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DEFEATING AUTHORITARIAN STATE STRUCTURES IN SEMI-DEMOCRATIC
COUNTRIES: LESSONS FROM TURKEY'S JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY

by

GULCAN SAGLAM

Under the Direction of Dr. Michael F. Herb

ABSTRACT

Political success in semi-democratic countries has two aspects: shifting the balance of power in one's favor and maintaining it. This thesis seeks to examine how the AKP has succeeded in shifting the balance of power in its favor while its predecessor the Welfare Party did not. Focusing on electoral success, existing research primarily lists center-periphery conflict, moderation, class struggle, party organization, and failures of others as the main determinants. Yet the significance of reining in the power of the Kemalist state structure has been mostly disregarded. Therefore, with a comparison of the AKP (2002-2007) and the Welfare Party (1996-1997) governments, this study tests one assertion using most-similar systems research design that in semi-democratic political settings with strong authoritarian actors, political parties that build broad coalitions via group specific policy promises will be more likely to shift the balance of power in favor of themselves than actors that lack such connections.

INDEX WORDS: Justice and Development Party, Joel Migdal, State-in-society, Clientelism, Group specific policy promises, Welfare Party, Authoritarian state structure

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GULCAN SAGLAM

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2012

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS	8
2.1. CENTER – PERIPHERY CONFLICT	8
2.2. POLITICAL LEARNING / MODERATION	11
2.3. CLASS STRUGGLE	14
2.4. PARTY ORGANIZATION / MOBILIZATION.....	16
2.5. FAILURES OF OTHERS.....	17
3. GROUP SPECIFIC POLICIES	20
4.1. PARTICULARISTIC POLITICS IN THE “STATE OF NATURE”.....	24
4. RESEARCH DESIGN.....	37
4.1. KEMALIST/NATIONALIST STATE STRUCTURE.....	39
4.1.1. THE MILITARY	39
4.1.2. THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT	40
4.1.3. THE PRESIDENT.....	41
4.1.4. THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE’S PARTY (CHP) AND KEMALIST INTELLECTUALS.....	42
4.2. COALITION BUILDING PHASE	43
4.2.1. IV: GROUP SPECIFIC POLICY PROMISES AS A COALITION BUILDING STRATEGY	44
4.2.2. DV: SHIFTING THE BALANCE OF POWER.....	45
5. INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: COALITIONS WITH THE POWER CENTERS IN TURKISH SOCIETY.....	45

5.1. KURDS	45
5.1.1. THE WELFARE'S RELATION WITH KURDS:.....	47
5.1.2. THE AKP'S RELATION WITH KURDS:.....	53
5.2. TUSIAD	60
5.2.1. THE WELFARE'S RELATION WITH TUSIAD:.....	62
5.2.2. THE AKP'S RELATION WITH TUSIAD:.....	63
5.3. MUSIAD	66
5.3.1. THE WELFARE'S RELATION WITH MUSIAD:.....	68
5.3.2. THE AKP'S RELATION WITH MUSIAD:.....	69
5.4. CONSERVATIVES	71
5.4.1. THE WELFARE'S RELATION WITH CONSERVATIVES:.....	74
5.4.2. THE AKP'S RELATION WITH CONSERVATIVES:.....	75
5.5. LIBERALS	78
5.5.1. THE WELFARE'S RELATION WITH LIBERALS:.....	79
5.5.2. THE AKP'S RELATION WITH LIBERALS:.....	80
6. DEPENDENT VARIABLE: THE STRUGGLE	82
6.1. THE WELFARE PARTY AND THE FEBRUARY 28 PROCESS	82
6.2. THE AKP AND THE 27 APRIL MILITARY MEMORANDUM	91
7. CONCLUSION	103
REFERENCES	107

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Weberian State	27
Figure 2: Migdal's State	28
Figure 3: Vertical, bilateral ties	34
Figure 4: Web of relations	35

1. INTRODUCTION

“The others are all collaborators,” decried Necmettin Erbakan in his 1994 local election speech, “They are all imitators of the West, the Zionists. Vote for Refah (Welfare Party), and let us spoil their game!” Just Order, which was based on a pragmatic mixture of capitalism, Communism, and Islam, was presented as the only solution to the chronic problems of Turkey.

The ongoing economic crisis, reported as the most damaging one in the history of the Republic, was on top of that obstinate list. “In the first quarter of 1994, the Turkish Lira (TL) was devalued more than 50% against the US dollar, the Central Bank lost half of its reserves, interest rates skyrocketed (with 400%), and the inflation rate reached three-digit levels.¹” A stabilization program, later supported by an IMF Stand-By was launched on April 5th, 1994, but the structural adjustment measures only deepened the crisis. First, real wages fell sharply: “average nominal wage increases of 65 percent were about 20 percent below the rate of consumer price inflation²”. Later, due to rapid privatization of public enterprises, the slowdown in government spending, and a sharp loss in business confidence, almost half a million people lost their jobs³.

Nevertheless, it is possible to speculate that the economic hardship might have been overlooked –or at least tolerated more quietly-, had not the monetary scandals of high-rank state officials –and even Prime Minister Tansu Ciller herself- broke out one after another during the same time period. It was quite obvious that the burden of the economic crisis, and the structural adjustment program was not shared by every segment of the society. And, as a result, the popular

¹ <http://www.econturk.org/Turkisheconomy/kriz.pdf>

² <http://sinestezi.wordpress.com/2009/04/04/turkiye-de-ekonomik-krizler-1994-1998-1999-ve-2001-krizleri/>

³ <http://sinestezi.wordpress.com/2009/04/04/turkiye-de-ekonomik-krizler-1994-1998-1999-ve-2001-krizleri/>

frustration ascended day by day as a reaction to the corruption, mismanagement of the crisis, and incompetence of the government.

Even worse, every path for channeling that frustration peacefully was either completely blocked or limited by an imperious military authority. The ongoing fighting in the east of the country between separatist Kurdish guerrillas and Turkish army was getting more intense every day, and since half of the country was being ruled under the state of emergency, the political space for the men in the uniform was expanding day by day. As the country was going through “those days that unity and solidarity of the nation were needed, above all”, “whining” about democracy or economic situation was intolerable. As a result, torture, death under custody, disappearance (mostly under custody), murders whose perpetrators were unknown became the norm due to the security-centric state ideology.

Sauced with a heavy Islamist rhetoric, Just Order was perceived as the light at the end of the tunnel in this atmosphere. The Party promised that there would be neither the oppressor nor the oppressed in the new system. The Kurdish problem, the privatization problem, the economic problems, the corruption problem, and even the traffic problem could be solved via Islamist way of governing. This call found a broad audience from the frustrated and oppressed lower classes as much as conservative middle class, and the Welfare Party increased its vote share from 9.8% (1989) to 19.10% (1994 local elections) in 5 years. At its peak, Welfare Party got 21.37% in the 1995 general elections, and for the first time in the history of Turkey, political Islam became the partner of a ruling coalition.

Despite its electoral success and popular support, the ruling of the Welfare Party lasted only for a year. The Party was first forced out of power by the military, and then shut down completely by the Constitutional Court due to its hidden “reactionary” agenda. Along with the

marginalization of the Welfare Party, a strict de-Islamization process swept the society. Known as 28 February process -regarding 28 February 1995 National Security Council decisions that are considered to be the basis of a post-modern coup d'état- this upgraded Turkish McCarthyism turned into a total witch hunt against practicing Muslims in the public sphere.

Therefore, the landslide victory of the Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (AKP) in 2002 general elections shocked the country not only because the Party “had been established merely 15 months before the elections and [its] president had been in jail some time ago for publicly reciting a poem” (Isik & Pinarcioglu, 2010, p.161), but also because its cadre mostly consisted of former Welfare Party members.

This victory quickly revived a huge scholarly and intellectual debate on the determinants of election victory of the AKP, and the resurgence of the political Islam in Turkey. Not surprisingly, the memoirs of the Welfare government revisited, and the AKP's survival possibility as a ruling party – and as a political party in general- became the subject of conversation all over the country.

Contrary to the expectations of some and fears of others, the AKP has not only been able to survive three general and two local elections, but also to increase its vote shares in each and every election[4]. In a country accustomed to military and/or judiciary interferences to government, the AKP was not exempt from assaults of the Kemalist state structure. During its ten year rule, AKP fought against the very same state structure that had dismissed the Welfare Party and many other governments while trying to convince the domestic and international forces that the Party was not a threat to secularism per se. When the tension reached its peak with an online military memorandum on April 27, 2007, the AKP was unexpectedly able to repulse the military, announce early elections, and consolidate its rule with another election victory

shortly after the memorandum. This was a historic moment for Turkish politics since it was the first time that a government resisted the ultimatum of the military, and managed to hold on to power in spite of it.

Why did not AKP share the same destiny with the Welfare Party although high-rank generals were implying such an end? How has the AKP managed to appease the Kemalist state structure and shift the balance of power in favor of itself while its predecessor the Welfare Party did not?

This puzzle is of more than passing historical interest of Turkish politics. Defeating authoritarian regimes -transition to democracy- has long been debated among scholars of democratization.

The sharp -yet smooth- balance of power change in Turkish politics in recent years might shed light on the path for other illiberal democracies that have a powerful authoritarian actor besides democratic institutions, or those that have a limited democratic setting. In a region with burgeoning electoral success of Islamist parties with the fall of authoritarian leaders one after another, the AKP experience could also be used as a reference point by the optimists to show that the political agenda of the Islamist parties could be shaped, contained, and transformed by the broad social coalition they depend on to survive, which eventually helps them weaken the authoritarian structures that are strongly rooted in these countries.

Hence, it is no surprise that the case of the AKP has attracted a vast scholarly interest from political science, sociology, and history for over a decade. Overwhelmed by the sensational election victories of the AKP, the literature has unfortunately focused its attention solely on this phenomena, and come up with different answers;

1. Center-periphery conflict: Top-down modernization –especially secularization– promoted the polarization of the Turkish society, and spurred a struggle between the center –the Kemalist elites– and the periphery –the Muslim population. As the periphery got stronger economically and ideologically after the acceptance of neo-liberalism in 1980s, its political influence began to ascend as well. The AKP’s success, therefore, was just a reflection of this resurgence of the periphery that changed the balance of power between the Kemalist elites and the Islamic masses.

2. Political Learning/moderation: The political learning process that the leaders of the Party have been through has played a significant role in moderation of its political agenda and rhetoric. And as a result of this moderation, the Party managed to appeal to a broader constituency.

3. Class struggle: The point of convergence for the scholars of political economy has largely been the emergence of a new conservative bourgeoisie as a product of the economic and political liberalization of 1980s and 1990s. In consonance with this view, scholars have contended that there is a class struggle between the traditional upper-middle class and the new middle classes in Turkey since 1980s, and the AKP owes its success very much to this conflict.

4. Party organization/mobilization: According to these scholars, the AKP’s unparalleled focus on grassroots voter mobilization, its systematical operation, and autonomy have cleared the path for election victories, and given rise to the Party.

5. Failures of others: A group of scholars offered a new perspective, and tried to find an answer to the question of why others failed instead of why the AKP succeeded. They contended that it was not necessarily the success of the AKP, but mostly the failures of center right and social left parties in finding a solution to the economic sufferings of the masses. Not

surprisingly, they argued that economic parameters were determinant for the voting behavior of the Turkish constituency.

6. Group Specific Policy Promises: What has been mostly overlooked by the literature is the fact that electoral success in-and-of itself may not be sufficient for explaining the survival of the AKP vis-à-vis the Kemalist state structure, since the predecessor of the AKP –the Welfare Party- was dismissed by the very same structure in spite of its 1994 and 1995 election victories.

Therefore, I believe that this puzzle cannot be analyzed properly without changing our perspective on what we understand as “success”. My perspective suggests that success, especially in semi-democratic contexts, refers to first reining in the power of the authoritarian actor(s) and shifting the balance of power in the political sphere in favor of oneself, and then maintaining/consolidating the new power balance. In other words, “success”, as it is used in this study, encapsulates both the political survival and the actual dominance of the party.

First of all, such a perspective offers a more demanding standard than sole electoral success, since in limited democratic settings elections can be used for a variety of reasons other than determining the actual ruler of the country. In fact, scholars argue that authoritarian actors use elections for systematic practical reasons such as gaining legitimacy in international arena (Schwedler & Chomiak, 2006) or appeasing the challengers from both within the ruling elite (Gandhi & Lust-Okar, 2009; Gandhi&Przeworski, 2007), and the society (Gandhi&Przeworski, 2007; Lust-Okar, 2004; Schwedler, 1998; Brumberg, 2002). Moderating radical opposition groups have also considered to be another motive for holding elections in authoritarian regimes (Schwedler, 1998; Brumberg, 2002; Gandhi&Przeworski, 2007; Berman, 2008).

However, it is important to note that these semi-democratic political settings strongly differ from façade or pseudo-democracies by offering four arenas to challenge the regime: “the

electoral, the legislature, the media and the judicial,” and therefore elections are not used merely for window dressing. Elections provide a front for challenging the existing balance of power, but one needs to take into account other fronts as well in order to win the battle.

Second, this new perspective takes into account the existence of various power centers in the Turkish society, and builds on their struggle over social control while analyzing the shift of power balance in the political sphere. This conflict, based on each groups’ value sets, preferences or interests, played an underappreciated role in changing the balance of power that dominates the Turkish society.

I argue that in this environment of struggle, the broad coalition of democracy seeking groups –each for its own sake- has managed to weaken the authoritarian state structure comprised of military, judiciary and bureaucracy. However, this coalition was not an ipso facto aggregation of different groups for a “greater good.” Rather, it was the product of a deliberate AKP strategy that aimed to attain the political power essential for the appeasement of the Kemalist state structure, and the establishment of its own domination. That strategy, I believe, was winning over different power centers in the society via particularistic policy promises.

In sum, deriving explanations from a larger literature on group-specific politics, and the seminal study of Joel Migdal’s state-in-society approach, this study suggest that AKP’s strategy of providing group-specific policy promises can be one of the underappreciated aspects that may have promoted the success of the Party –not only in terms of winning elections per se, but also in terms of shifting the balance of power in the political sphere in favor of itself.

After presenting the literature on the rise of the AKP/Islamist in Turkish politics, we offer particularistic politics as an alternative explanation, and draw the boundaries of the term as it is used in this study by providing a brief summary of the discussions on particularistic vs.

universalistic politics in Chapter 2. Later, I contend that Joel Migdal's state-in-society approach, which delineates the state as a web of multiple power loci struggling for social domination, presents a proper context for the viability and acceptability of such an explanation. I argue that in a context in which multiple power centers struggle with one another for social control, actors using group-specific policy promises will be more likely to successfully change the balance of power than actors that lack such connections. Relating this general hypothesis to my research question, I assert that the AKP has been successful in appeasing the Kemalist state structure and shifting the balance of power in favor of itself; because it was able to build a broad coalition consisting of various power centers in the society via providing group-specific policy promises to each, whereas the Welfare Party lacked such connections.

In Chapter 3, I clarify the contents of the Kemalist state structure, and reveal my research design for analyzing the correlation –if any- between the AKP's group-specific policy promises (IV) and its success in shifting the balance of power in favor of itself (DV). Chapter 4 tests my hypothesis with a most-similar research design with the AKP and the Welfare Party at its focus.

2. ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

2.1. CENTER – PERIPHERY CONFLICT

Most scholars studying Turkish politics believe that the primary factor that has shaped Turkish society and politics for decades is the modernization process, which dates back to Tanzimat reforms (1839) of Ottoman Empire, and takes a more radical and transformative stance with the founding of the Turkish Republic (Onis, 1997; Ozbudun, 1981; Kalaycioglu, 1994; Isik & Pinarcioglu, 2010). More than any other scholar, Serif Mardin, in his 1973 book *Center and Periphery: A Key to Turkish Politics?*, makes the case that Turkish society has always had a

center and a periphery. According to Mardin, Ottomans used Islam –the majority religion of the era- as a communication tool that tied these otherwise very loosely related worlds together (Mardin, 1973). Modernization, on the other hand, cut that connection between the central elites and peripheral forces and created “the most important social cleavage underlying Turkish politics” (Mardin, 1973, p.170).

Modernization process had such traumatic effects for state-society relations because bureaucratic elites were convinced that Islam was an obstacle to development and modernization of the state, and therefore it had to be wiped out of the society through a top-down reform process. As a result, “the Republican elite bodied in the Republican People’s Party –the single party through which Republican policies were channeled- was unable to establish contact with the rural masses.” (Mardin, 1973, p.183). Modeling the French system, the strict secularization process in Turkey was more about subordinating religion to the political realm than separating it from the state. Combined with harsh punishments, the authoritarian secularism further “promoted the polarization of Islam and the struggle between Kemalists and Muslims for control of the state,” (Yavuz, 1997, p.64) – a struggle usually resulted in the triumph of the Kemalist elites due to their monopoly of political, economic, and military power.

