explanation for the government. The government spokesman Cemil Çiçek, who fronted the cameras at 15:15,

⁴⁷² Holy Birth of Prophet Muhammed, Sunni Muslims observe the Prophet Muhammed's birthday on the 12th day of the Islamic month of Rabi' al-awwal, while Shi'a Muslims mark it on the 17th of this month.

⁴⁷³ Parliamentary Research Commission Report, November 2012.

⁴⁷⁴ Genelkurmay'dan Çok Sert Açıklama, Hürriyet Newspaper, 29.04.2007.

⁴⁷⁵ Available at: <http://darbeler.com/2015/05/18/27-nisan-e-muhtirasi/>, Access Date: 05.03.2017.

said: "The Chief of General Staff, an institution linked to the Prime Ministry, cannot make a statement against the government in a democratic state of law. The Office of the Chief of the General Staff is an institution designated by the Constitution and related laws at the disposal of the Government. The declaration will be perceived as an initiative to influence the Supreme Court in this sensitive period when the Constitutional Court is engaged in discussions. Everyone needs to understand well that our government is more sensitive than anyone else about the basic and indispensable common values in Articles 1, 2 and 3 in the constitution of our state, our country's unity and integrity of our nation's dignity, the characteristics of Turkey's being secular, democratic and social legal state." He also reminded the TSK where to stop and expressed his determination that the government would not bow to this tutelage initiative.⁴⁷⁶

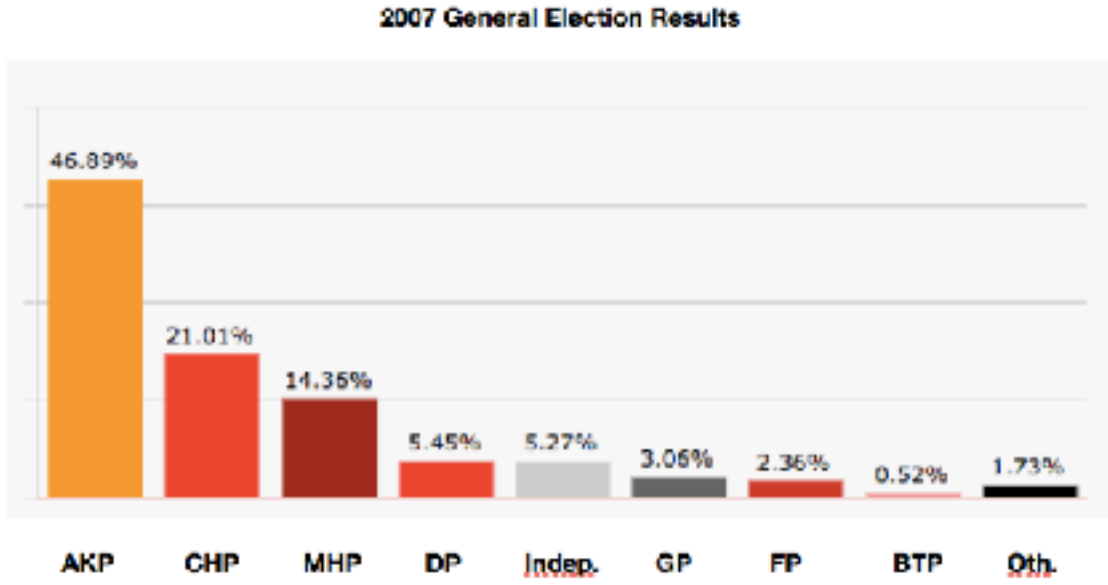
The fact that the Constitutional Court canceled the first round of the presidential elections on the CHP's application was also a mid-coup by the jurisdiction. The style and timing clearly pointed to a memorandum as well as the convictions contained in the report. Although it did not include a call for resignation for the government, it was paving the way for illegalizing the decree of the Constitutional Court.⁴⁷⁷ As a matter of fact, the judiciary, which is another foot of the tutelage, announced the cancellation decision as of 1st May in this coup attempt as well as the exams it failed before. At first glance, the 367 "invention", which was not legal because it was not sought in any previous election, went as far as the Constitutional Court to accept the cancellation of the first round of elections.⁴⁷⁸ Abdullah Gül did not withdraw from the candidacy, but the government announced the cancellation notice on 1st May. The government also announced the decision to withdraw from the election and Gül's withdrawal if the government did not comply with the early election calls made before the Constitutional Court decision. Ahmet Necdet Sezer, whose term ended on May 16, also spent more than 3 months in the mansion,

⁴⁷⁶ Available at: <http://darbeler.com/2015/05/18/27-nisan-e-muhtirasi/>, Access Date: 05.03.2017.

⁴⁷⁷ Available at: <http://darbeler.com/2015/05/18/27-nisan-e-muhtirasi/>, Access Date: 05.03.2017.

⁴⁷⁸ For more information see Şamil Tayyar, *Kıt'a Dur*, Timaş Publications, Istanbul, 2009.

contributing to the democracy coup. When the general elections were canceled on 22nd July, the Constitutional amendment was put into force with the compulsory approval of Sezer's choice of the next presidents.⁴⁷⁹



Former Foreign Minister and former CHP leader Hikmet Çetin seriously criticized the CHP's attitude at that time in these words: "Although I do not like the AKP, this policy, which the CHP has implemented, is definitely wrong".⁴⁸⁰ He emphasized that the CHP is breaking away from the demands of the people.

In the elections of July 22, 2007, the ruling party succeeded in forming a government once again with 46.7 percent of the votes, and the people showed their reaction against the memorandum with the support of AKP.⁴⁸¹ Gül was elected President on 28th August with the support of the MHP entering the parliament. The tension with the soldiers starting with the August 30 ceremonies continued for a while. In 2008, the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Court of Cassation Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya opened a closure case against the AKP, claiming that they have become the center of acts against secularism. However,

⁴⁷⁹ Tayyar, *ibid.*, 2009.

⁴⁸⁰ The interview with Masanori Naito, 18.12.2016.

⁴⁸¹ Available at: <https://secim.haberler.com/2011/>.

this Constitutional Court overturned this anti-democratic initiative, since the majority of votes were not provided for party closure.⁴⁸²

The failed presidential selection in May 2007 led to the decision to hold parliamentary elections, originally scheduled for November, on July 22, 2007.⁴⁸³ According to Angel Rabasa and Stephen Larrabee, AKP was embittered by the military's role in derailing Gül's candidacy for the presidency, although AKP critics contend that the party pushed the envelope too far by nominating him after Erdoğan decided not to stand for the presidency. In this view, the AKP abused its parliamentary majority—which represented only one-third of the electorate—to ram through the election of a candidate who was not broadly acceptable. Gül's election as president on August 28, 2007, marked an important political watershed. For the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic, a non-secularist was elected president. This broke an important political tradition.⁴⁸⁴ However, it was unlikely to end the strains between the AKP and the military. The military harbored deep misgivings about Gül's election and continued to manifest its discontent—as underscored by the military leadership's decision to boycott Gül's inaugural reception and swearing-in ceremony. These pointed public displays of discontent were likely to continue. However, the AKP's overwhelming victory in the 2007 elections was likely to make the military cautious about undertaking any direct intervention against the government unless it takes actions that clearly pose a threat to Turkey's secular order.⁴⁸⁵

On August 28, 2007, the army command post, unable to prevent Gul's election to the presidency, was trying to show its reaction to the new president in different ways. These included the refusal of the president to attend the oath ceremony, the dispatch of low-ranking officers to the presidency invitation, and the failure to attend the opening of the new parliament, which was contrary to

⁴⁸² The interview with Yaşar Yakış, 11.06.2016.

⁴⁸³ Available at: <http://darbeler.com/2015/05/18/27-nisan-e-muhtirasi/>, Access Date: 05.03.2017.

⁴⁸⁴ The interview with Yaşar Yakış, 11.06.2016.