Contrary to earlier literature, Ramin Ahmadov (2008) argues that the social and political structure of Turkey, namely this center-periphery tension between Kemalists and Islamists has dramatically changed after 1980s (Ahmadov, 2008). The role of the 1980 military in this transformation was decisive, since “the leaders of the military coup, ironically, depended on Islamic institutions and symbols for legitimization; fusing Islamic ideas with national goals, they hoped to create a more homogenous and less political Islamic community,” (Yavuz, 1997, p.67). “In this transformation process,” contends Ahmadov, “though the macro structure of society was

preserved and the center and periphery continued to co-exist, the power balance between the two has changed,” (Ahmadov, 2008, p.18). As a result, “the periphery recovered, produced its own world with its own market and financial networks, grew its elite, and re-defined its worldview with respect to its central beliefs and traditions,” (Ahmadov, 2008, p.18) - a transformation which left Turkish center no option but to defend the status quo at any cost, even if it meant supporting military coups. Islamists, on the other hand, demanded more and more liberalism in order to extend the sphere of influence of the peripheral masses they are representing. In final analysis, “these developments set the stage for a paradoxical switching of roles: progressive Islamists versus reactionary Kemalists,” (Gunter & Yavuz, 2007, p.290)

In addition to the change in the balance of power between center and periphery, the 1980s contributed to the addition of new battlefields that new wars could be fought. Isik and Pinarcioglu (2010) claim that with the introduction of the neoliberal policies and increasing urbanization, the center-periphery tension transferred to urban areas, and transformed into a new tension between the well-educated rich and the less-educated poor. Taking over the heritage of the once powerful center-right, Islamist parties have become the spokesperson for these newly established peripheral areas.

Either the secular and West-oriented center vs. the religious and traditional periphery or the modern urban vs. rural conflicts, the tension between two opposing worlds is still “the most salient axis of political divisions in Turkey.” (Isik & Pinarcioglu, 2010, p.178). That’s why the election victory of AKP –the last representative of the periphery- was correctly labeled as the “Anatolian⁴ revolution⁵” initiating the “Second Republic⁶” by the mainstream media organs.

⁴ Aside from its geographical meaning, “Anatolia” represents the periphery in Turkish society.

⁵ <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2002/11/04/04/17/2012>

⁶ <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2002/11/24/04/17/2012>

Even if we accept that this dichotomy presents useful insights for explaining the electoral success of the Islamist parties in Turkish politics, it is hardly that helpful in addressing the distinction between the Welfare Party and the AKP with regards to the origins of their strengths and weaknesses as well as their political agenda. The center-periphery arguments fail to answer why the Welfare Party used a heavy Islamic rhetoric while AKP refrained from it and emphasized the importance of democratization.

In addition to that, the center-periphery dichotomy overlooks the disparate between the ruling experiences of these two peripheral parties vis-à-vis the center –or namely the Kemalist state structure. Contrary to the “representative of the same periphery” thesis, the characteristic and the life span of the Islamist governments entirely differed from one another. While the Welfare Party was forced out of power with a post-modern military coup –aka 28 February process, AKP has been able to stay in power with an increasing strength albeit the efforts of the Kemalist state structure, surviving the 27 April Military Memorandum. Why would that be the case if the same constituency against the same enemy supported both?

2.2.POLITICAL LEARNING/MODERATION

Another group of scholars emphasized the apparent difference between the party programs, policy goals, rhetoric, and constituency support of the parties in explaining the AKP’s success and the Welfare’s failure vis-à-vis Kemalists. In fact, they argued, AKP has been successful because the Party refrained from making references to religion – a sharp contrast with the previous Islamist parties (Cavdar, 2006). Thereby, “despite the Party’s Islamist heritage, AKP targeted a broad constituency, cutting cross-class, gender, and ethnic lines, and gained the support of those who previously had voted for central right and Islamist parties,” (Cavdar, 2006, p.479).

This moderation was not a sudden invention of the AKP, but rather was the result of a “political learning” process, which was deeply rooted in the experiences of its cadres in the Islamist movement, and the lessons they derived from the unpleasant end of the Welfare Party.

Scholars define political learning as “a process through which people modify their political beliefs and tactics as a result of severe crises, frustrations, and dramatic changes in environment” which is usually forced by structural constraints (Bermeo, 1992, p.274). Carrot and stick policies as well as regime accommodations such as democratic openings have been essential for moderation of the radical opposition leaders in order to exploit the opportunity of inclusion to the system (Bermeo, 1992; Wickham, 2004; Yilmaz, 2008, Somer, 2007).

Hampered by the previous experiences of Islamist movement vis-à-vis these structural constraints –namely the authoritarian Kemalist state structure and the unique position of European Union regarding democratization-, “the top [AK] Party leadership came to acknowledge that any attempt to increase the influence of Islam in Turkish politics, let alone any radical changes in domestic or foreign policy, were bound to be blocked” (Cavdar, 2006, p.481). Therefore, a radical transformation of the state was impossible in Turkish context. Instead, “what was desirable and feasible, they believed, was to seek greater religious freedoms within the parameters of a secular and democratic political system,” (Cavdar, 2006, p.481). Moreover, moderation would also help them broaden their constituency support as they became aware that the Turkish society was against the obstinate confrontation with the secular state structure (Cavdar, 2007). In short, following the Welfare legacy was a political suicide in every means.

Such a shift from Islamism to post-Islamism⁷- and even to non-Islamism⁸- has put moderation at the heart of the AKP’s political posture and practices: respect to Ataturk and

⁷ Post-Islamism: “A form of instrumentalization of Islam by individuals, groups and organizations that pursue political objectives...[which] provides political responses to today’s societal challenges by imagining a future, the

secularism was consistently emphasized by Party members, female candidates were chosen from among those who did not wear headscarves, the EU membership was listed as one of the priorities, headscarf, and IHL⁹ problems, the core demands of the conservative electoral base¹⁰, were postponed to an indefinite future. And consequently, this unprecedented de-Islamization of the Party –a virtue the Welfare Party apparently lacked- promoted its success vis-à-vis the secular state structure. After all, “for Kemalists, radical Islam [has been] easier to vilify and to justify restricting within democracy” as “moderate Islam’s zeal to embrace modern lifestyles and its rejection of revolutionary methods make it harder to justify restricting it within a democratic system,” (Somer, 2007, p.1277).

Nevertheless, even if we overlook the similarities of the AKP and the Welfare Party on gender, and foreign policy practices, and accept that moderation argument does account for their divergent destinies, the failure of other moderate Islamist parties that were not nearly as successful as the AKP still begs an explanation.

After the Welfare Party ousted from power, the reformers that were going to found AKP in upcoming years were not the only fraction to realize that avoiding open confrontation with the Kemalist state structure was the only way to succeed (Yilmaz, 2008). The Virtue Party, which was founded by traditionalist Welfare cadres after they realized that the closure of the Welfare Party became imminent, also refrained from using religious rhetoric to an extent that its

foundations for which rests on reappropriated, reinvented concepts borrowed from the Islamic tradition,” (Denoeux, 2002, p.61) cited in (Yilmaz, 2008, p.45).

⁸ “From the beginning, the AKP claimed that their party is not Islamist; they even rejected the use of the label “Muslim democrats” as an analogy to the Christian democrats in Western Europe. In rejecting the label “Muslim democrat”, Erdogan stated that: ‘These attributions are not correct, not because we are not Muslims or democrats; but because these two [identities] should be considered on different planes’. Rather, the AKP based its policies on the “conservative democracy” program. Instead of emphasizing their Muslim identity, they preferred to ground their moral and religious values within the confines of ‘conservatism’.” (Ayata & Tutuncu, 2008, p. 367).

⁹ Imam Hatip Schools – Vocational schools that pursue an Islamic curriculum in addition to the national one containing arts and sciences.

¹⁰ Hayrettin Karaman, Iktidarın Uc Mesele ile İmtihani Yeni Safak Newspaper
<http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2005/eylul/09/hkaraman.html> 05/20/12

discourse became very similar to that of a center-right economically liberal and socially conservative party, (Yilmaz, 2008). The Virtue Party also “advocated pluralism and the democratization of everyday values in order to democratize politics, abandoning the nationalist and state-oriented model of economy preached by Erbakan for decades, in favor of free-market economy with an emphasis on social justice. The VP also renounced anti-Westernism and embraced European Union membership, previously thought to be a Jewish conspiracy by the Welfare Party and its Islamist predecessors (Yildiz, 2003).

In short, even though the Virtue Party went through the same political learning process as the AKP, this moderation did not carry it to power, nor did it prevent the Constitutional Court from banning it in 2001 due to its violation of the Kemalist articles of the Constitution.

2.3. CLASS STRUGGLE

Deviating from the analysis based on traditional “center-periphery” conflict, some scholars contend that class struggle lies at the heart of the ideological and cultural tensions in Turkey in general, and the rise of the AKP in particular. According to these scholars, what is disguised as an Islamist-Kemalist conflict is nothing more than a struggle between Anatolian bourgeoisie (embodied in Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association – MUSIAD) and Istanbul’s large businesses (embodied in Turkish Industry and Business Association – TUSIAD) to get larger shares from the expanding economic pie (Onis, 1997; Meyer, 1999; Gulalp, 1999; Cavdar, 2006; Alam, 2009; Baskan, 2010; Sen, 2010). Consequently, each class supports the political parties that could be a perfect spokesperson for their economic interests.

After all, the scholars argue, ideology matters only to an extent in an environment in which there are alternative players that could represent the same ideology. Therefore, the Anatolian bourgeoisie has not been inclined to support the Islamist parties only because of their

ideological proximity. Endowed with genuine entrepreneurial spirit as much as religious and national values, MUSIAD members believed that they were “excluded from the economic life controlled by big business groups supported by Kemalist state, [which] allocated investment funds and other privileges largely to Kemalists and Westernized big business groups –the Istanbul bourgeoisie- [that are] state-protected, monopolistic, and rent-seeking,” (Sen, 2010, p.74). Accordingly, what gave rise to the AKP was the marriage between neoliberalism and Turkish Islamism that promised benefits to the new business elite.

This explanation is problematic in several aspects. First, the AKP was not the first Islamist party to enjoy this support. During the 1980’s, the Welfare Party as well voiced the interests of burgeoning Anatolian bourgeoisie who wished to receive state support and protection like their Istanbul counterparts (Gulalp, 2001; Meyer, 1999; Baskan, 2010). “The rise of the Welfare Party reflects,” argued Ziya Onis, “the growing aspirations of the rising Islamic bourgeoisie to consolidate their position in society, to achieve elite status also and, in purely economic terms, to obtain a greater share of public resources, both at the central and local levels, in competition with other segments of private business in Turkey,” (Onis, p.760). Nevertheless, the support of the Anatolian bourgeoisie did not prevent the fall of the Welfare Party. Quite the contrary, the conservative entrepreneurs themselves got harmed by being labeled as “unfavorable” and “reactionary” during 28 February process (Yavuz, 1997).

Second, TUSIAD, the very same organization that is claimed to be clashing with MUSIAD- and consequentially the AKP, has been one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the AKP. In this regard, Mehmet Ugur and Dilek Yankaya observe that “[the] awareness of the significance of credible commitments to reform and the explicit linkage between the reform process and EU conditionality (...) brought TUSIAD into close cooperation with the Justice and

Development Party,” (2008, p. 590). In fact, “TUSIAD [itself] tended to describe the AKP government as an opportunity for economic and political stability and for economic and social transformation that the country had been longing for,” (Ugur & Yankaya, 2008, p.593).

2.4. PARTY ORGANIZATION / MOBILIZATION

Studies addressing the links between electorate mobilization and the AKP’s success have primarily placed stress on party organization. Some scholars argue that forming grassroots organizations that build direct bridges with the large segments of society –especially those adversely affected by the outcomes of the globalization- is the main reason behind the Party’s landslide victory (Tugal, 2009). Others emphasize the role of “the party’s character as an organization, its internal power structure, its electoral roots, strategy, and leadership in the context of [the Party’s] organizational environment –including its constitution, major veto players as well as international actors,” in determining not only the electoral success but also the survival possibility of the AKP (Boyras, 2010, p.287; Kumbaracibasi, 2009).

After all, parties do not act in a vacuum, the argument follows, the interaction between internal life of a party (being systematic) and its organizational environment (its autonomy) is of significant importance (Kumbaracibasi, 2009). Accordingly, “the survival [of the AKP] as a major political force” will depend on “balancing the AKP’s roots in Islamic parties and movements against its claims to be a moderate party far from radicalism and fundamentalism,” (Kumbaracibasi, 2009, p.4).

However, such explanations overlook the fact that the Welfare Party’s rapid ascent in 1990’s was also considered to be due to “its populist platforms and aggressive recruitment campaign [as well as] the Party’s unique internal discipline and impressive organizational strengths,” (Kamrava, 1998, p.292). In other words, the Welfare Party stood out as a party with

unprecedented cohesion, unity, and a well developed administrative organization (Yavuz, 1997). And yet, its organizational capabilities and mobilization success did not translate into the ability to govern when confronted by the secularist state structure.

2.5. FAILURES OF OTHERS

In spite of the vast literature studying the dynamics behind the AKP's landslide victory, a number of scholars posit that it is not the success of the AKP per se but the failures of the major parties of the center-right and center-left that could explain "the first stage of a structural transformation in center politics" (Cosar & Ozman, 2004, p.57, Carkoglu, 2002).

Integrating nationalist, conservative, liberal and social democratic tendencies, the AKP leadership aims to transcend the ideological borders and appeal to the broader center-right constituency (Cosar & Ozman, 2004; Taskin, 2008; Alam, 2009). In this vein, the AKP's self-identification itself of "conservative democrat" and distancing itself from the Islamist legacy in Turkey, as well as its distinctive efforts for EU membership, are not natural consequences of political learning. Rather they are "a part of a deliberate strategy of filling the void on the center-right.... in responding to the ontological crisis deepened by the destabilizing effects of globalization, civil war, and unregulated urbanization," (Taskin, 2008, p.53-54).

But how did center-right politics, which represented no less than 50%¹¹ of the Turkish electorates during 1990's, fail in Turkey? Taskin (2008) argues that the answer lies in the systematic corruption combined with the failure of two center-right parties (the Motherland and the True Path Party) to integrate the rising Muslim counter-elites into conservative modernization process, which promises economic development without moral decay. In addition, increased cooperation with the military and the secular establishment further distanced these two

¹¹ <http://www.ysk.gov.tr/ysk/GenelSecimler.html> 04/24/12

parties from their populist claim of authentic representation of the masses (Cosar & Ozman, 2004; Alam, 2009).

On the other hand, economic factors also have significant implication for party politics in explaining the decline of the center-right politics in Turkey. For example, Kalaycioglu observes that since “there is more than one political party that occupies a particular ideological position of the left-right spectrum, the voter needs to make a further choice between ideological similarity of identical parties,” (Kalaycioglu, 2010, p.31). Similarly, Baslevent et. al (2005), provides evidence in support of economic voting hypothesis[2], which basically argues that incumbent parties will be in a disadvantaged position at this point, since voters hold the incumbent party responsible for economic indicators such as inflation, unemployment and GNP per capita –real or perceived-, and punish the government in elections. Likewise, Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier contend that “Among the issues on the typical voter’s agenda, none is more consistently present, nor generally has a stronger impact, than the economy. Citizen dissatisfaction with economic performance substantially increases the probability of a vote against the incumbent.,” (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000, p.211).

Thus, the fall of a government seems to be more likely to come from economic accountability than the shifts in ideological or political attachments (Lewis-Beck & Stegmaier, 2000). Even though, this effect has been considered asymmetrical, with mostly punishment and little reward (Radcliff, 1994), Kalaycioglu (2010) finds out that “partisan affiliations followed by the voter satisfaction with the performance of the economy played the biggest role in determining the voter preferences in Turkey in 2007 elections,” (p.29).

Either symmetrical or asymmetrical, there is a consensus in the literature that the performance of the economy has a direct impact on the failure or the success of a government.

The dimension and the nature of the impact, on the other hand, are quite controversial. Nevertheless, what is not controversial is “incumbents pay the price for short-term economic setbacks, but deeper crises may be translated into broader political shifts,” especially in developing countries (Remmer, 1991). Accordingly, some scholars argue that these “broader political shifts” mean the breakdowns of democratic or semi-democratic regimes (O’Donnell, 1973; Linz, 1978; Collier, 1979; Gasirowski, 1995), while others contend that economic setbacks have a catalyst effect in triggering transitions to democracy (O’Donnell, Schmitter, & Whitehead, 1986; Bermeo, 1990; Przeworski, 1986).

Either way, it can be derived from the literature that the worse the economy fails, the more radical the political change will be. By weakening the old actors and/or giving rise to new ones, economic crises create a chaotic atmosphere in the system. Thus, the argument indicates that economic parameters that hindered the power of the incumbent parties enabled the electoral victory of the AKP.

What might be an interesting research question for future research is whether we could attribute the consecutive electoral victories of the AKP to the miracle developments in Turkish economy under the AKP government. Is it possible that the political success of the Party is just a reflection of its economic success?

Putting aside the debates on the symmetrical and asymmetrical effects of the economic parameters on voting behavior, and the uneven distribution of wealth under the AKP rule, it should be kept in mind that governments do not necessarily come and –especially- go with elections in semi-democratic political settings such as Turkey. Therefore, the economic success might not tell us much about the containment of Kemalist elites, which consistently intervenes the democratic processes on ideological rather than economic grounds. After all, the military has

never addressed the poor economic performance of governments as a legitimizing factor for its interruptions.

3. GROUP SPECIFIC POLICIES

Despite the valuable contributions they make to the literature on the rise of the AKP, existing explanations suffer from two major weaknesses. First, most scholars take election victory as the ultimate indicator of success. Even though it might be a useful proxy in fully democratic political settings, where the elected government becomes the actual ruler of the country, elections do not necessarily determine who dominates the society in semi-democratic settings such as Turkey. Deeply rooted in the state structure, strong authoritarian actors in these political settings do not refrain from interfering with democratic institutions whenever they feel the need for the reproduction of their authority. Therefore, elections become an insufficient platform for the challenger that wishes to dominate the society according to its political agenda for establishing its rule prerequisites changing the status quo first.

But if not for determining the actual ruler of the country, what is the purpose of elections in these limited democratic settings? Scholars argue that authoritarian actors use elections for systematic practical reasons that can be summarized in two categories: external and internal factors:

External factors: To be recognized as a respectful member of the international community, the virtues of equality, the rule of law, human rights and freedoms as well as the liberal economy are supposed to be internalized by states. The countries that have problems in at least one of these are imposed, encouraged and even forced to reconsider their attitude (Huntington, 1991). Moreover, to get financial aid from IMF, World Bank, the United States or

the European Union, responding to foreign pressure and gaining legitimacy in the international arena has become crucial for the autocracies. If they manage to reflect this international pressure on to domestic opposition, they have a chance of pressuring the further moderation of the opposition (Schwedler & Chomiak, 2006; Berman, 2008).

Internal factors: The internal reasons to have electoral institutions are as important as the external ones. Since the strength of an autocrat is not limitless, even the cruelest one cannot repress or kill every single opponent to his power. Thus, autocratic regimes should compromise one way or another to the challengers from both within the ruling elite and the society.

The solution to the challenges coming from other ruling elites or noble family members could be conciliated by redistribution of the state patronage. The most efficient way for an autocrat to decide who should be spoiled more by such patronage is holding elections to see who is more popular (Gandhi & Lust-Okar, 2009; Gandhi & Przeworski, 2007).

Challenge also comes to the authoritarian regimes from the opposition groups in the society. When autocrats need to neutralize these threats and “solicit the cooperation of outsiders”, they usually use democratic institutions such as elections (Gandhi & Przeworski, 2007, p. 1279). Since they can set the rules for competition, decide inclusiveness and exclusiveness of the system (Lust-Okar, 2004), and influence electoral outcomes with direct and indirect ways (Schwedler, 1998); autocrats rely on democratic institutions to maintain their interests. It is a fact that “divide and rule” is a historically valid method in politics, and autocracies use it very often to maximize their room for maneuver (Brumberg, 2002).

Moderating radical opposition could be another motive to hold elections in authoritarian regimes. It is possible to make opposition condemn violence, act openly and respect the government rules in order to participate in the elections. To survive in the pluralist system,

radicals will have to compromise from some ideological extremism and become more moderate. In return, they will be allowed to pursue their political agendas on low politic issues (Schwedler, 1998; Brumberg, 2002; Gandhi&Przeworski, 2007).

Clearly then, “political success” in semi-democratic settings have a different meaning than topping elections. I argue that it is the ability of the elected governments to govern the society without any interference. As Huntington (1968) contends “the most important political distinction among countries concerns not their form of government but their degree of government,” (p.1). Similarly, Francis Fukuyama notes that an essential feature of many developing countries is the gap between the formal claims of the state authority, and its actual capacity to govern (Fukuyama, 2004). This capacity has two aspects to it: first reining in the power of the existing authoritarian actor, which will lead to a shift in the balance of power, and then maintaining/consolidating the new balance of power, favoring one’s own political agenda.

Thus, I argue that the real success of the AKP lies not in the Party’s landslide electoral victories, since they were not unprecedented, but in its ability to appease the Kemalist state structure, and shift the balance of political power in favor of itself. I believe that this is why the literature focusing solely on electoral success of the AKP fails to explain the demise of the Welfare Party after its sensational election victories.

The second weakness of the literature is its attempt to analyze Turkish society in superficial dichotomies such as “center vs. periphery”, “state vs. society” or “Kemalists vs. Islamists.” In fact, revolving around a Weberian type of state definition, the literature fails to account for the various power centers in Turkish society that cut across class, religious, or ideological lines. In fact, none of these categories can be portrayed as a homogenous block

pursuing the same political agenda. Within and across the categories, there are multiple power centers, big and small, competing with each for the fulfillment of their political agendas.

Joel Migdal addresses this patched characteristic of the society with a new definition of state in his state-in-society approach. He contends “the society is a web or *mélange*, rather than a pyramidal structure with the state’s rule-making mechanisms at the apex,” (2001, p.36). This web, according to Migdal, consists of “multiple rule-making loci, and the hidden and open conflict among these multiple centers seeking to exercise domination,” (Migdal, 2001, p.36). These power centers do not necessarily represent a single class, religion, or an ethnic group. Rather, they are comprised of individuals who share similar value sets and compete for the domination of their values.

I believe that this depiction of the state is a much closer fit to the Turkish case. Due to its historical, ideological and political realities various power centers are all in a constant struggle with each other for domination of their sets of values and beliefs in Turkish society. Some of these power loci are the military, the Constitutional Court, the President, the Parliament, the Kurds, Alewits, Sunnis, and the Kemalists elites. Putting the state-in-society approach at the center of its analysis, this study aims to evaluate the determinants of the AKP’s success in appeasing the power of the Kemalist state structure, which was a threat to the rule of the Party, and shifting the balance of power in favor of itself – a virtue I contend is what differentiates the Party from its predecessors.

The central question this study aims to answer is “How has the AKP managed to appease the Kemalist state structure and shift the balance of power in favor of itself, while its predecessor the Welfare Party did not?” I argue that the use of particularistic policy promises as a coalition-building strategy can provide part of the answer. There is no doubt that a broad support base will

be useful for winning elections. But I believe the diversity of the coalition members will provide the Party with the necessary means for changing the balance of power at different levels in different arenas such as the media, the judiciary, the discourse of the political sphere etc. For example, a coalition partner that has a TV channel, a radio station or newspaper will enable the Party to confront the Kemalist state structure in the media as well. Or a partner with strong foreign connections will provide international support that can be vital and determinant in these countries. In short, the diversity of coalition members opens new fronts that can be used to either target the status quo seekers or defend oneself vis-à-vis them.

4.1.PARTICULARISTIC POLITICS IN THE “STATE OF NATURE”

Different historical and institutional circumstances may make different strategies politically more or less viable and socially more or less acceptable. Therefore, before examining how group-specific policy promises can be used as a coalition-building strategy for political survival and domination, I will provide a brief summary of Joel Migdal’s state-in-society approach as a fertile context for particularistic politics.

“Many of the existing approaches to understanding social and political change in the Third World either have downplayed conflict altogether (e.g., much of “modernization” theory), or have missed these particular sorts of conflicts, which only on occasion are class based (e.g., much of the Marxist literature), or have skipped the important dynamics within domestic society altogether (e.g., dependency and world-system theories),” observes Joel Migdal (2001, p.65). This incompetency, according to Migdal, derives from a misunderstanding of Weber’s classical state definition (see Figure 1). Weber defines state as “a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory,” (Migdal,

2001, p.13). Migdal argues that that this “omnipotent given” image of the state is one of its two components:

1-An image, a perception of the state as “the chief and appropriate rule maker within its territorial boundaries”, which is “fairly autonomous, unified and centralized,” (Migdal, 2001, p.16).

2- The actual practices of multiple parts of the state, which may bolster the image of the state, or batter it.

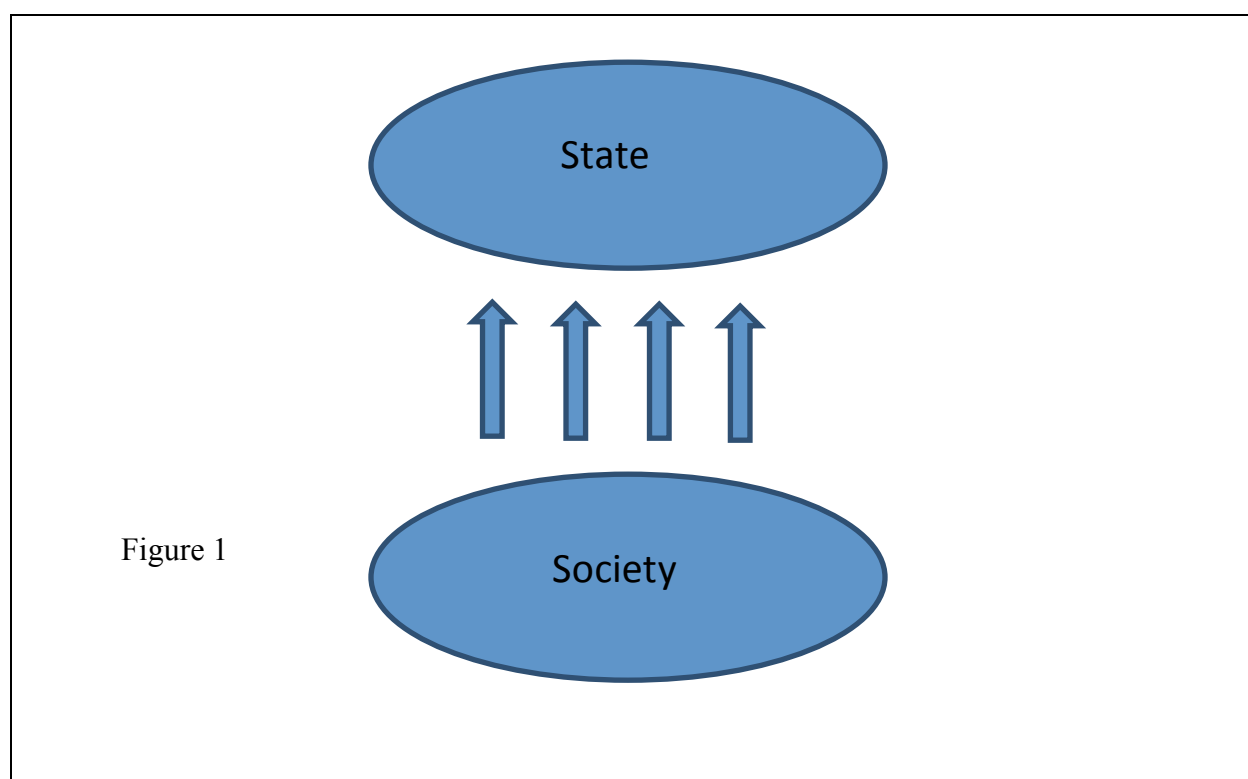


Figure 1: Weberian State

What other scholars overlook, he continues, is the second component; the actual practices of multiple parts of the state, which may bolster the image of the state, or batter it. Therefore, according to Migdal, in order to understand the political change one should look at the accommodations between multiple parts of the society, which is “a web or *mélange*, rather than a

pyramidal structure with the state's rule-making mechanism at the apex," (Migdal, 2001, p.16). In other words, moving away from a perspective that simply puts state against society, Migdal offers a state which is a player among multiple power centers in the society that are constantly at hidden and open conflict over social control (Migdal, 2001) (See Figure II).

Moreover, he delineates the state as neither a unified nor a coherent actor in its struggle with societal forces as its image suggests. On the contrary, Migdal contends that the parts of the state are also at conflict with one another. They and do not refrain from building coalitions with other formal or informal organizations to develop practices contradicting the official laws and regulations of the state (Migdal, 2001).

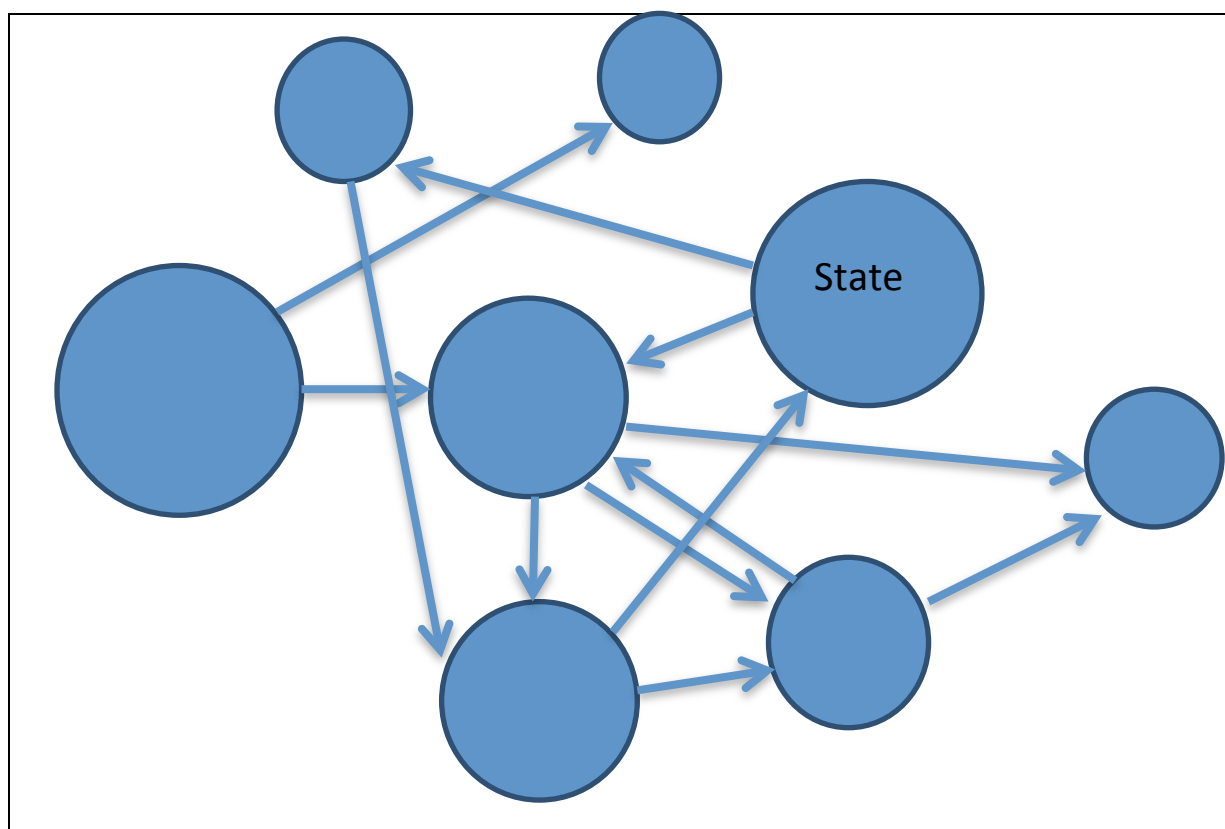


Figure 2: Migdal's State

He further notes that the struggles for domination take place in multiple arenas, and is not limited to the question of who controls the top leadership position of the state (Migdal, 2001). As aforementioned earlier, pseudo governments do not tell us much about the actual ruler of the society. Whose laws prevail? Who controls the society? We cannot answer these questions by just looking at the top leadership position of a country unless we know the “degree” of government, whether it is autonomous from any influence or whether it actually controls the society. Hence, we cannot limit the scope of the power struggle to a single arena. There are various arenas that can be used for confrontation or accommodation by multiple power loci such as the media, the judiciary, the legislature, the discourse of the society, and elections are but one of them.

If this social struggle is not simply for controlling the top leadership position of the state, then what is it for? “Social control is the currency for which social organizations compete,” answers Migdal (Migdal, 2001, p.51) for the supremacy of a group’s rules or value system requires social control. In addition, it is necessary for the enhancement of the strength and autonomy of the ruler, and reflected by compliance, participation, and legitimacy (Migdal, 2001).

According to Migdal, there are two paths for sustaining social control. The first one is political mobilization of masses, which entails “conveying to people that the routines, symbols, and ways of behaving represented [by that power center] are essential to their well-being. And involves providing them with channels to express their support,” (Migdal, 2001, p. 71). The second one is the strategies of survival, which becomes a necessity due to the lack of broad political support. While broad political mobilization solves the problem of social control by lessening the centrifugal forces, lack thereof “makes the position of state leaders precarious,

especially in the face of any other significant concentration of power in the society, which ultimately might be used against them,” (Migdal, 2001, p.71). Therefore, such narrower bases of popular support necessitate the application of survival strategies that aim to “weakening any group in society that seems to be building extensive mobilization strength, even the agencies of the state itself,” (Migdal, 2001, p.72).

Migdal goes into detail explaining the strategies of survival while he pays little attention to strategies of social mobilization other than stating that it demands much more than exhortations, charisma, or ideology of state leaders. In addition, he suggests that it would be better “for state leaders to undermine those other organizations and the efficacy of their rules by supplying to people a mix of rewards, sanctions, and symbols” that constitutes a more attractive value set than the other organizations offer (Migdal, 2001, p.66). However, he does not expound the “rewards, sanctions, and symbols” that would convince people to trail behind.

What conveys to people that the routines, symbols, and ways of behaving represented by that power center are essential to their wellbeing? How do these people come to believe that their fate/future lies in with that actor? At this point, I offer group-specific policy promises made by political parties or governments as one of the mobilization strategies that could have such an effect on people from different power centers.

Joel Migdal mentions the importance of building coalitions and a domestic balance of power as a strategy of survival. However, in his argument, this coalition building is limited to “those agencies and organization whose services and products are of direct benefit to a regime that cannot bring them under central control,” –namely “state-owned enterprises, local capital, multinational firms, and other important state agencies (including the military),” (Migdal, 2001, p.82).

On the other hand, I believe that this coalition building strategy could be applied on the societal level. On the demand side, power centers yearn for a powerful ally that could help them fulfill their political agendas. On the supply side, political parties have the means necessary to channel the demands of its allies by taking advantage of the democratic openings the system offers – how small they might be.

The Demand Side (The Society): As already discussed, society consists of multiple power centers, and each power center has its own value set, beliefs, and policy preferences. In addition, these power centers are at a constant conflict with one another for the fulfillment of their interests and political agendas. In this “state of nature”, obviously some actors are powerful while others are not, some are more influential while others are peripheral, and some benefit from the reproduction of the existing balance of power while others and seek an opportunity to change the status quo. Democratic institutions in a fully democratic political setting, especially elections, may present such an opportunity. Whereas, in countries where election victories do not necessarily change the existing balance of power, these democratic institutions lose their efficiency as the channels of voice for the unsatisfied actors in the system. Authoritarian actors in semi-democratic states do not refrain from interfering, interrupting, and even suspending democratic processes, which might be upsetting the existing balance of power reproducing the authoritarian domination. Therefore, the challengers need to acquire, aggrandize, and maintain political power to challenge this rule and set a new balance of power favoring their utility functions – be it a political agenda, belief system or an economic interest.