⁴⁸⁵ Rabasa and Larrabee, *ibid.*, p. 72-73.

tradition. Again on August 29, 2007, in the first official ceremony attended by Gül in GATA, the commanders did not conform to the protocol rules, and on 30th August, they used the statement of “honorable president” instead of the statement that should be used “your honorable president” in turn-over ceremonies.⁴⁸⁶

According to Ertuğrul Günay, the former Minister of Culture and Tourism in the AKP between 2007 and 2013:

“There was an elected government by the people. There was a picture of trying to destroy that power with other channels, not with people's votes. And on 27th of April, a memorandum was published against the ruling election in the General Staff's website, as we saw earlier. I immediately made a statement against the April 27th memorandum on that day, and I said it was against the democratic principles that it was not right to oppose such elected political power. I was already independent in that process. I left the CHP in 2004 and I was independent because I could not agree with Baykal administration. After that threshold, after the memorandum, we were conversational with Mr. Erdoğan. In the end, I and a few of my friends joined AKP and made great efforts for democratization. In 2007, we also did a very serious constitutional study. Between 2007 and 2011, a very good work was performed apart from a few stylistic differences. Turkey, in the direction of a more pluralistic, more in line with EU accession, in a peaceful way of resolving these problems, took important steps towards democratization. From 2012 onwards, serious disagreements have arisen among us. At the end of 2013, these allegations of corruption came to the agenda, and at that

⁴⁸⁶ Cansever and Mehmet Kiriş, *Ibid.*, p. 378-379.

threshold, I resigned because I did not find the position and attitude of my party.”⁴⁸⁷

Mahmut Akpınar has a different interpretation regarding the crisis of 367 in 2007. According to him:

“At the end of its 2nd term, AKP began to lose power and energy and to be unraveled seriously. The 367 crisis and the provision of e-memorandum behind it led the right-religionist conservative masses to turn to AKP again. If it were not for this crisis, it could see things like the change of power in the next elections, at least the emergence of a coalition. However, the anti-democratic attitude by CHP, the organization of secularist rallies calling for military opinion, the crisis of 367, and finally the e-memorandum caused AKP to be a victim, and the people wanted to support the victim by teaching a lesson to CHP and the army. In our opinion, these events opened the way of “one man administration” for Erdoğan, giving more credits to him and extended his political life. With the charisma and sympathy that he earned, Erdoğan opened his own one-man path.”⁴⁸⁸

Yaşar Yakış made the following statements about the 367 rule:

“I certainly think that the 367 rule does not apply. That’s what the law says. In the first round, if the majority cannot be achieved, the statement “it will be ok for the second round” will make no sense. It is already thought that the number cannot reach 367; this statement

⁴⁸⁷ The interview with Ertuğrul Günay, 05.05.2016.

⁴⁸⁸ The interview with Mahmut Akpınar, 09.07.2017.

is created. I think that the law was bent to make a decision. Thus, both the political party CHP and the judiciary failed a test.”⁴⁸⁹

As can be seen, we can say that the 2007 presidential election and the e-memorandum event were a turning point for the AKP as well as Turkey, because the people could say “stop” to the army and they supported the AKP in an extensive scope.

5.3 Conclusion

Having its roots in the conservative Views of Ummah, the AKP achieved a great success in the Turkish political history with the voting rate it received in the election held on November 3, 2002. In this sense, it became a sociological research topic that attracted attention both from the point of view of its tradition and the change and innovation which it brought to Turkish politics.

The AKP has stated since the day it was founded that it is not an Islamist party and it will not take Islam as a reference in political ideologies. The most obvious indication was that it tried not to use the “headscarf” issue in its election campaign which had always led to divisions in Turkish politics. It had expressed its political identity as "conservative-democratic". This point must be noted that the fact that the AKP does not define itself as an Islamist party does not mean that it is not an Islamist party. This discourse has been used because of voting considerations and the conjuncture required it. In other words, it was understood that it could fight against military elites through this democracy rhetoric and received, in return, a kind of protection under this discourse.