However, not every one of these challengers has the strength, opportunity or capability to control and dominate the society on its own. They need to increase their influence by aligning with more powerful groups that are willing to incorporate their partners’ political agendas into

their utility functions. In other words, in a rational choice exchange model, power centers exchange their resources and get into a coalition for political influence in an effort to maximize their utility. In return, they provide compliance, participation and legitimacy to their partners through different channels.

The Supply Side (The Political Party): Being one of the power centers in the society, a political party also represents a certain way of thinking, ideology, and utility function. And just like any other power center that is not happy with the status quo, some of them want to change the existing balance of power. Their advantage is that these parties have an actual potential to change the status quo and have social control over society, if they could sustain political mobilization of the masses or apply strategies of survival, according to Migdal.

Since it is a semi-democratic political setting, there are channels that are open to every power center in the society. Even though authoritarian actors abuse them from time to time, they exist. Elections, media, NGOs, referendums, demonstrations of support or opposition, strikes, universities, economic forums, the courts, the Parliament etc, all can be used -to a lesser or a greater degree- as channels for expressing political support, compliance, legitimacy or their lack of.

However, in order to take advantage of all this support channeled through various platforms, the party needs to appeal to people from different power centers on different grounds. Moreover, the party should respond to the demands and longings of a particular power center to an extent that the people in that power center would believe that the routines, symbols, and ways of behaving represented by the party are essential to their own well-being. The strength of the bond between a power center and the party will depend on the sense of urgency among members of this symbiotic relationship about the dangers of upsetting the coalition. I argue that in a

society, in which there are multiple power centers with their own utility functions, one of the strategies for creating this kind of attachment is through particularistic politics.

First of all, it gives the political party the flexibility to determine the partners of this relationship via including or excluding any power center of its choice according to the value of the resources or the degree of support provided by that power center. Such flexibility gives a dynamic characteristic to the coalition, meaning that the party or a coalition member may prefer to defect at any time during the process of challenging the status quo for any reason. Likewise, the party may create new symbiotic relations with new power centers on the course of the struggle. In sum, particularistic politics provides the party with the necessary means to regulate the size and the composite of the coalition.

What is the ideal size for such coalitions? Riker (1962) argues that where coalitions are engaged in a zero-sum competition with other coalitions over a limited source, and where coalition leaders can offer side payments (bribes, money, promises or other things of value) to induce outsiders to join them, rational coalition leaders will aim to attract only the smallest number of members into their coalition that they need in order to win the competition –size principle (p.33). In short, where additional members tend to raise the costs without adding benefits to the coalition, the coalition leader will be inclined to create a minimum winning coalition, the smallest possible coalition that will be enough for winning the majority of votes (Riker, 1962; Koehler, 1972; Shepsle, 1974; Uslaner, 1975; Koford, 1982; Denzau and Munger, 1986; Baron and Ferejohn, 1989).

As rational as it may sound in theory, political scientist have found that Riker's minimum winning coalition does not hold empirically, and oversized coalitions are more common in politics (Ferejohn, 1974; Arnold, 1979; Wilson, 1986; Collie, 1988, Carubba & Volden, 2000).

Why? First of all, the size principle depends on the particular aim or goal of the coalition. If it is not a zero-sum game, meaning that the spoils of the victory do not have to be divided amongst the coalition members, then there is no need to strict the size of the members. Second, even Riker himself accepts that there is an uncertainty problem with regards to the probability of winning the battle: “Since the members of the coalition may not be certain about whether or not it is winning, they may in their uncertainty create a coalition larger than the actual minimum winning size (Riker, 1962, p.48). Likewise, when there is an uncertainty about the reliability of the coalition partners, or when the incentive to defect is high, oversized coalitions will be more probable (Carubba & Volden, 2000). Moreover, when the status quo policy is ideologically extreme, and the coalition builder wants to change it, an oversized coalition will arise (Baron & Diermeir, 2001). Last but not least, oversized coalitions may develop if partners are not only concerned about holding government office, but also influencing policy (Strom, 1990). Another argument is that oversized coalitions arise when there is a need to reduce the conflict of interest among different parties via including more centrist groups to the coalition (Axelrod, 1970).

Considering that 1- our context does not provide a robust institutional environment where the rules of the game are clear, agreed and established, and framed in terms of game theory, 2- the spoil of the victory – which is changing the existing balance of power in our case- is a collective good benefiting all members of the coalition, and 3- the coalition builder can never be sure about the minimum power that is going to be necessary for shifting the balance of power as it is a process rather than a single election victory; I argue that oversized coalitions will give a better chance of success for the political parties in our cases. As a mobilization strategy, coalition building via group specific politics will aim to attain as much support as it can via oversized

coalitions that will be of great help for the survival of the coalition builder vis-à-vis the threatening power centers.

Second, group-specific policy promises as a coalition-building strategy enables the party to build a broad coalition without an effort to sustain harmony among its members as each power center in the coalition will be connected directly to the party and not necessarily to each other. The relationship between the party and a coalition member will be a vertical one in the sense that the party will provide the policy preferences of the coalition member in exchange for its support, and other coalition members will have nothing to do with this bargain as their preference sets are different. Hence, I believe that the structure of the coalition created by group-specific policy promises will be more like Figure 3 than Figure 4.

The patron-client type of relationship between the party and the power center shown in Figure 3 resembles what political scientist call as “contemporary clientelism.”

Piattoni (2001) describes contemporary clientelism in a nutshell as a “strategy for the acquisition, maintenance, and aggrandizement of political power, on the part of the patrons, and strategies for the protection and promotion of their interest, on the part of the clients, and that their deployment is driven by given sets of incentives and disincentives,” (p.2). In this vein then, contemporary clientelism can be increasingly used as “a means to pursue the delivery of collective as opposed to individual goods,” which means that “political clienteles are less likely to assume the form of loose clusters of independently negotiated dyads than organizations, communities or even whole regions that fashion relationships or reach understanding with politicians, public officials and administrations,” (Gay, 1998, p.14).

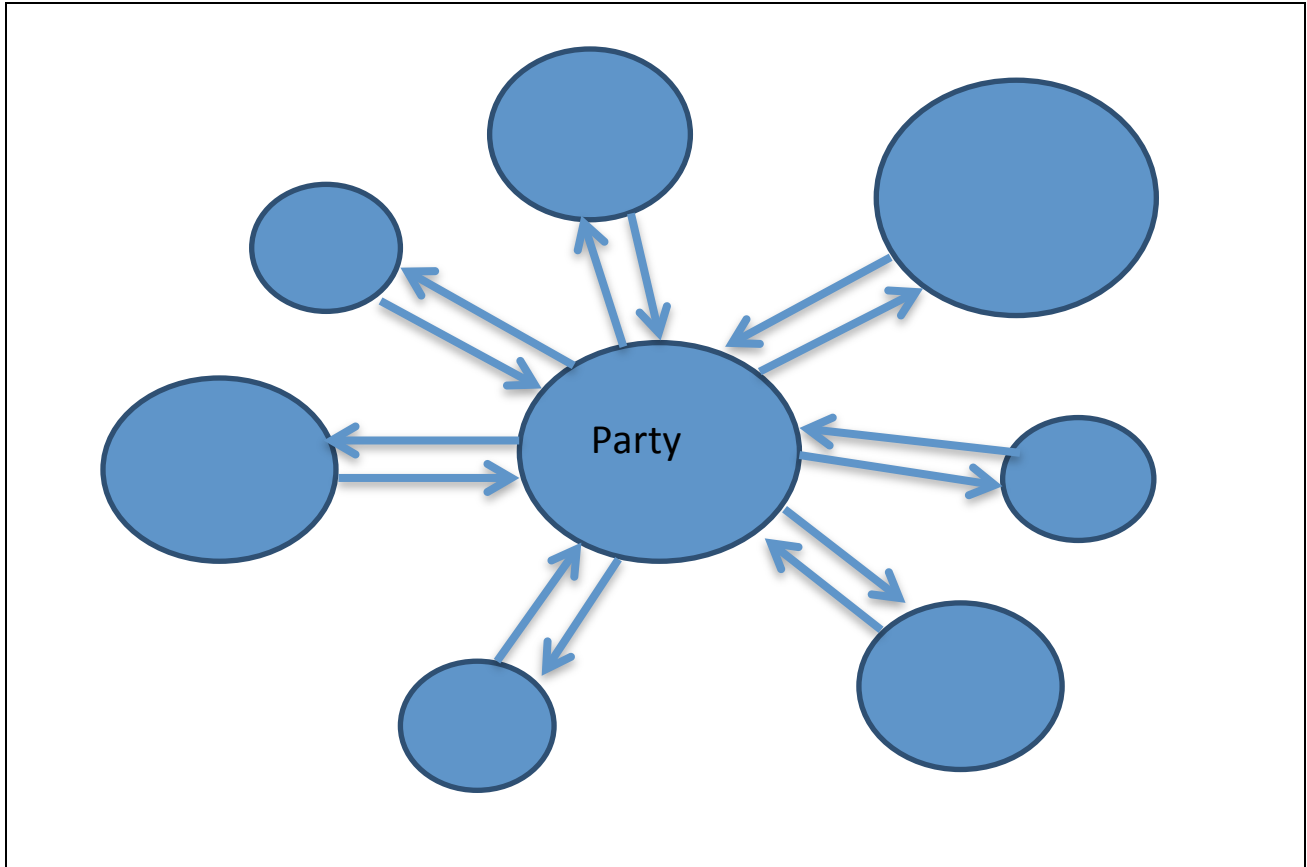


Figure 3: Vertical, bilateral ties

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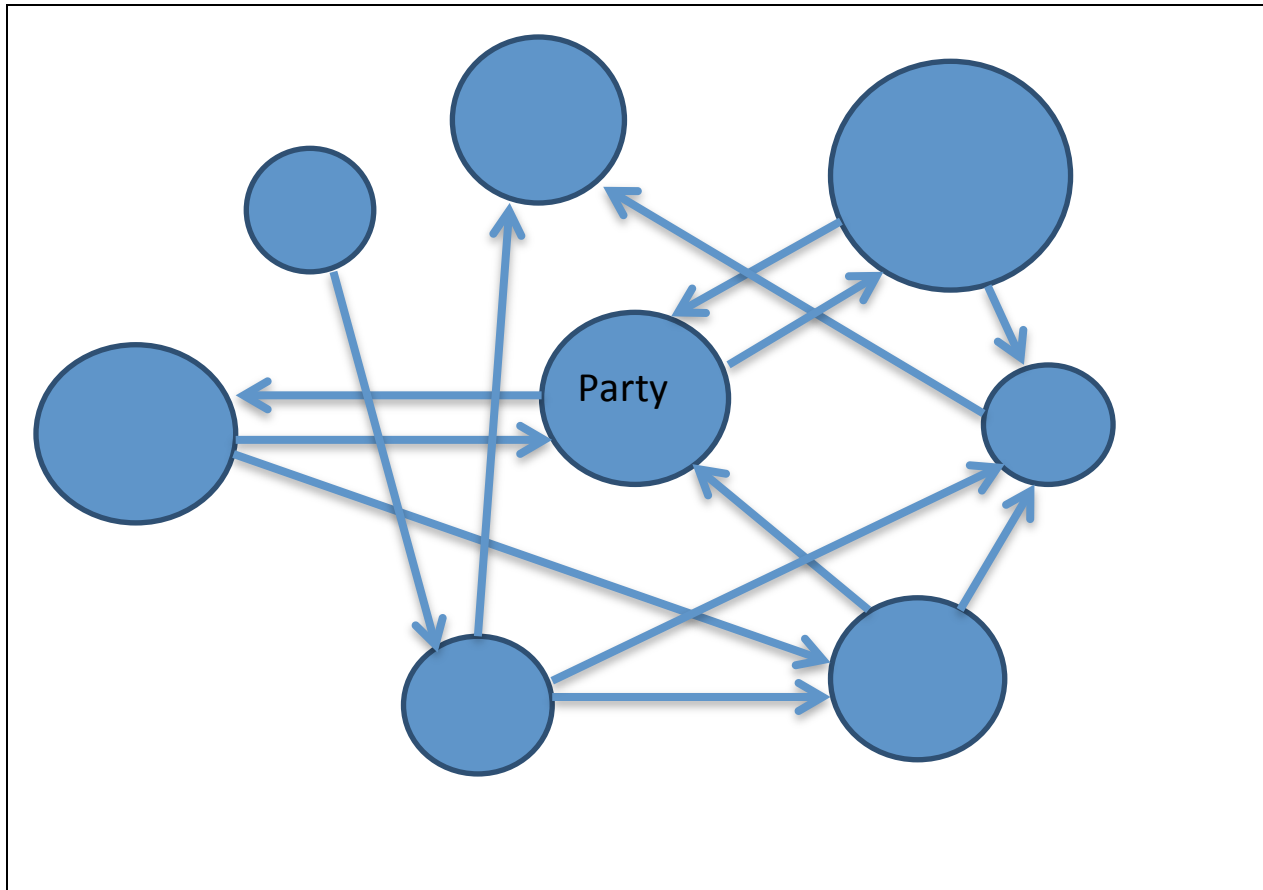


Figure 4: Web of relations

I believe that the relationship created by the group-specific policies of the party resembles “contemporary clientelism”, because these scholars interpret clientelism strictly as exchange relations – a non-universalistic quid pro quo relation- ruled by cost-benefit analysis of both patrons and clients. In other words, “what matters [in clientelistic relations] to both patron and client is the advantage that can be drawn from the exchange,” (Piattoni, 2011, p.13). Such an economic approach enables the political party to choose the level of aggrandizement depending on its interest (Piattoni, 2001) Modern clientelism, then, offers more than merely an exchange of votes for favors. It offers “the exchange of votes for what political actors would like to present as

favors but the least privileged elements of the population demand or claim as rights,” (Gay, 1998, p.15).

Based on this definition, our coalition then can be described as an abstract collection of bilateral symbiotic relations between different power centers in the society and the political party. Considering the symbiotic, bilateral character of this relationship, we can contend that the party will focus on strengthening its bilateral ties with each member of the coalition rather than trying to sustain the coherence of the coalition itself - which brings us back to the first benefit of the particularistic politics: the flexibility of regulating the size and the composite of the coalition.

To sum up, the supply side of this symbiotic, bilateral relation (political party) offers group-specific policies as coalition building strategy for acquisition, maintenance, and aggrandizement of political power that is necessary to rein in the power of the authoritarian actor, and shift the balance of power in favor of itself. On the other hand, the demand side (power centers in the society) prefers to get into this kind of relationship for the protection and promotion of their interests. More importantly, both sides are aware that they need to struggle with the existing authoritarian power in different arenas.

After the establishment of the coalition, the partners begin to develop a common language and change the discourse of the struggle through every possible channel. Through this discursive change and their reactions to different issues in different arenas, the coalition shapes the discourse of what is acceptable and what is not in the political sphere. Apparently, as the coalition or collection of power centers gets broader, the discursive change they offer gets more widespread across different conflict areas. Moreover, a broader coalition means a broader support base that is ready to mobilize. As the balance of power mandates, the broader the

coalition gets, the higher the chance of survival for the political party will be vis-à-vis threatening power centers.

If this is true, I expect to find that in semi-democratic political settings with strong authoritarian actors, political parties that build broad coalitions consisting of various power centers in the society via group-specific policy promises will be more likely to shift the balance of power in favor of themselves than actors that lack such connections. Consequently, I contend that the AKP is the first Islamist political party in Turkey that pursued this strategy, and it was these group-specific policy promises that eventually helped the Party to repel the Kemalist state structure back, and shift the balance of power in favor of itself.

Hypothesis: In semi democratic Turkish political setting, political parties that build broad coalitions consisting of various power centers in the society via group specific policy promises will be more likely to shift the balance of power in favor of themselves than actors that lack such connections

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

I will evaluate my hypothesis by comparing the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the Welfare Party in a most similar systems research design. I aim to assess the correlation, if any, that have linked my independent variable “group-specific policy promises” and my dependent variable “a shift in the balance of power” for each case.

Such an approach makes it possible to vary the coalition building strategies of both parties while controlling for potentially intervening factors effectively. While these intervening factors might be originating from intrinsic characteristics such as their identity, ideology, or electoral success, they might also be related to the contextual factors such as the state of the

economy, party system, electoral environment, and legal framework (especially Law on Political Parties and the Deputy Electoral Law).

Nevertheless, considering the fact that the AKP is the heir of the Welfare Party might help us control all these intervening factors. First of all, they share similar ideologies, namely Islamism or conservatism. Second, they both had sensational electoral victories – the Welfare Party in 1994 (local), and 1995 elections, and the AKP in 2002, 2004 (local), 2007, 2009 (local), and 2011 elections. Third, they were both subjects of the same party system, legal code, and electoral environment. Moreover, both parties competed in a neoliberal economic setting. Last but not least, 1994 economic crisis for the Welfare Party, and 2001 economic crisis for the AKP set the stage for the failures of the alternative parties on the ideological continuum.

I take the military intervention as a cut point in my examination of the parties and their survival strategies vis-à-vis the demands of the military. These military interventions are embodied not as full-fledged military coup d'état's but as memorandum to the same effect. By looking at the first two terms of the AKP government (2002-2007), I expect to assess the relationship between the survival strategy that carried the party to the power and its triumph over the military. Such limitation in the scope of the study is considered to be appropriate as its repulsion of the military in 2007 proved to be a turning point for the political agenda and the survival strategies of the party.