As can be inferred from the study “whether the AKP is sincere or not”, it achieved significant achievements in terms of the democratization of the country. EU Commissioner in charge of Enlargement Gunter Verheugen said in a statement on December 14, 2002: “The reforms made in Turkey in the last 18 months were more significant than the reforms carried out in the last 80 years. The economy of the country attained a once-unimaginable acceleration and it

⁴⁸⁹ The interview with Yaşar Yakış, 11.06.2016.

was now the second fastest growing country in the first seven years of the 21st century. This was an important data. Given the contributions brought by the economic development, it can be asserted that the reforms undertaken in the fields of democracy, human rights, and rule of law have enhanced the prestige of Turkey. That being said, there are still shortcomings.”

Being experienced and aware of fact that democracy does not guarantee election victories as seen in the 28th February process, the AKP knew that the support of just its voters would not be enough to maintain the election victory in the political arena and if it wanted to be a genuine political power, that would amount to settling accounts with the military authority. Starting from this first electoral victory, the AKP’s settling accounts with the military authority followed two basic axes. The first one was the limitation of the military authorities under the umbrella of a broad democratization and within the framework of the EU integration process. Bracing the EU project strengthened the political project of the AKP, both nationally and internationally, against military elites. In this process, AKP first limited the powers of the NSC and then transformed this institution, which was positioned itself above the civilian politics in the 1990s, as an advisory body rather than a decision-making executive body.

Another transformation that made it possible for the AKP to settle accounts with the military authority was the steps taken to civilianize the Kurdish issue and to resolve the Kurdish issue in civilian politics. Undoubtedly, in this first period, the only reason why the AKP took steps on the political solution of the Kurdish issue was not the restriction of the military authority, but realizing that the civilianization of the Kurdish issue will be directly linked to the decrease in the role of the military in civilian politics was one of the main reasons behind the steps taken in this regard. Indeed, in this early period of the AKP government, the main debate between the AKP elites and the military authority was on the "soft" attitude of the party in the Kurdish issue. Although the AKP did not have a comprehensive plan for the Kurdish issue, it was also seen that it was gradually aiming to find a political solution to the problem through small

steps. In the relatively nonviolent period between 2002 and 2003, important steps were taken in the human rights field as well as respect to the political demands of the Kurds, unseen until that time. The AKP's elites were clearly aware that trying to solve the issue militarily again would, first of all, reinforce the military's grip on civilian politics, which would mean limiting their own power. In short, in this first period, the political relationship established by the AKP with the EU project allowed the military authority to be directly restrained under the "civilianization" agenda, while, on the other hand, the solution on the political sphere of the Kurdish issue, which had made it possible for the military to expand its authority, led to the indirect decrease in the military elites on the political arena.

As can be inferred from the study, the power struggle between the AKP and the soldier reached its peak in 2007. The political crisis triggered with the claim that a quorum of 367 was needed to hold a session in parliament to elect the new president and the e-memorandum posted on the website of the General Staff was a turning point both for Turkey and the AKP itself. For the first time, the military had to give up on its plan to intervene in the politics. Then, the AKP couldn't hold the prudential election in the parliament due to the objections of the military elites and called for a new general election to elect a parliament to elect the new president and won this election with a landslide with a large margin and a more powerful parliamentary majority. This victory of the AKP was now a sign of a new era. The post-2007 period in Turkey saw the prosecution of the soldiers on charges of attempted coup d'etat. Ergenekon trials, which started in 2008, can be considered as the most important sign of this transformation.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.0 Conclusion

The research mainly focused on how Turkey's democratization has been influenced by conservative parties throughout the contemporary history of Turkey since the 1950's. One of the most important significances of this research is that it has been argued that Turkey's conservative parties positively contributed towards democratization by attempting to strike balance between modernization and Islamic identity.

Some studies demonstrated what Atatürk did for the modernization of Turkey by isolating these achievements from the pre and post periods of the events. But, Turkey's democratization or modernization began much earlier. The modernization of Turkey has been continuing since the Ottoman Empire. By modernization, it was meant that the social structures of economic institutions and political institutions were organized according to the needs of the times. Though Turkey has considerable experience on the path to democratization, yet it went through a different process from that pursued by the West. The West, experiencing simultaneously political revolution and the industrial revolution, reached its present position by giving long struggles for democracy.

In Turkish historical experience, the fact that the social class concept has not been observed and the rulers did not directly exploit people was the biggest difference that separates Turkish people from the West. The fact that the steps were taken for modernization and/or westernization were imposed by the rulers for the continuity of the state rather than as a necessity of social needs has strengthened the perception of democracy in the social framework. The society was made to adapt to the modernization efforts made for various reasons. On the other hand, the view of Turkish society towards the state and the sacredness it has attributed to the state has prevented the society from raising any objections to the practices. In this context, almost all the researchers think that the democratization of Turkey started during the political reforms by the Ottoman Empire in 1839. Despite the contradictions and problems of the Tanzimat Era,

we know that this period had positive improvements with regards to political and legal life. During this era, many achievements, such as the principle of abiding by laws and legality instead of arbitrariness, development of the idea of restricting the boundaries of political power, orientation towards secularism in institutions and rules, facilitating the process of establishing a constitutional process, modernization and westernization were gained during this period.

When the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923, Europe was conceived as its destiny by the Kemalist leadership dedicated to the secularization and modernization of the country. There is no doubt that accepting Turkey as an EU candidate country was based on this Kemalist modernization-as-Europeanization project. The fact that Turkey is considered a European country was not based on geography, history, or popular identities, but on the Kemalist modernization project. However, largely due to its inability to find a political solution to the Kurdish question, the Kemalist tradition has, in recent decades, been seen as the greatest obstacle preventing Turkey from transforming into a workable liberal democracy.⁴⁹⁰ This state of affairs has duly been seen obstructing Turkey's EU bid and its own democratization process.

There were internal and external reasons for accelerating democratization in the Republican period after 1945. The internal reasons included the CHP's single-party policies, the failure of the party to localize, getting support just from the urban voters and CHP's hard-line stance, and liberal controversies in CHP. Additionally, the attitude of the rural people oppressed under the heavy economic pressures of the CHP due to World War II and influences of the elites raised under democracy and popular movements in the Republican ideology can be cited as internal reasons. Among the external reason were Turkey's cooperation with the Western nations and rapprochement with the USA due to the USSR's claims on the Turkish land and straits at the end of the 2nd World War and the promises that Turkey would be democratized at the San Francisco Conference.

⁴⁹⁰ Toni Alaranta, *Turkey Under The AKP*, The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 2015, p. 5.

After the elections in 1946, the CHP faced, for the first time, a serious opposition party in the parliament. With the DP's discourse on democracy and freedom, many people registered with the party supported the party. As a result, the CHP entered democratization process between 1946-1950, granted workers the right to unionize, allowed the establishment of associations and societies, removed censorship by changing the law of the press and ensured the autonomy of the universities by enacting the University Law. Obviously, these forced reforms had a positive effect.

Between 1946 and 1950 when the DP was in opposition, it repeatedly criticized the CHP government for issues, such as press, universities, associations and trade union rights, and argued that there was no democracy in the country. However, when the DP was in power, it allowed the activities of trade unions and associations in legal terms, but it began to take tough measures as the CHP began to strengthen again. Having its roots in the CHP and separating from the CHP on grounds that the party was not democratic enough, the executives of the DP adopted a discourse advocating the freedoms, liberal economy and democracy, but as it strengthened in time, it deviated from this discourse and undertook undemocratic practices for fear that it may lose power. During 1950 to 1960, the DP resorted to many anti-democratic laws and practices, such as weakening of the university autonomy, the restriction of press freedom, the introduction of the ban on political parties and associations, and the ban on other party lawmakers to speak in the TBMM. The famous saying by John Dalberg Acton that "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely" has always demonstrated itself in the Turkish politics. Unfortunately, the rulers and leaders initially set off with the rhetoric emphasizing the importance of democracy, law and human rights. However, this just becomes rhetoric when the power balance changes in their favor.