I turn to the clarification of what I mean by the Kemalist/nationalist or the authoritarian state structure before starting my analysis.

4.1. KEMALIST/NATIONALIST STATE STRUCTURE

4.1.1. THE MILITARY

In the 19th century, Ottoman Empire was far from its glorious days. The defeats against Western powers followed one another, and Ottoman military was first to blame. Sultan II. Mahmut realized that it was the backwardness of the traditional Janissaries vis-à-vis the modern armies of the Europe that lead to the humiliating defeats and empty treasure. Therefore, in order to be able to compete with the latest technology of the Western powers, the Empire has dismissed the Janissary army and established a Western-style military school, Mekteb-i Harbiye. However, students of Mekteb-i Harbiye were not getting education only on the latest war techniques but also were espoused to Western ideas and ideologies at school. As a result, these military officials played a significant role in the modernization of the Ottoman Empire. When they realized that the fall of the Ottoman Empire was inevitable, these officers did not hesitate to start an independence war against foreign occupation and the Istanbul government. Young military officials educated in modern sciences were the founders of the Turkish Republic.

After Turkey was founded in 1923, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk –the leader of the Independence War- prohibited the political activities of officers on active duty with the Military Penal Code numbered 1632 and dated 22 May 1930. However, The Turkish military has always perceived itself as the guardian of the state. Kemalist ideology, the modernization of Turkey especially via secularism, became the end and the means that the military devoted its existence to.

Then it is no surprise that the Turkish military never refrained from intervening politics, especially when they perceived an Islamist threat to the Kemalist ideals. The military bases its interferences on the Inner Service Act of the Turkish Armed Forces, which was established after

the 1960 coup by the National Unity Committee. In subsequent coup d'états and coup d'état attempts, especially the Article 35¹² of this act is used to justify the political activities of the military.

Turkish military had a record of intervening in politics, removing elected governments from power in every ten years. There were a coup d'état in 1960 (27 May Coup) –resulted in the execution of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, in 1971 (12 March Coup), and in 1980 (12 September Coup). It also maneuvered the removal of an Islamic-oriented government party –the Welfare Party- with a post-modern coup in 1997 (28 February Process), and attempted to remove another –the AKP- in 2007 (27 April) with an online memorandum.

4.1.2. *THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT*

After the 27 May Coup in 1960, an informal coalition of the military, Kemalist elites and Republican People's Party wanted to strengthen the institutional checks and balances vis-a-vis the government. Their aim was to constrain democratically elected governments and prevent any possible abuse of power. The Constitutional Court was established in 1962 as one such institution. Prior to that date, absolute superiority of the Parliament was adopted as a constitutional principle. However, such absolute superiority proved to be a dangerous weapon used for counter-revolution in the wrong hands. The election victories and the support enjoyed by the perpetrators were irrelevant. Kemalist state structure believed that the only modernization path for Turkey was the top-down approach, and therefore constituency and their representatives should be set to correct path when needed. Contrary to the Article 3 of the 1924 Constitution emphasizing that “sovereignty belongs to the nation without any restrictions or provisions” (Earle, 1925), Kemalist elites believed that it should be filtered through bureaucratic agencies

¹² <http://www.mevzuat.adalet.gov.tr/html/1044.html> 17/05/2012

loyal to the Kemalist ideals. The military junta cemented these ideals and its power by 1961 Constitution. Although the following coup in 1982 replaced the 1962 Constitution with a more statist one, the Constitutional Court remained intact.

The Court has participated in many party closure cases ever since, contending that these parties were acting against Kemalist ideals and the principle of national integrity. While Party (DEP) and Democratic Society Party (HADEP) were banned due to their violation of the principle of territorial and national integrity, Islamist Parties such as The Welfare Party and the Virtue Party were banned due to their reactionary activities towards secularism.

In addition to party closures, the Constitutional Court also ruled that wearing headscarves in universities was unconstitutional.

The Constitutional Court made an attempt to ban the AKP in 2008 because it became a “focal point” for reactionary activities. The attempt was not successful.

4.1.3. THE PRESIDENT

The Turkish President is the head of state. Even though, the Presidency is largely a ceremonial office, it has some important functions that exceed the duties of a normal presidency office in a parliamentary system. He represents the Republic of Turkey and the unity of the Turkish nation; oversees the implementation of the Turkish Constitution, and ensures the harmonious functioning of the organs of state.

There are two legislative functions that particularly give strength to the President over the Parliament. The first one is the President’s right to return the laws to the Parliament to be reconsidered. And the second is to appeal to the Constitutional Court for the annulment of certain provisions or the entirety of laws, decrees, or rules of procedure on the grounds that they are

unconstitutional in form or in content. Such powers could and did block the functioning of the Parliament when there is an ideological gap between the President and the government.

4.1.4. THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (CHP) AND KEMALIST INTELLECTUALS

The CHP has played a significant role in the establishment of Turkey, and, therefore, perceives itself as the founding father and the guardian of the Republic. Having acting as the umbrella organization for resistance groups during the Independence War, People's Party entered into politics and declared itself as a political organization on September 9, 1923 after the defeat of the occupying forces. On October 29, 1923, Ataturk renamed People's Party as "Republican People's Party" (CHP) and initiated the 20-year-long single party domination of CHP in Turkish politics. From the very early stages, CHP's party programs and policies have been deeply rooted in the Kemalist ideals, namely republicanism, nationalism, statism, populism, secularism (laicite), and revolutionism.

During the single-party period, the CHP worked as an instrument for the top-down modernization and Westernization of Turkish society. However, this top-down process combined with the strict secularization of the Islamic sphere lead to a great discontent among masses. These masses used every bit of democratic opening to try to oust the CHP out of power, showing the leaders of the CHP how fragile their rule was¹³. It was this discontent that obstructed any CHP led government ever since Turkey's transition to multiparty democracy.

During the interim "multi-party periods" between the military coups of 1960, 1971, and 1980, CHP was regarded as a social-democrat party¹⁴ with a strong nationalist and secular emphasis.

¹³ See the multi-party experience in 1924, Ertem, B. Liberal Republican Party as a Political Opposition Experiment http://sobiad.odu.edu.tr/cilt1/cil1sayi2_pdf/ertem_baris.pdf 05/17/2012

¹⁴ A member of the Socialist International

However, the Party failed to offer a solution to the working class and lower classes suffering from the adverse effects of neoliberalism during 1980s. Such failure widened the gap between the lower classes and the Party, and, as a result, moved the Party further away from its “leftist” stance. The party ideology was now solely depended on the Kemalist ideals and nationalism.

The Republican People's Party is currently at the center-left of the ideological continuum with traditional ties to the middle and upper-middle classes, consisting of white-collar workers, retired generals, government bureaucrats, academics, college students, left-leaning intellectuals (secular intellectuals in Turkish context) and some labor unions such as DİSK.

4.2. COALITION BUILDING PHASE

To all my other selves in other parallel universes: Hope you are having as much fun. If you are not, close your eyes and find comfort in the thought that one of us is having a hell of a good life. Since the parties will not be able to actually govern the country and implement their own political agenda until they shift the balance of power in favor of themselves, the party programs, urgent action plans, election speeches, legal arrangements as well as the statements of party leaders might not explicitly reveal the coalition building strategies of the AKP and the Welfare Party. As the balance of power slowly shifts towards the Party, the discourse and the actions of the party will be expressed more explicitly, and the party will take bolder steps. This shift will take some time, and, therefore, needs to be analyzed as a process. I will use content analysis on various documents, such as election speeches, laws, executive orders, constitutional amendments, commission reports, and comments/statement of party leaders, to evaluate both my independent and the dependent variables.

In short, asking the questions of "who says what, to whom, why, to what extent and with what effect?" will enable us to analyze the coalition building strategy of the party on the one hand, and how this coalition is used by the party to shift the balance of power in the political sphere on the other hand. Thereby, we will first try to understand the coalition building strategies of the parties – group-specific policy promises in the AKP case, and their lack of in the Welfare Party case. Second, via studying the discourse of different power centers in various arenas, we will reveal the level of compliance, support, and legitimacy these power centers provide for the party. And third, we will try to find a correlation –if any- between the support of the coalition members and the party's success in shifting the balance of power in favor of itself, or their lack of.

4.2.1. IV: GROUP SPECIFIC POLICY PROMISES AS A COALITION BUILDING STRATEGY

Studying all these documents will give away a pattern or a mindset that is unique to each party. I believe that this pattern can be used to study the coalition building strategies of the AKP and the Welfare Party. While tracing for correlations, the texts mentioned above will be evaluated with reference to a set of questions for each case:

- Is the party targeting a particular group or is it taking into account large segments of the society?? Who benefits from the new regulation?
- Do the party leaders mention or imply any particular group with regards to the new regulation while giving statements or making comments?
- Is there a pattern in the statements or actions of the parties towards a particular group or a subject? For example, are they only interested in the Kurdish problem as opposed to the general improvement of minority rights?

- Do parties ever imply that they are fulfilling their promises to a particular group?

4.2.2. *DV: SHIFTING THE BALANCE OF POWER*

These documents/statements are also important in terms of their role in initiating a discussion across the country, in which the reaction of different power centers will shed light on the ongoing power struggle within the society. Studying the reactions is important because they showcase who is aligning with the party, who is opposing it, and on what grounds – what we mean by the power struggle.

- Who are supporting the party? Who are opposing it? With what means?
- Are the groups consistent with their support/opposition across the issues to an extent that we can call them “coalition partners” or “clashing powers?”
- Is this discursive change –created both by the action of the government and the reactions of other power centers to it- help changing the balance of power at all? Who withdraws after all the dust settles down?
- Do power centers ever mention promises made by the party to them?

5. INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: COALITIONS WITH THE POWER CENTERS IN TURKISH SOCIETY

5.1. KURDS

In 1923, with the aim of establishing a secular Westernized nation state, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk began to implement his top-down modernization policy. He desired to create a new regime based on concepts of cultural unity, rationalism, secularism and a liberal economy. In this respect, all former Ottoman subjects living in Anatolia were accepted as members of the new Turkish nation. As Mustafa Kemal’s cultural policy was based on the assimilation and/or

elimination of ethnic elements other than Turks, ethnic groups demanding to maintain their local cultural traditions were threats to territorial integrity and political unity of state. As a result, the policy of cultural unity pursued by the Kemalists gave rise to the emergence of recurring Kurdish uprisings against the central government since 1925. State authorities created the perception that military measures were the only solution to the problem since they described the uprisings as ethnic separatist movements regardless of their genuine origin or intent.

Especially after the 1980 military coup, hard-core Turkish nationalism towards Kurds fueled counter nationalism among Kurds and increased the number of Kurdish separatist/rebellious movements. Accordingly, 1990's witnessed more military operations, more casualties, and more aggression on both sides. On the one hand, the state ideology dictated that Turkey did not have a "Kurdish problem" because there was no such thing as "Kurd." These people who called themselves Kurd were simply "mountain Turks." There was a "terror problem" and it could only be solved via military measures. On the other hand, Kurdish resistance to assimilation took a dual course;

1-A peaceful political struggle to obtain basic civil rights for Kurds in Turkey,

2- A violent armed struggle to obtain a separate Kurdish state.

The dimensions of the resistance to the state ideology along with the size of the Kurdish population¹⁵ generated the perception that Kurds belonged to the only minority group that posed a threat to Turkish national unity. Therefore, Kurds and the Kurdish issue had been on the agenda of each and every government in Turkish politics – including interval (military) governments, especially when the armed struggle got increasingly violent on both sides.

¹⁵ 18% according to the CIA World Factbook and 7.07 % according to the Turkish Statistical Institute

More than 70 reports have been published on the issue between 1920 and 2010, intensifying in two periods: 1- One Party Period (CHP) and 2- After 1990s. The reports during the one party period were simply a repetition of the official state ideology and defined the problem as a “public order” issue. This character has changed after 1990s. As products of objective research done by NGOs and political parties, the reports written after 1990 referred to the problem as an identity and democracy problem that worsens with the democracy and human rights violations of the Turkish state (Yayman, 2011). After all, it was clear that it would take more than military measures to solve the problem of Kurdish people living in a region that was under the state of emergency for 51 years, from 1925 to 1950 and from 1978 to 2002.

Even though the identity problem was recognized by most of the political parties, the governments were not able to step back from the official state ideology with regards to the Kurdish problem for a very long time.

5.1.1. THE WELFARE'S RELATION WITH KURDS:

Islamist movements and the Kurdish movement in Turkey have always been sympathetic to the sufferings of each other as they were both marginalized by the same Kemalist state ideology. Additionally, Islam played a significant role in bringing these two groups together considering the fact that most of the Kurdish population in the east and southeast Turkey were practicing Sunni Muslims. It was not until 1991 that the Welfare Party prepared a report on the Kurdish problem that had both the origin of the problem and policy recommendations for the Party leadership. Rather than being a genuine effort of the Party to end the sufferings of the Kurds, the report was more of a guideline on “how to win Kurdish voters,” a constituency base that was alienated by the alliance of the Welfare Party and ultranationalist Nationalist Movement Party in 1991 elections.

The Welfare report was prepared by the order of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, then a young and respected member of the Welfare Party who would become the popular leader of the AKP in the upcoming years. Erdogan was against the election coalition with an ultra-nationalist party due to the fear that it would alienate the traditional Islamist Kurdish voter base in the Southeast¹⁶. Yet, with the approval of the Party leader Necmettin Erbakan , the coalition formed and won 16.90% of votes in the 1991 election that opened the doors of the National Assembly to the Welfare Party with 40 MPs¹⁷.

The report was written with the aim of regaining traditional Islamic Kurdish votes after the 1991 election, and consisted of two parts 1-The Problem and 2- Proposals. The proposals were quite radical at that time as they “[were] still sharply inconsistent with traditional opinions among military elites and state bureaucrats, and for the first time accepted the existence of a Kurdish question,” (Efegil, 2011, p.30).

According to the report, Turkey [had] a “Kurdish” question, and Southeastern Anatolia was historically called Kurdistan. Their language [was] different from Turkish. Kurdish people suffer[ed] equally from military operations and the PKK terrorist attacks. Contrary to the common perception, except for some marginal Kurdish groups, most Kurdish people did not demand independence from Turkey. They only demanded freely practicing their cultural traditions and using their mother tongue. In sum, the acceptance of their identity and culture by the state authorities was much more important than independence for Kurds.

The report indicated the following concrete suggestions for the party leadership: “the end of punitive measures upon local people, ensuring regional and economic development, the usage of the word “Kurd” more often, the improvement of human rights, development of the Kurdish

¹⁶ <http://dunyabulteni.net/index.php?aType=haberArchive&ArticleID=30433>

¹⁷ <http://www.odatv.com/n.php?n=erdoganin-kurt-raporunda-ne-yaziyordu-2109101200>

culture, the establishment of a Kurdish institute, the free publication of Kurdish newspapers and journals, the formation of local parliaments, decreasing the central government's powers and allowing the free use of the mother tongue.¹⁸”

The report stressed the need to find a solution within the framework of full democratic, cultural pluralism and noted the reasons for the problem were denial, assimilation, and the suppressive policies of the central government. Consequently, “it supported the establishment of a new legal state, which would be prescriptive to equal political, social and cultural rights for all people,” (Efegil, 2011). The Welfare Party's suggestion for such new legal state was the Just Order. By replacing the Kemalist ideology with brotherhood of Muslims, Just Order would erase any ethnic or racial tensions.

Thus, even though Erbakan took the report seriously and established a Southeastern Study Group, it seems that he did not fully grasp the essence of it. According to Erbakan, both Turkish and Kurdish nationalism were at fault, and the only solution was Islam. In a parliament speech, he underlined this fact by stating, “Above anything, we are Muslims. We are brothers and sisters¹⁹.” Erbakan did not recognize the just and equal togetherness of the Turkish and Kurdish nationalities as different ethnic groups, but rather replacing the century-old “nation” with “umma” via underrating the ethnicity factor. According to Erbakan, “When the system is just, would it make any difference whether someone is a Kurd or a Turk? Or when the system obeys the Zionists and exploits its people, does it make any difference for the exploited whether he is a Turk or a Kurd²⁰?”

¹⁸ <http://dunyabulteni.net/index.php?aType=haberArchive&ArticleID=30433>

¹⁹ www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F7_Hk08WpQ&feature=related

²⁰ www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F7_Hk08WpQ&feature=related

However, by focusing on the common religion factor that referred to the Sunni interpretation of Islam, the Welfare Party divided the Kurdish population and alienated the group with other sectarian beliefs.

Nevertheless, the report shaped the discourse of the Welfare Party for long enough to rekindle Kurdish support for the Party. The 4th Congress of the Welfare Party, held on October 10th, 1993, was particularly important in underlying the Party's position regarding the Kurdish question. It was announced once again that the armed conflict in the East and Southeast was a conflict between the Kurdish and Turkish nationalism; which were both at fault because they were prioritizing ethnicity instead of brotherhood of all Muslims (Gulalp, 2003). Just Order based on Islamic principles was an alternative to the oppressive Kemalist ideology. It could solve the problems created by state's assimilative strategies towards the Kurdish question. Remaining loyal to the proposals of the 1991 report, the Party once again stated that the state should recognize the Kurdish identity and give full cultural rights to Kurds -including the rights related to the use of Kurdish language- (Gulalp, 2003). The Kurdish problem did not remain the same during 1991-1995. "This period had witnessed the rise of "the military solution" that manifested itself in closing down two Kurdish nationalist parties, the HEP, and the DEP and in imprisonment of their deputies. The election booklet did not make any references to these important developments in Turkish political life," (Duran, 1998).