As a result of the 1960 coup and closure of the DP, Turkey was ruled by center-right parties for a long time until the 1990s. As can be inferred from the study, the most important obstacle to the democratization of Turkey was the behavior of the military elite and their supporters. These segments who asserted

power since the founding of Turkey often resorted to military intervention even after the closure of the DP.

As explained in Chapter 4, Views of Ummah Movement achieved in garnering the support of the majority thanks to a discourse different from its predecessors in 1990s. The underlining success of the Views of Ummah and the WP was due to the fact that the people were fed up by the military elites. However, the election strategy that the WP pursued to reach every level of society was the main reason behind its success. In this context, the nomination of candidates in every city and municipality was a first incidence in the history of Turkish democracy.

The main arguments of the military in the 1990s were based on the protection of secularism and struggle against reactionary movements. In the 28th February process, the military updated its threats priority and the number one priority threat was decided to be the reactive and separatism was downgraded to be the number two priority threat. In the 1990s, although the fact that the military was putting pressure on the governments through the NSC and then the governments had to leave power was not a direct military coup, such interventions changed the way the politics functions. The 28th February process can be considered as a milestone for recent events that determine Turkish politics and the relations between the politics and military.

With the closure of the WP on January 16, 1998, some party managers, including Erbakan and Tayyip Erdogan, were banned from politics. When WP was closed, it had 158 deputies in parliament, and the deputies who understood the party would be closed down transferred to the FP, which was established on 17th December 1997. Under the pressure of the 28th February process, deputies of the FP tried hard to prove that their party is not a continuation of the WP rather than NSP. They even expressed that they take as the basis the spirit of the DP and ANAP. While the WP preserved its Islamic ideology and opened up to the masses and transformed (Islamized) them through new methods without compromising from its values, the Views of Ummah underwent a forced change

and transformation out of its will after 28th February process. So, events leading to the establishment of the AKP started with this process.

The need for democracy began to be felt more and more when the people were made to pay the price of the political controversies in the social and economic context in the second half of the 1990s. The active role of the army in the developments in the 28th February process reinforced political crises. The fact that the political crises were mainly due to the conflicts including the military interventions between the administrative and military elites put the society in a difficult position. These developments have strengthened the need for democratization in society as well as the commitment to democracy.

The establishment of the AKP was the immediate aftermath of this incident. As explained in Chapter 5, the establishment period of the AKP constituted one of the periods that produced the most important democratization policies of the Republican history. The party stated in its election manifesto that one of its *raison d'être* is to close the democracy gap in Turkey. In this context, they pursued successful policies in the fields of social equality, rule of law and freedom of speech, especially through the policies they followed.

One of the most important problems in the Turkish politics is the gap between the state and society and the widening of this gap due to the wrong practices and policies. This is due to the fact that the resolution of political and social problems the country confronts is left to the mercy of the security paradigm. For a long time, the state has ignored the citizens' demands with regards to the expanding the democracy and rights and freedoms, even preventing them from being mentioned. After the 1990s, Turkish politics has had a lot of painful experiences that politics would bring no benefit to settle these problems, on the contrary, it would cause them to multiply. On the other hand, at the beginning of the 2000s, a new approach started to emerge that tried to put forward solutions to the chronic problems the country had been grappling with. This approach reflected a viewpoint that went beyond the conventional security paradigm and brought to the fore universal democratic values in the solution of the problems.

The AKP, which has defined itself as a conservative democrat since its founding, could not bring a clear explanation to this definition within the framework of democracy. In this approach blended with representative/liberal democratic elements and participatory democracy, it was seen that different democratic elements were not clearly defined; consequently, a systematic democratic understanding has not been materialized. It appears that the intellectual level of the AKP's political manifesto effort has not been sufficiently clear. It can be seen from the interviews made during this study, the executives of the AKP, which had some hesitations about the conditions of the period, tried to protect themselves as if they were shielding with their conservative democratic identities.

In the early 2000s, Turkey's EU accession process gained momentum. Many steps have been taken to regulate military-civil relations within the framework of constitutional and legal reforms by reducing the political power of the military, which was contrary to the democratic standards that the EU has insisted on. In order to have a stable and institutionalized democracy as required within the framework of the Copenhagen criteria, it was inevitable for civilian politics to be adopted in the process of harmonization with the EU, so the relations between civilian and military authorities changed in favor of civilians.

The AKP grassroots also reflect a pro-Western attitude. According to a public opinion poll conducted in July 2004, 79 % of the AKP voters favored EU membership against the national average of 73 %. They also viewed NATO more positive (60 %) in comparison with the national average (48 %). The AKP voters had a positive view of 'Western civilization' (50 % against 54 % - national average), and favor aligning the West with 53 % instead of the East if they have to choose between these two broadly defined orientation.⁴⁹¹ This policy received support from the voters and democratization efforts were initiated in order to enter the EU and the party's policies were implemented in this direction.

⁴⁹¹ Ihsan Dağı, "The Justice and Development Party: Identity, Politics, and Discourse of Human Rights in the Search for Security and Legitimacy," *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and AK Parti*, Ed. H. Yavuz, Salt Lake City: Utah University Press, 2006, p. 89.

Among the initial positive steps were the removal of the state of emergency, thus facilitating the daily lives of the large segments of society in Turkey, settling accounts with the past, the fight against the coup d'état and the coup instigators within legal boundaries, expansion of cultural rights, and the development of a libertarian understanding of many areas including the use of Kurdish language. Of course, this process emerged as a result of a long and laborious journey.

When we look at political parties, it can be observed that the institutional structure of political parties has changed considerably over the past 10 years. Turkey saw the closure of many political parties. Since 1963 when the Constitutional Court entered the Turkish legal and political life, 26 political parties were shut down. With the changes made in the legislative and constitutional articles, the closing of the political parties has been made considerably more difficult. Closure conditions are clearly defined and explained. Institutional guarantees granted to the political parties have been strengthened. But, unfortunately, it does not seem easy to say the same about individual rights within the political parties.

In Turkey, there have been no serious problems with regards to holding democratic elections. The elections are held on a secret voting and open counting basis under legal guarantees and the voting is general and equal. The elections are also held at regular periods. This is offered as an indication that Turkey is democratic. Of course, it would have been true if democracy solely consisted of continuous and regular elections. At least in part, it is true, but it is also clear that there are problems arising from the electoral system, because if the representative democracy means elections, then the elections must ensure a fair representation. The electoral system in Turkey is not fair. An example of this is the continued presence of the 10% election threshold.

As can be inferred from the study, the 2007 presidential election has a very important place in Turkish political history. Those who thought that the secularism principle would suffer when the 10th President Ahmet Necdet Sezer's term will expire were opposed to the election of Erdoğan or Gül as president

instead of Sezer. Non-governmental organizations, especially the Atatürkist Thought Association, which adopted a similar attitude with the military, organized mass demonstrations called *republican rallies* in major cities, such as Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir, and tried to influence the process. In addition, many discussions and incidents took place regarding whether the *headscarf* must be allowed into the public space.

The military, which directly intervened *the presidential election process in 2007*, declared in 27 April e-Memorandum that the government was engaged in efforts to abuse the religion and defy the secular structure of the state and the government was just *paying lip service* to the principle of secularism. However, the military wanted the government to embrace the principle of secularism in essence and it was a party to this process as the definite advocate of secularism and where required, it would take action. This declaration caused the anticipated discussion in the Turkish politics, influenced the political process, but it fell short of creating the result desired by the military. One of the reasons was that the military was not assertive enough to impose its demands and the government and the leadership were more committed than ever to assert civilian control. The government spokesman emphasized on contemporary democratic values, and specified that the General Staff reported to the Prime Ministry that an institution cannot be against an institution to which it reports in any democratic country governed by rule of law and the government was committed more than any other institution to a Turkey that was a democratic, secular and social state governed by rule of law. This was really turning point for democracy. The military could not make an intervention, and the Turkish nation did not support the military. The military had to give up an intervention for the first time in its history.