In Kurdish city Bingol in 1994, Erbakan gave his much contentious statements regarding the issue and the Kemalist state: "For centuries, children of this country started their education at school with the name of Allah every day. You abolished this tradition and replaced it with what? With 'I am a Turk, honest and hardworking.' If you say that, a Muslim brother from a Kurdish origin will have the right to say 'Oh, is that so? Then, I am a Kurd, more honest, and more

hardworking.’ By doing so, you estranged the children of this country to each other. Tomorrow, that parliament will be at the hands of the believers, and all those rights will be granted without spilling blood²¹.” Later in 10 March 2000, Erbakan was found guilty of “provoking the nation for hate and enmity via emphasizing the ethnic and religious differences – the famous Article 312 of the Turkish Criminal Law (TCK),” and sentenced one-year prison by the Diyarbakir State Security Court²². Even though, Erbakan repeatedly announced any “ethnicity” would be irrelevant in the new system (Just Order) and the most important thing would be the common religious beliefs of people.

Mentioning “Kurds” as a separate ethnic group and demanding cultural rights for them helped Party win over the Kurdish voters in Kurdish cities and the big cities with large Kurdish immigrant population. In 1994 and 1995 elections, this win over translated into remarkable increase of Kurdish based votes for the Party (Calmuk, 2005).

When the Welfare entered the parliament as the big coalition partner, its attitude and actions towards the Kurdish question were a total disappointment for not only Kurds but also for liberal elites. “Taking into consideration the inflexibility of the Turkish political system, the strength of Turkish nationalism and unwillingness of its coalition partner the True Path Party (Dogru Yol Partisi), as well as the military to change the status-quo related to the Kurdish identity and cultural rights, the WP rearranged its priorities on the issue. Not unexpectedly, it shifted its emphasis to the economic side of the problem while identity and cultural rights dimension had to wait for some time,” (Duran, 1998). “Furthermore, the WP’s reluctance in giving priority to democratization of the political system in power and its insistence on keeping anti-regime political symbols resulted in a regime crisis. This crisis inherently narrowed the

²¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IeJTIzDR8s>

²² http://www.belgenet.com/belge/erbakan_01.html , <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/15680.asp>

political space in which the WP would introduce some political reforms for the recognition of Kurdish identity and language,” (Duran, 1998).

First of all, only a month after coming to power as the big coalition partner, Erbakan ‘visited’ the General Staff of the Republic of Turkey, and ‘asked’ the opinions of the soldiers on OHAL (state of emergency in the eastern and southeastern Turkey) and reactionary movements. After a few weeks later, the Welfare-DYP coalition extended the OHAL, which had been considered responsible for the systematic human rights violations and the oppression of Kurds.

Second, during an interview in his Libya visit (Oct. 5th, 1996) –as a reply to the accusations of Muammar Kaddafi on the sufferings of Kurds in Turkey- Erbakan argued “Turkey [was] a democracy. Turkish legal system [did] not discriminate against any race or ethnicity; each and every citizen [had] equal rights. Thus, Turkey [did] not have either a race or a gender problem. The only problem of Turkey [was] the problem of terrorism [referring to the Kurdish separatist movements-namely PKK], and this problem [was] rooted outside the Turkish borders. The West was trying to tear apart the territorial integrity of Turkey, using Kurds via provoking them towards this end. Turkey [did] not have a Kurdish problem. Turkey [had] a terrorism problem²³.” Despite this word-by-word recitation of the state ideology, opposition parties and the media accused Erbakan of remaining passive against the humiliations from a ‘desert bedouin.’

On 16th of October, there was an interpellation against the Welfare-led government concerning its foreign visit choices. During the interpellation, State Minister Abdullah Gul

²³ Turkish National Assembly Archive

http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/td_v2.goruntule?sayfa_no_ilk=66&sayfa_no_son=69&sayfa_no=93&v_meclis=1&v_donem=20&v_yasama_yili=&v_cilt=12&v_birlesim=008

claimed that the interpellation was based on false accusations of the media, which obviously was determined to defame the Welfare Party²⁴.

Third, as full-fledged military operations against the PKK camps continued during the rule of the Welfare Party, nothing was done regarding the constitutional recognition of the Kurdish identity or the improvement of Kurdish culture and language. Instead, Erbakan offered “ummah” as an abstract alternative to the “nation,” and Islam as an alternative to “nationalism.” Even though, the Party established a Southeast Study Group, the focus of the group was mostly economic problems of the region.

Consequently, contrary to its early discourse and the warnings of the Kurdish reports, the Welfare Party could hardly step outside of the official state ideology regarding the Kurdish problem. In addition to the political and social pressure –or because of it- Erbakan could not fully grasp the ethnic dimension of the problem. He did not fall short of using “Armenians with Kurdish origin²⁵” as an insult that shows his confusion about the issue.

Considering the ebbs and flows in the relations between the Welfare Party and Kurds, their limited coalition –if any- broke down at a very early stage, soon after the election victory of the Welfare Party in 1995.

5.1.2. THE AKP'S RELATION WITH KURDS:

The AKP-Kurdish relations dates back to the 1991 Kurdish report of the Welfare Party as the person who came up with that report was no other than Recep Tayyip Erdogan himself, the leader and the founder of the AKP. Aware of the origins of the problem and possible solutions to it, Erdogan and the AKP leadership based their Kurdish policy on two pillars. First, the full

²⁴ For an example of the fabricated news, see <http://fotogaleri.haber7.com/inner/261120120301020408601.jpg> which reads “The Storm of Lies” referring to the Prime Minister’s state of the nation address broadcasted the previous day according to the newspaper, whereas Erbakan had to postpone the speech due to a national football game.

²⁵ www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F_Hk08WpQ&feature=related

recognition of the Kurdish identity as a different ethnic group, granting full cultural and social rights to Kurds, and narrowing the economic gap between the undeveloped East and industrialized West of the country. Second, armed struggle with the PKK that will go parallel to the improvement of Kurdish rights. In other words, the Party made a distinction between the separatist PKK terrorists and innocent civilians, and guaranteed carrot to the Kurds as long as they stay loyal to the state and do not get involved in terrorist acts.

Accordingly, starting from the establishment of the Party, the AKP used various channels to explain their group-specific strategy to Kurds, to change the discourse of the Turkish public, and to fulfill its promises.

Early Period Policy Promises:

Right after its establishment in 2001, the AKP devoted a special section of its Party Program to the Kurdish problem with the title of ‘The East and The Southeast²⁶.’ As a sign of particularistic politics, this section dealt with the specific policies that are to be pursued when the Party came to power. This particular section was an addition to the other sections Party such as ‘Fundamental Rights and Freedoms,’ ‘Law and Justice,’ and ‘Democratization and Civil Society’ that underlie the democratic stance of the Party.

First of all, the Program states that “The event, which some of us call the Southeastern, others call the Kurdish or the Terror problem, is, unfortunately, a reality in Turkey. In cognizance of the negative issues caused by this problem in our social life, [the AKP] shall follow a policy guarding the happiness, welfare, rights and freedoms of the regional population²⁷.” It is remarkable that the Party uses all terms, including the ones utilized by the Kemalist state structure, which are related to the problem at the very beginning. By doing so, it

²⁶ For the full text, see http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_

²⁷ http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_

chooses a more moderate discourse that could be felt less of a threat to the Kemalist state structure.

Second, after noting, “The cultural diversity in this region is considered richness by [the Party],” the Program suggests that the problem must be dealt in a manner which goes beyond the identification of the reality but respectful to the sensitivities of the entire society including the integrity of national borders²⁸.

Most importantly, the Program makes a distinction between terrorists and innocent civilians, and argues that the posture towards each of them should be different: “Our Party aims at putting an end to certain practices that are resorted to as a reaction to terror but go beyond their original purpose and disturb the region's population. It also aims at abolishing entirely the State of Emergency practices, which have been maintained for many years. We believe that our state must display a deterrent posture towards criminals and a protective posture towards innocents and must treat innocent people with affection.” In sum, the Party Program promises to put an end to the injustice and human rights violations in the region done by the Kemalist state structure in the name of war on terror. Contrary to earlier practices, the Party argues “terror and [state] oppression respectively feed one another.” Accordingly, any approach that ignores terror is a consequence of the oppression promotes more terror. The Party instead offers a three-pillar approach to fighting terrorism: respect for fundamental rights and freedoms of the Kurds, sustaining economic development and providing security in the region²⁹.

Eliminating, or at least minimizing, the developmental gap between regions was presented as an important aspect of the solution, even though economic improvement was but part of the solution to the Kurdish problem. The Program presented economic measures as the

²⁸ http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_

²⁹ http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_

third pillar of the policy along with providing cultural rights and fighting terrorism. According to the AKP leadership, “lack of public services, unemployment, poverty, and oppression [created] situations where terror [could] flourish most conveniently³⁰.” Improving trade, especially border trade with neighboring countries, was offered as a viable solution to the low economic activity in the region.

Consequently, the Program posits that a bureaucratic and authoritarian state relying solely on the concept of security will exacerbate the problems even further in the long term. Therefore, democratic principles and pluralism should replace security concerns if we are to protect the unity and integrity of our nation in the long term, how unfavorable it may sound initially³¹.

This Party Program has constituted the basis of the AKP discourse and activities since the establishment of the Party. For example, during the propaganda period of 2002 elections, Erdogan made several references to the Party Program with regards to the Kurdish problem and his Party’s solution to it. In 2002, in his Hakkari and Diyarbakir speeches, which were his first election speeches as the leader of the AKP, Erdogan stressed the existence of different ethnic groups in Turkey, and promised that there will be no religious, ethnic or regional discrimination when the AKP came to power³². In Cizre, he added that the villagers that were forced to leave their villages due to terrorism would be able to return to their homes after a rehabilitation project³³.

³⁰ http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_

³¹ http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_

³² “We do not discriminate against anyone, whether he is a Kurds, a Turk, a Laz, a Caucasian or an Abkhaz. When we rule, there will be no discrimination between Alawites and Sunnis, nor will there be any between Muslims, Christians and Jews. There will also be no nationalism based on race. Because, no race is superior to the other. We are all human beings. Likewise, there will be no nationalism based on region. Neither the East nor the West will be superior to one another.” <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/ak-parti-lideri-erdogan-ilk-secim-mitingini-hakkaride-yapti/4242>

³³ <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/ak-parti-lideri-erdogan-cizrede-halkla-bulustu/4174>

During this period, Erdogan met the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Jalal Talabani in his office. In this meeting, Erdogan stated “the information he got on Iraq and Kurdistan made him happy, and he wished that the relations would be closer in the future³⁴.” Yet, these two sentences were enough to start a fire amongst the Kemalist elites situated in the media and political parties. The AKP needed to clarify that Erdogan used Kurdistan for the limited geographic region in the north of Iraq, which at the same time happened to be the name of Jalal Talabani’s party³⁵.

Consequently, these early period policy promises, and emphasis on pluralism and democracy earned the AKP 32,2% of votes in Eastern and 26,5% in Southeastern Anatolia³⁶. In other words, the AKP was either the first or the second party in twelve Kurdish cities³⁷, even though on average it gained less than half of the electoral support that DEHAP obtained in East and Southeastern provinces (Carkoglu, 2002).

European Union Alignment Packages and Kurdish culture:

With the adoption of the "National Program" in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) on 19 March 2001, the issue of constitutional change landed on top of the political agenda. With this document, Turkey promised to fulfill certain reforms before becoming eligible for full member to the EU. In accordance with the short-term and mid-term goals in the National Program, the Government consisting of Democratic Left Party (DSP), Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) gave priority to the preparation of a new constitutional amendment package in accordance with the EU standards. Among these

³⁴ <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haber/4041/ak-parti-genel-baskani-kurdistan-yurtseverler-birligi-lideri-celal-talabani>

³⁵ <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haber/4041/ak-parti-genel-baskani-kurdistan-yurtseverler-birligi-lideri-celal-talabani>

³⁶ With the help of the 10% national threshold that prevented DEHAP[7] from entering the parliament despite having a 6,2% national vote share Ali Bulac, Kurt Secmenin Oylari, 28.07.2007

<http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=569630>

³⁷ [8] Agri, Batman, Bingol, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Mardin, Mus, Siirt, Sirnak, Tunceli, Van

standards were the expansion of fundamental rights and freedoms, the abolition of death penalty, obstruction of party closure by presenting a gradual punishment system for those that indulge in unconstitutional activities, legalization of broadcasting and publishing in local languages “that has been prohibited by law”, and incorporation of fair trial to the Constitution.

However, these amendments did not change the century-old mentality of Turkish Kemalists. In 2000, in a meeting with Socialists Group in the European Parliament, Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, the leader of the coalition partner DSP, announced that Kurdish was not a language³⁸. In 2002, after the amendments, the coalition was still discussing whether broadcasting in Kurdish was a threat to national security³⁹ and contended that Kurdish language was not suitable for education⁴⁰. Accordingly, national unity and territorial integrity of the country were at risk due to such EU demands⁴¹, and therefore a possible EU membership was a first step towards the dissolution of Turkish Republic as intended by the allied forces after the World War 1⁴².

In this atmosphere, AKP leadership repeatedly suggested the localization and the implementation of the Copenhagen Criteria as ‘Ankara criteria’ with or without EU membership, (Ugur & Yankaya, 2008). After the elections in November 2002, the AKP government issued a program and an action plan that stressed the EU reforms as the basis for upcoming constitutional/legal reforms. Despite all the controversy, EU membership was a Kemalist project beginning in 1960s, and the AKP chose to use their weapons against them to legitimize its political agenda.

³⁸ yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2000/mart/28/p2.html

³⁹ <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/44055.asp>

⁴⁰ [/haber.php?haberno0=29391](http://haber.php?haberno0=29391)

⁴¹ Sevr Paranoia-the belief that the West is waiting for the right time to apply the Sevr Treaty, which intended to break Turkey into its pieces after the WW1

⁴² <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2004/10/29/yazar/pulur.html>

One of the first actions of the AKP government was to put an end to the state of emergency that affected the Kurdish areas⁴³. Then, the AKP government adopted five reform packages from 2002 to 2007. These reform packages abolished Article 8 of Anti-Terror Law and allowed for broadcasting in languages and dialects other than Turkish. Moreover, the reforms enabled private Kurdish courses, naming children in Kurdish, and propagating in elections in local languages other than Turkish⁴⁴.

The first Kurdish private course was opened in Batman on April 2nd, 2004 after an enormous bureaucratic controversy⁴⁵. On the other hand, people had to wait until 2009 to watch the first full-time Kurdish broadcasting in Turkish Radio and Television (TRT)⁴⁶-with a 7-year delay again due to bureaucratic obstacles.

During this five year-reform period, the AKP government supported the reform packages with discursive changes as well. For example, in October 2004, the Human Rights Commission, responsible to the office of Prime Minister, published a minority report. The report primarily contended that the usage of race-based “Turk” as a supra-identity created many problems for Turkish society. “Turk” happened to be the name of one of the sub-identities in the society that lived under the supra-nationality of “Ottoman” for centuries without any problems⁴⁷. The suggestion of the Commission was to find another supra-nationality that was territory based and more inclusive, like “Turkiyeli”⁴⁸.

⁴³ <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=112742>

⁴⁴ <http://egemenbagis.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/tsr.pdf>

⁴⁵ <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/264131.asp>

⁴⁶ <http://www.baskinoran.com/2011/Paris-Kurtce-16-04-2011.pdf>

⁴⁷ <http://baskinoran.com/makale/Birikim-IHDKRaporununOykususu.pdf>

⁴⁸ “A citizen of Turkey”

Without doubt, these suggestions created a storm in Turkish politics, and even the AKP government had to announce, “the Report had been prepared without the knowledge or permission of the government⁴⁹.”

Nevertheless, the words were out there, and after a year, Erdogan began to talk in full agreement with the report. In 2005 during a meeting in Kurdish city Siirt, he announced, “every ethnic group in Turkey will be called in the name of its ethnicity. They are all sub-nationalities. And the supra nationality uniting all will be the citizenship of Turkish Republic⁵⁰.” In a historic speech in Diyarbakir, he pointed out that he had been, and still was, against any regional and ethnic separatist movements while he approved cultural pluralism. According to Erdogan, there was a “Kurdish problem” in the country, and it was not confined to a limited group of people. It was the problem of all⁵¹. He also recited a famous poem demanding “an end to the fight between brothers⁵².”

The government also tried to take a step towards decentralization of power, in the same lines with the suggestions of all Kurdish reports published in 1990s and later. According to the proposal, the authority should be transferred from the national government to local administrations, and thereby, strengthen the participation of the local people in their governance⁵³. Due to the controversy it created, the AKP government drew back the proposal.

5.2. TUSIAD

Starting from the Jon Turk movement during the late Ottoman Empire era, the replacement of the existing, non-Muslim “comprador” bourgeoisie with a national one was on

⁴⁹ <http://baskinoran.com/makale/Birikim-IHDKRaporununOyKusu.pdf>

⁵⁰ <http://yenisafak.com.tr/arsiv/2005/ekim/10/p01.html>

For other examples, see www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/11/22/son/sonsiy10.html,
www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/11/27/siyaset/axsiy02.html

⁵¹ arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2005/08/12/siy94.html

⁵² bianet.org/bianet/print/65194-erdogan-kurt-sorunu-hepimizin-sorunu

⁵³ <http://haber.php?haberno=94207>

top of the political agenda of Turkish nationalists. National bourgeoisie was the backbone of an economically independent nation state. Therefore, after the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the Kemalist state dedicated itself to creating the new class with government subsidies, tax reductions, concessions, credits and laws that protected entrepreneurs. In order to get larger shares from such privileges, enterprises articulated high-rank bureaucrats and politicians to their bodies.