In the big power struggle between the AKP elites and military authorities in the first years of the AKP, the AKP's political elites used the democracy, democratic institutions, and processes as trump cards. The AKP strengthened its hand through democracy and consolidated its power through conservatism and this enabled it to garner national and international support, thus winning the

power struggle against the military. Winning this struggle enabled the AKP to see itself as the only political object in the “state order”.

In fact, the center-right and conservative parties paved the way to democratization in Turkey. Many reforms, innovations, and developments were made during their time in power. The developments with regards to democracy and judiciary and economic leaps have been observed in the periods when DP, JP, ANAP, and AKP were in power in the country. Every centre-right wing party has achieved so many successes in its first years in power, however, the acceleration of development and democratization had fallen in later years and the developments were rolled back in time. This is not the sole problem of the center-right parties in Turkey. Rather, it is a problem of all parties which come to the power. The main problem is the lack of a developed check and balance system in place in Turkey. In Turkey, people are inclined to adhere to their political parties just like being a big fan of a football team and behaving in a partisan manner is one of the reasons for moving away from democracy. Political parties are not entities that must be supported under any circumstances. The popular support they receive must shift when required. But, in Turkish society, beginning to support another political party is perceived as betrayal. I believe that the abuse of conservative values and religious beliefs also helped the authoritarianism of the right-wingers. Unfortunately, all the centre-right wing parties have made use of religion and beliefs for political gains.

Consequently, Turkey must realize democratization in line with the expectations and desires of their internal dynamics, not under the influences and pressures of external dynamics just like during the Tanzimat Period of the Ottoman Empire. In this context, it must put into practice the qualities of the democratic society which has been mentioned at the beginning of this study, because the democratic structure which is tried to be set up top-down will not survive.

6.1 Gaps in research and suggestions for future research

This study did not focus on the center-left and left-wing parties in Turkey. It focused only on the policies and events that have been implemented by the conservative parties. Thus, to be able to understand and interpret the full extent of the democratization process in Turkey, a comprehensive study must be carried out with regards to the left-wing parties.

This study has focused on the period up to the 2007 presidential election. It goes without saying that very important events occurred after that period. But, the reason for not focusing on the aftermath of 2007 is the ongoing effects of the process. Definitely, it can be argued that after consolidating its power in 2007, the AKP started to back down on the achievements it made up to that time and began a tendency of authoritarianism through the policies it put into practice. As I have frequently mentioned in my study, it is the destiny of the Turkish political history. To shed a light on the process from 2007 to the present day and to be able to understand the events, this process needs to come to an end and it needs to be studied in an impartial manner. It is almost impossible to do that in the ever-changing agenda of the country. Therefore, after Turkish politics becomes more stable, it is absolutely necessary to focus on this area.

To sum up, it is noteworthy that Turkey's understanding with regards to democracy and freedoms in the first ten years of the 2000s is much more advanced than before. However, one of the most important issues here is to remember the difference between the past and today in order for a realistic approach to be dominant and to keep the social memories alive in this respect. Thus, it will be possible to bring a feeling of awareness in the society in terms of democratic reforms and to increase the legitimacy and social support for democratization initiatives. It must be noted that the most perilous barriers in the 2000-2010 period have been overcome and the most powerful steps have been taken. Many reforms were unfortunately forgotten since the reforms were not continued with the same determination in the following period. A Turkey which resolves its internal political and social problems and ensures a harmonious co-existence for all segments of society will be more powerful in its

region and in the world and it will also be a more powerful and assertive country.

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