In addition to the economic policies of the Kemalist state, Turkish bourgeoisie benefited from the rising racism in Europe during 1930's. Most of the non-Muslim entrepreneurs either forced out of the country due to increasing anonymous assaults or had to pay higher and additional taxes.

Moreover, until 1980, the Kemalist state refrained from liberalism and applied import substitution industrialization (ISI) policies, which increased the dependence of the national bourgeoisie to state for import/export privileges and policies.

Such dependence of the Turkish bourgeoisie to the Kemalist state led to an organic, clientelist relation between the upper middle classes and the Kemalist state structure not only economically but also ideologically. In other words, Turkish bourgeoisie has been the most enthusiastic supporter of the Kemalist ideals and the state structure for decades.

Founded in 1971, Turkish Industry and Business Association (TUSIAD) represents the national secular bourgeoisie mentioned above, which -after all- was a Kemalist project. The Association defines itself as a voluntary entrepreneurial organization with members from the major industrial and service companies in Turkey⁵⁴. TUSIAD members produce 50% of Turkey's GDP (excluding government sector) and 80% of its foreign trade (excluding natural

⁵⁴ <http://www.tusiad.org.tr/tusiad/verilerle-tusiad/>

resource imports)⁵⁵. Concentrated mainly in Istanbul, TUSIAD operates as an independent, West-oriented, non-governmental organization that supports research and policy discussion on important socio-economic issues in Turkey (Gunter & Yavuz, 2007).

In the early 1990s, TÜSIAD campaigned for legal and institutional reforms aimed at enhancing the institutional quality of Turkey's economy. "However, its reforms vision was limited to economic governance and optimal size of the state. This vision underwent a significant expansion with the conclusion of the EU–Turkey customs union (CU) in 1995," (Ugur & Yankaya, 2008, p.588). After 1995, TÜSIAD began to campaign for extensive democratization and protection of the individual rights vis-à-vis the state (Onis, 1997). "An important reason for this change was the perception that the CU could constitute a stepping stone toward EU membership as it would enable Turkey to achieve the necessary economic and political maturity to be a full member of the EU" (TÜSIAD 1996, 5; 1997a, 4)," (Ugur & Yankaya, 2008, p.588).

In short, TUSIAD had the perception that the prospect of EU membership provided "a sense of legitimacy" that would reduce resistance to comprehensive reforms within the state and the society. Therefore, TUSIAD published highly controversial and influential reports on EU membership of Turkey from 1997 onward.

5.2.1. THE WELFARE'S RELATION WITH TUSIAD:

The pinnacle of the Welfare Party ideology and its economic policy guide was the Just Order. The Just Order was a guiding ideological prism that mainly concentrated on economic matters and presented prescriptions for Turkey's economic diseases.

⁵⁵ <http://www.tusiad.org.tr/tusiad/verilerle-tusiad/>

First of all, the Party stressed that the Just Order not be confused with either capitalism or communism. According to the Just Order, capitalism had “five viruses” causing “sixteen diseases,” (Kamrava, 1998). The viruses were “interest rates, unfair taxes, the mint, the banking system, and the exchange system. The most awful diseases spreading via these viruses were hunger, poverty, high prices, inflation, the mafia, corruption, moral decay, backwardness, wars, and exploitation,” (Kamrava, 1998, p. 287). Communism, on the other hand, was a bankrupt ideology and a twin brother of capitalism: both were the systems where there was an oppressor and an oppressed. The only difference between the two economic systems was that the oppressor force was political power in communism and capital power in capitalism.

Instead, the Welfare Party offered Just Economic Order, in which the economic system would remain under the complete control of market forces, and state involvement in the economy was merely regulatory (Kamrava, 1998).

As for the foreign policy, the Just Order was based on classic dependency arguments. In his words, Erbakan described the West as “imperialist Zionists that [were] dedicated to the exploitation of the Islamic countries⁵⁶.” Erbakan also claimed that the West was trying to divide Turkey by “manipulating Kurds and playing Muslim brethren against each other⁵⁷.”

In sum, even TUSIAD and the Welfare Party were completely at odds with each other not only with regards to their political ideologies but also with regards to their economy and foreign policy expectations.

5.2.2. *THE AKP'S RELATION WITH TUSIAD:*

The Party Program of the AKP was almost perfect for reassuring the TUSIAD that their economic and political agenda would be fulfilled. In the Program, it was explicitly stated “[the

⁵⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWG7DGmLhqk>

⁵⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWG7DGmLhqk>

Party] favors market economy operating with all its institutions and rules,” and the function of the state in the economy [was] limited to a regulator and controller⁵⁸.” Moreover, under the title of “Our Concept of the Economy,” the AKP announced that “[their] relations with the European Union, World Bank, IMF and other international institutions [shall] be maintained along the lines of the requirements of [their] economy and [their] national interests.⁵⁹”

Meanwhile, TUSIAD published reports after reports, and called governments, opposition parties, and relevant ministries and committees to maintain the momentum for the compatibility between EU criteria and Turkish legal system. Yet, “the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government from 1998-2002 tended to distance itself from the reform agenda. TUSIAD criticized the government for this reluctance, and also related the twin crises of November 2000 and February 2001 to the government’s lack of political determination and its economic/financial mismanagement,” (Ugur & Yankaya, 2008, p.590).

In this atmosphere, the AKP incorporated the EU policy conditions on its own agenda, and declared that the Party was committed to fulfilling Copenhagen criteria. AKP leadership presented the EU democratization reforms as “long-overdue policies that would benefit the Turkish society at large –and not as EU interference in Turkey’s domestic affairs,” (Ugur & Yankaya, 2008, p.590). The AKP also rejected the prejudice that the EU conditionality will destroy the territorial integrity and national unity of the Turkish state, and with several occasions stressed out that Turkey could only solve its ethnic problems with more democracy.

As a result of this attitude, “the cooperation between TUSIAD and Recep Tayyip Erdogan had begun even before the foundation of the AKP on August 14, 2001,” (Ugur & Yankaya, 2008, p.590). In private and official meetings, Erdogan assured TUSIAD authorities

⁵⁸ <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum>

⁵⁹ <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum>

that he had abandoned Islamic fundamentalism; he favored a secular political system, and that accession to European Union was among his priorities⁶⁰.

Before the November 2002 elections, Erdogan took a face-to-face diplomacy stance with EU leaders, and assured them of his personal commitment as well as AKP's determination to maintain EU perspective. After the elections, the AKP government issued a program and an action plan that underlined EU norms as the basis for upcoming legal reforms, and announced that the EU membership was a top priority of the government. The government also repeatedly stated that "its main objective was to pave the way for a Council decision to start accession negotiations in 2004," and "even though the sought date came with a delay of one year in 2005, the AKP government remained committed to the reform agenda until the end of 2004," (Ugur & Baskaya, 2008, p.591).

Besides working as a catalyst for policy reforms on democracy, human rights and the rule of law, the EU conditionality provided the AKP with the necessary means to restrict the military's ability to intervene in politics. With the help of the reform packages, military representatives in civilian bodies were replaced with civilians. With these changes, the National Security Council, which was "an organ that had enabled the Turkish Armed Forces to play a significant and often dictating role in the determination of the government policies," was reduced to an advisory board responsible to the Prime Minister (Ugur & Yankaya, 2008, p.591).

Due to the political and economical commitments of the AKP to the EU process, TUSIAD described the AKP government as an opportunity for economic and political stability of Turkey. Accordingly, the Party had the capacity and the will for the economic and social transformation that the country had been longing for (TUSIAD, 2003). "Even before the election

⁶⁰ <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=akp-leader-erdogan-to-meet-with-tusiad-2002-07-08>

of November 2002, TUSIAD backed the Party's active engagement with the EU and declared its support both in Turkey and in European capitals. Thereby, it lent the AKP government the crucial support it needed against veto players such as the military and the judiciary," (Ugur & Yankaya, 2008, p.593).

5.3.MUSIAD

Established in 1990 by five industrialists and businessmen, Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (MUSIAD), is a non-governmental, non-profit, and voluntary-based, businessmen's association that is based on the small and medium size enterprises of traditional Anatolian cities.

MUSIAD have emerged in a historical period characterized by major changes in both the domestic and the international economic and political arena. On the domestic level, the state abandoned the import substitution industrialization and embraced neoliberal economic policies with all its classical policy suggestions. On the international level, "it was a period characterized by the rise of small and medium size enterprises associated with the downsizing of large firms and the decentralization of vertically integrated enterprises," (Sen, 2010, p.72).

In accordance with the neoliberal economy policies, the growth of MUSIAD was independent of any state protection. Unable to benefit from the state's preferential treatment like its counterpart TUSIAD, MUSIAD mostly supported collective rights and social justice as opposed to individual rights. Moreover, unlike TUSIAD, MUSIAD has been a more Eastern oriented association that is heavily influenced by the successful cases of East and Southeast Asia (Onis, 1997).

In addition to the neoliberal economy policies, there were other factors that helped the emergence and rapid growth of MUSIAD. Following the Naqshi Sufi tradition himself, Turgut

Ozal, the former Prime Minister of Turkey (1983–1989) and former President of Turkey (1989–1993), “generously favored Islamist groups in the economic, cultural, and political arena and played a crucial role in the emergence of a new business class, affiliated with the organized religious groups,” (Sen, 2010, p.72). International Islamic banks and financial institutions made their appearance in Turkey in the 1980’s and provided “halal” credit for the Islamic bourgeoisie in Anatolia. These institutions also helped some local enterprises “to establish economic links with the Middle Eastern countries, especially in construction, oil, trade, and transportation,” (Sen, 2010, p.72).

In fact, these small and medium size enterprises had no option other than turning their face to the East, since the West –European Common Market- was already tied up to TUSIAD. With the help of the state protection, and a Western oriented foreign and economy policy, TUSIAD was able to make connections with the European countries. Therefore, the new middle class represented by MUSIAD depended on the fruits of globalization and relied their personal connections with Middle Eastern countries for their exports. Therefore, MUSIAD worked hard to improve the cooperation and trade between Islamic countries under the leadership of Ali Bayramoglu.

Economically; MUSIAD demanded the promotion of small and medium-sized firms and the mobilization of public resources and the financial system towards this end. Politically; it strongly rejected the Customs Union with Europe and demanded the reorientation of the country’s political and economic relationship towards the East⁶¹ (Onis, 1997; Bayramoglu, 2008).

⁶¹ See the key report, Pamuk Birliği, Istanbul; MUSIAD, 1996.

5.3.1. *THE WELFARE'S RELATION WITH MUSIAD:*

There is a consensus in the literature that “the transformation of the Welfare Party from a marginal force to a significant political movement is a parallel phenomenon to and a reflection of the growing power of Islamic business in the Turkish economy and society in the context of the 1990s,” (Onis, 1997, p.760; Gulalp, 1999). Considering the role of the state as the allocator of rents in the main economic areas, Islamic bourgeoisie needed and supported Islamic movements at the political level to get greater share from the public resources pie (Onis, 1997).

As part of its anti-West ideology, the Welfare's primary goal of bringing Turkey and Islamic world closer perfectly aligned with that of MUSIAD's demands. Erbakan particularly emphasized the importance of strengthening relations with countries of the Middle East, the emerging states of post-Soviet Central Asia and the rising states of Southeast Asia with large Islamic populations.

At one level, the Welfare's approach was transnationalism in the sense that the Party emphasized the brotherhood of and cooperation among Islamic countries. At the same time, there was a strong nationalistic flavor to its foreign-policy approach since Turkey was presented as the natural leader of this cooperation (Onis, 1997). In its 1995 Election Manifesto, the Welfare Party declared that its foreign policy goal was making “Turkey a leader country, not a satellite state.” And for the fulfillment of this objective, Turkey had to be in the union of World Islamic Countries, “not a Christian club that was founded by the command of the Papa Pio the XII⁶².”

Not surprisingly, the Welfare Party was extremely critical of any future union with Europe and promised to “dismantle the Customs Union agreement signed in 1995,” defining it a

⁶²<http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/eyayin/GAZETELER/WEB/KUTUPHANEDE%20BULUNAN%20DIJITAL%20KAYNAKLAR/KITAPLAR/SIYASI%20PARTI%20YAYINLARI/198602597%20RP%20PROGRAMI%201986/198602237%20THE%20PROGRAMME%20OF%20MOTHERLAND%20PARTY.pdf>

betrayal of the history, the civilization, the culture and most importantly the independence of Turkey⁶³.

In accordance with this political stance, the Welfare leadership started its official foreign visits with Iran, Egypt and Libya after forming the government. However, these visits and the overall East-oriented foreign policy of the Welfare Party led to a massive opposition from the military as well as the parties of center-right and social left. The opposition was in favor of the traditional Turkish foreign policy and argued there was no benefit of building relations with countries that were isolated by the international community other than impairing the relations with the West. After all, the West represented progress and modernity -everything Turkey longed for, and the East represented backwardness and underdevelopment -everything Turkey escaped from.

Nevertheless, even though the Welfare Party remained loyal to the Customs Union agreement and Turkey's memberships in the international institutions, it did not stop emphasizing the importance of having an "Islamic NATO" or an "Islamic Customs Union" throughout its rule.

5.3.2. *THE AKP'S RELATION WITH MUSIAD:*

Contrary to the Welfare Party, the AKP announced in its Party Program that Turkey's relations with the European Union, World Bank, IMF and other international institutions would be maintained along the lines of the requirements of Turkish economy and national interests⁶⁴. In

⁶³<http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/eyayin/GAZETELER/WEB/KUTUPHANEDE%20BULUNAN%20DIJITAL%20KAYNAKLAR/KITAPLAR/SIYASI%20PARTI%20YAYINLARI/198602597%20RP%20PROGRAMI%201986/198602237%20THE%20PROGRAMME%20OF%20MOTHERLAND%20PARTY.pdf>

⁶⁴ http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_

addition to that, the Program assured the opposition and the West that the relations with the European Union, NATO, and the USA would not only be maintained, but also be intensified⁶⁵.

After stating that Turkey would remain loyal to current axes of Turkish foreign policy, the Party presented the end of the Cold War as an opportunity for the country to rearrange its relations with alternative power centers, flexibly and with many axes. These power centers consisted of regional countries (neighbors and the Middle Eastern countries), Turkic Republics of Central Asia, former Eastern Bloc countries in the Black Sea, China, Russia, Balkans, Caucasus, and specifically Islamic countries. The Program noted that it attributed particular importance to the relations with Islamic countries. Accordingly, “it shall make efforts for the increase of the bilateral cooperation with these nations on the one hand, while continuing attempts on the other for the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) to have a more respectable place in the international arena and to have a dynamic structure able to take initiatives. Again in this conjunction, it shall try to impart more substance to the work of the standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of OIC (Comcec) which is chaired by the President of the Republic of Turkey⁶⁶.”

In other words, the AKP rephrased and rekindled Welfare’s foreign policy. After various unsuccessful attempts for the full EU membership resulting with humiliation, the AKP argued that Turkey did not need Europe, and instead, Europe needed Turkey. Party leadership consistently emphasized the unique character of Turkey as “a bridge between the Muslim East and the Christian West⁶⁷.” At a time when Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations thesis was influential, the AKP co-created the initiative of “Alliance of Civilization” under UN umbrella.

⁶⁵ http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_

⁶⁶ http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_

⁶⁷ http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_

Thereby, instead of demonizing the West and using Islam as the reference for Turkish foreign policy, the Party chose to give assurances that it was committed to the traditional foreign policy stance of Turkey, but needed to utilize other cooperation opportunities created with other power centers. The policy was named “Zero Problems with Neighbors” and applauded by every segment of the society. More interestingly, the policy was based on an apothegm of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: Peace at home, peace in the world! Accordingly, Ankara improved its relations with all of its neighbors including its archenemies such as Greece and Armenia.

Aside from foreign policy, the AKP gave voice to the economic demands of MUSIAD as well. In its Party Program, the AKP underlined the importance of artisans and small and medium scale enterprises for Turkish economy. According to the AKP Party Program “making significant contributions to the creation of production, employment and added value, small and medium scale enterprises are the backbone of the Turkish economic and social structure⁶⁸.” In addition, the Party suggested “a plan including, among other measures, financing support based on projects, tax incentives, and a plan including the reduction of bureaucratic obstacles.” Moreover, it promised protection from unfair competition to tradesmen, artisans and small and medium scale enterprises against large corporations. For this purpose, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization, found in 1990, was used more actively and effectively. Not only the supported sectors⁶⁹ but also the budget⁷⁰ of the organization expanded between 2002 and 2007.

5.4. CONSERVATIVES

Turkey’s modernization process dates back to Tanzimat reforms (1839) during the late Ottoman rule and takes a more radical and transformative stance with the founding of the

⁶⁸ http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_

⁶⁹ See the list of the sectors at <http://kosgeb.gov.tr/Pages/UI/b.aspx?ref=44>

⁷⁰ See the Graphs 2 and 3 at <http://www.sp.gov.tr/documents/planlar/KOSGEBSP0812.pdf>

Turkish Republic. Educated in European capitals and influenced by their ideologies, Young Turks believed that the Empire needed fundamental reforms to be able to compete with its European counterparts, both militarily and economically. Moreover, the ideals of French Revolution were spreading throughout the continent and Ottomans were not exempt from their influence. However, these early modernization efforts never denied the significance of Islam for the society. Islam was not incompatible with modernization according to Young Turks and their ultimate goals were “Turkification, Islamization, and modernization” of the society.

Nevertheless, this benign perception of religion changed under the leadership of the following Ottoman intellectuals, among whom Ataturk was a prominent actor. According to these nationalists, religion was the reason Ottoman Empire missed the modernization train. Even though most of the Anatolian peasants who fought in the Independence War believed that they were saving the Caliph, Mustafa Kemal was determined to erase religion from the public sphere after the founding of Turkish Republic. French secularism was accepted as one of the six principles of Kemalism, has been heavily used to control the religion by the state (Cavdar, 2006).

To this end, Ataturk abolished the Sultanate (1922), and the Caliphate (1924); issued Tevhid-i Tedrisat law which ordered the ban on every school and curriculum (religious schools and those belonged to minorities) except the official state schools and curriculum (1924); banned the use of fez, and issued a law on hat usage and appropriate dressing (1925); prohibited Sufi orders, and dervish lodges (1925); accepted a new civil law, and abolished the old sharia-based one (1926); replaced the Arab alphabet with the Latin one(1928); and removed the phrase “The religion of the Turkish Republic is Islam.” from the 1924 Constitution (1928). In addition to these reforms strengthening the secular character of the state, Mustafa Kemal issued an order that

prohibited the Arabic version of the call to the prayer (1932) – a law that was effective until the election failure of CHP in 1950.

From the early years of the Republic, secularism has been accepted as the most important character of the state and guarded by the military and Kemalist elites. In a country where 99% of the population is Muslim, the top-down secular reforms of Kemalist regime polarized the society to a great extent. Muslim population felt more and more oppressed and marginalized as years passed.

The 1980 military coup was a milestone in this state policy because the new military regime decided to use religion as a legitimizing tool for promoting political stability. “Without changing the state’s promise of secularism, a notion called Turkish-Islamic synthesis was adopted by the military,” (Cavdar, 2006, p.487). During this period, the state founded the Presidency of Religious Affairs; incorporated mandatory religion classes to the national curriculum; opened vocational schools that train imams; and broadcasted increased number of religious programs on state-owned television. Yet with the continuing emphasis on secularism, not much changed in terms of how Muslim masses perceive themselves vis-à-vis state.

In addition to economic crises, three-digit inflation numbers, and skyrocketed unemployment rates, scandals of high-rank state officials –and even Prime Minister Tansu Ciller herself- broke out one after another in 1990s. However, contrary to the expectation of the left, lower classes living in the newly established suburbs of big cities responded these developments by redefining their identity in religious terms instead of class. The prevalent perception was that Muslims have been oppressed and marginalized not only culturally, but also economically. The two most significant symbols of this oppression were the ban on headscarf in public spaces and the marginalization of vocational schools after 28 February process.

5.4.1. *THE WELFARE'S RELATION WITH CONSERVATIVES:*

In his 1994 and 1995 election speeches, Erbakan continually emphasized the discrepancy between the Muslim majority and Kemalist elites. According to Erbakan, there were only two political parties in Turkey: The Welfare Party with its Just Order Program, and others who are collaborators, imitators of the West, and (willingly or unwillingly) servants of the Zionist interests. Therefore, he contended that the Welfare Party had “believers” whereas others had “voters.” In a party group meeting he also added that the Welfare Party would definitely rule Turkey, and establish Just Order. The question was whether the transition would be with or without blood⁷¹.

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 Alawite),” (Yavuz, 1997). The leadership insisted the solution of all these confrontations lied in state-centric Islam. Accordingly, the Welfare Party redefined the principles of Kemalism as rationalism, independence, indigenous development, industrialization and reaching the level of modern civilization and reinterpreted secularism as the freedom of religion to Sunni Muslims (Duran, 1998).

Before the elections, the Party focused its discourse on the exploitative relationship between the West and the Muslim world and delineated the Kemalist elites as an offshoot of that imperialist West. Yet, after coming to power, the actions and the discourse of the WP were not as radical. For example, contrary to its early discourse, the Party signed a military agreement with Israel and remained loyal to the Customs Union Agreement with the EU.

⁷¹ "Erbakan 'kanli' konustu," Milliyet, April 14, 1994, p. 1.
<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/-kanli-mi-kansiz-mi-dedi-asker-korktu/siyaset/siyasetdetay/15.07.2012/1567088/default.htm>

As a result of this change in its actions and discourse, the WP felt the need to appease and appeal to its conservative constituency via number of events. These events included “the WP's insistence on building a mosque at Taksim with the claim to recapture Istanbul. The November 10th, 1996 speech of the WP's Kayseri Mayor, Sukru Karatepe, in which he urged Muslims to 'nurture and preserve the hatred and vengefulness they felt inside until their day comes.' The iftar dinner, to which Prime Minister Erbakan had invited the leaders of the religious orders. And the 'Jerusalem Night' celebrations in the township of Sincan near Ankara. At this rally, under the posters of the leaders of Hamas and Hizbullah, Sincan Mayor Bekir Yildiz and the Iranian Ambassador to Ankara, Mohammad Baghari, delivered messages that irritated some sections of the Turkish public opinion,” (Yavuz, 1997).

5.4.2. *THE AKP'S RELATION WITH CONSERVATIVES:*

Contrary to the WP, the AKP refrained from making direct references to Islam in their discourse and party documents. First of all, the AKP declared itself neither a religious nor an Islamic party. Rather, it was a “conservative democratic party.” Erdogan refused any resemblance to even the “Christian Democrats” of Europe.

Second, the Party leadership redefined “secularism” in accordance with the Anglo-Saxon usage of the term. According to Erdogan, the source of the oppression of the freedom of religion and consciousness in Turkey was the application of French type secularism. Instead of a secular state that considers controlling the religion as one of its primary duties, Erdogan offered a secularism definition that guarantees the freedom of all faiths, as well as non-believers⁷². Moreover, secularism was a feature of states, and therefore only states could be secular, not real persons.

⁷² From an interview with Faith Altayli on his TV program “Teke Tek”, 2002. Also see <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haber/6273/erdogan-biz-siyasetin-riskini-goze-aldik>

Third, in its Party Program under the “Fundamental Rights and Freedoms” section, the AKP explicitly stated its stance towards religion with three Articles, and denounced the state ideology that uses secularism as a tool for oppression against pious citizens:

- “Our party considers religion as one of the most important institutions of humanity and secularism as a pre-requisite of democracy, and an assurance of the freedom of religion and conscience. It also rejects the interpretation and distortion of secularism as enmity against religion.
- Basically, secularism is a principle which allows people of all religions, and beliefs to comfortably practice their religions, to be able to express their religious convictions and live accordingly, but which also allows people without beliefs to organize their lives along these lines. From this point of view, secularism is a principle of freedom and social peace.
- Our Party refuses to take advantage of sacred religious values and ethnicity and to use them for political purposes. It considers the attitudes and practices that disturb pious people, and which discriminate them due to their religious lives and preferences, as anti-democratic and in contradiction to human rights and freedoms. On the other hand, it is also unacceptable to make use of religion for political, economic and other interests, or to put pressure on people who think and live differently by using religion.”

Fourth, during his 2002 election campaign in conservative cities such as Gaziantep, Karaman, and Konya, in reply to questions concerning the headscarf issue Erdogan assured the people in the meeting arena that the country would become “a land of freedoms,” after they came to power only if conservatives were patient⁷³. He also added that the Party would equally fight

⁷³ <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/erdogan-gantepte-halkla-bulustu/4285>

against groups that exploit religion for their own interests and the groups that oppress pious people in the name of fighting against the exploitation of religion⁷⁴.

And last, but not least, the AKP emphasized the significance of “social convention” for the solution of secularism problem in Turkey. Contrary to the WP’s radical discourse that seemed to be dedicated to changing the regime, the AKP chose to remove each and every obstacle with the help of “social convention” of different groups in the society. In other words, the AKP tried to let sleeping dogs lie after what had happened to the WP and its Islamic discourse.

After its 2002 election victory, the AKP was entirely silent on the demands of the conservatives with regards to the headscarf and vocational training issues. The primary emphasis was on the “democratic” character of the Turkish state and its consolidation through the EU membership.

However, that door also closed for the AKP after a series of “wrong” decisions on the EU side. First, the European Court of Human Rights approved the closure of the Welfare Party. Next, the EU strongly rejected the AKP’s insistence on accepting adultery as a crime. Consequently, a decision by European Court of Human Rights in 2005 sealed the deal for the headscarf issue and puzzled the AKP on its stance towards the EU membership. In a case against the Turkish state, the Court found the Turkish state not guilty for banning the headscarf in public spaces (especially in universities), and declared that secularism was essential for maintaining the democratic system in Turkey⁷⁵. This decision unsurprisingly disappointed the leadership of the AKP. Bulent Arinc, a prominent party leader and then the President of National Assembly, was

⁷⁴ <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/erdogan-karamanda-hakla-bulustu-laikligi-her-inancin-guvencisi-olarak-goruy/4173>

⁷⁵ <http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=237352>
<http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=169646>

sure that the next president of Turkey will allow headscarf in Cankaya⁷⁶ (the city of residence for Presidents), while Abdullah Gul, another prominent figure in the AKP as former PM opposed the decision stating “Prohibitions honors no one⁷⁷.” However, the AKP continued to play its “patience” card with the conservative constituency regarding the headscarf and vocational schools problems.

It was not until the repulse of the military with an election victory in 2007 that the Party leadership changed their stance towards these issues and admitted during the controversial Constitution amendments of 2008 that they had been patient for the last five years regarding the headscarf issue, and now was the time to solve it since there was a convention between institutions in addition to the societal convention⁷⁸.

5.5.LIBERALS

There has always been a group of intellectuals from both right and left of the ideological spectrum that –despite the iron fist of the state- consistently denounced the violation of human rights by Turkish state. These liberals demanded an immediate change in state’s attitude emphasizing that torture; death under custody, missing people (mostly under detention), murders whose perpetrators are unknown had become a common practice throughout 1980s and 1990s. These liberals mostly consisted of university students, academicians, journalists, intellectuals, human right NGOss, artists, relatives of the victims, etc.

Providing a voter base that is not affiliated with any existing systemic party, the liberals longed for a competent government that would punish the perpetrators of atrocities, expand

⁷⁶ <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=169646>

⁷⁷ <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=169646>

⁷⁸ “Erdogan: Turban icin 5 yil sabrettim.”

http://haber.gazetevatan.com/Turban_icin_5_yil_sabrettim_162536_9/162536/9/Haber

democratic rights, respect the rule of law and human rights, and transform the garrison state of 1980s and 1990s into a modern democracy.

5.5.1. *THE WELFARE'S RELATION WITH LIBERALS:*

The WP was hardly suited for challenging the century-long state security ideology and filling human rights and democracy gap. First of all, the Party was dedicated to demonizing the West and all Western institutions, including human rights and democracy. One of his party group speeches, Erbakan even contended that The West was trying to tear apart the territorial integrity of Turkey by provoking the imperialist agenda under the disguise of democracy and human rights⁷⁹.

Second, the WP supported this discourse with its policies towards the people who demanded more democracy and human rights, as well as punishment of the perpetrators of past atrocities. In fact, the Party maintained the old security-centric state ideology after coming to power. For example, influenced by the mothers of the Plaza del Mayo, in the midst of 1995 mothers of disappeared started a civil disobedience initiative that entailed convening in Galatasaray Square (Istanbul) every Saturday. Their primary objective was to create a public opinion and opposition against the disappearances under detention and murders whose perpetrators are unknown, learn about the fate of their children, and ask for the punishment of perpetrators. The group received a substantial support from journalists, some sensible MPs, students, academics and some segments of the public. (Kocali, 2004). Starting from the summer of 1996, which happened to be the period of WP and True Path Party coalition government, the

⁷⁹ Turkish National Assembly Archive

police began using force against the Saturday Mothers. Arrests, interrogations, police brutality, etc. used to prevent the group from convening in Galatasaray Square (Kocali, 2004).

Another example of the WP's contempt and ridicule against the demands of liberals showed itself during the protests of November 1996. One of the biggest scandals of Turkey was surfaced after a car accident in the small city of Susurluk, Balikesir. The victims of the accident included the deputy chief of the Istanbul police, a parliament deputy from a powerful Kurdish clan, and the leader of a mafiatric organization who was on Interpol's red list. In other words, the accident revealed that most of the murders in the Kurdish regions, as well as the drug trafficking, had taken place in the hands of the state itself.

Not surprisingly, several demonstrations were organized in protest against the corruption and illegal activities uncovered by the investigations. A popular nation-wide event was held to protest the state mafia relations. Participants all around the country turned off the lights for a minute every night to show their discontent. Later, this protest evolved into a protest against the Welfare Party and its reactionary agenda. Nevertheless, instead of investigating the incident properly, and punishing people who were involved, Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan called them "parasites and conspirators...who have nothing to do apart from intrigue." Minister of Justice, Sevkettin Kazan, even implied that these protestors were playing sexual games, including incest relations⁸⁰.

5.5.2. *THE AKP'S RELATION WITH LIBERALS:*

In its Party Program, the AKP gave assurances to the liberals seeking democracy and respect for human rights with a number of objectives⁸¹, some of which are:

⁸⁰ <http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/?hn=329370>

⁸¹ <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum>

- “The fundamental human rights and freedoms are acquisitions obtained by humanity after struggles lasting for centuries. The level of these freedoms is an indicator of being a civilized society. It is also the expectation of our society to see Turkey, which is part of the civilized world, to be brought in the area of fundamental rights and freedoms to a position that it deserves. Therefore, steps must be taken because our people deserve these rights and freedoms, rather than because international institutions want them to be taken.
- Standards in the area of human rights contained in the international agreements to which Turkey is a party, especially in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, Paris Charter and Helsinki Final Act shall be put into force.
- Practices such as torture, death under custody, missing people, murders whose perpetrators are unknown, which are unacceptable in a democracy. State of law shall be seriously prosecuted, transparency shall be ensured. Complaints of all citizens in this subject shall be considered, the necessary arrangements shall be made to provide deterrence, and those responsible shall not go without punishment.”

In addition The AKP recognized Kurdish identity and its rights, promoted the freedom of religion and consciousness, embraced the EU and the Copenhagen criteria that institutionalized human rights and the rule of law. The Party also emphasized its commitment to democracy numerous times, was eager to solve problems through societal convention, aimed at limiting the role of the military in politics, and presented secularism as a guarantor rather than an obstacle to all religious freedom. These policies and promises appealed to the democrat group seeking change.

6. DEPENDENT VARIABLE: THE STRUGGLE

6.1. THE WELFARE PARTY AND THE FEBRUARY 28 PROCESS

6 March 1996 Even though Erbakan's Welfare Party won the 1995 election with a 21.7% vote share, President Suleyman Demirel gave the duty of government formation to another party with 19.65% vote share contrary to the tradition. The leader of ANAVATAN Mesut Yilmaz managed to convince his biggest rival and mortal enemy Tansu Ciller, the head of the True Path Party, to form a coalition (ANAYOL) so that the rule of the Welfare could be prevented.

March-April 1996 The Welfare Party asked for a parliament interrogation for Tansu Ciller, claiming that she had indulged in corruption during the privatization of TOFAS and TEDAS, and requested a resolution of her assets.

14 May 1996 Due to the claims of the Welfare Party that the vote of confidence for ANAYOL coalition was against the relevant provisions of the Constitution, the Constitutional Court annulled the ANAYOL government.

25 May 1996 Erbakan warned Mesut Yilmaz through the media that if Yilmaz did not return the unearned PM chair, they would have to force him out of power by force.

June 1996 Erbakan announced, "Anyone who gets into a coalition with the WP will become as innocent as a baby," and guaranteed Ciller that all accusations would be dropped, in that case.

29 June 1996 Ciller's DYP got into a coalition with Erbakan's WP and formed 54th Government of Turkish Republic.

- Hurriyet News: Muslims in Power

- President Suleyman Demirel: Nobody can play with the state. I will never ever let it happen⁸².
- Emin Colasan, a prominent columnist in Hurriyet newspaper: We feel sick. The farce comedy begins. (Referring to the rule of the WP in his articles)

6 October 1996 Erbakan pays his last visit to Libya in a tour including Iran, Nigeria, and Egypt.

- Hurriyet: What impudence!
- Sabah: Scandal in Cairo!
- Hurriyet: The millet (society) will bring you to the court!
- Bulent Ecevit (former leader of the CHP and the head of the Democratic Leftist Party –DSP): This trip of shame shall not be recorded in official state archives.
- Tansu Ciller: Qaddafi once again made a historic mistake. In response to the statements of a desert Bedouin, we would bang our fist on the table.
- Deniz Baykal (the leader of the CHP): In these past 70 years, Turkish Republic has had 53 prime ministers, and none of them have been insulted as Erbakan did during his Libya visit. It did not happen. It could not, cannot and must not occur!

3 November 1996 Susurluk scandal

- Ciller: The people who shoot and who get shot for the state are equally honorable. (Defending the mafia-state relations)

Late 1996 The headlines were all about Mehmet Gunduz, the leader of Aczmendiler (a Sufi order), and the sex scandals he got involved. Allegedly Gunduz took advantage of his position and forced a 24-year-old disciple into a sexual relationship. (Only after years, the

⁸² <http://www.demokratakademi.com/component/content/article/44-manet/268-kapsaml-bir-28-ubat-analizibin-yla-bedel-guenler.html>

disciple accepted that everything was a part of a plot that designed to defame the Welfare Party by showing the real character of the Sufi orders it was closely connected to.)

- Deniz Baykal (CHP): It is the WP government that encourages this kind of behavior and this type of people.

1-28 February 1997 "Sürekli Aydınlik İçin Bir Dakika Karanlık" ("One minute's darkness for the sake of perpetual light" protests aroused all over the country, which started as a protest against the covering of Susurluk scandals and evolved into a secular protest against the WP.)

- Erbakan: These protestors are nothing but "parasites and conspirators...who have nothing to do apart from intrigue.

Early 1997 Erbakan pronounced that an ostentatious mosque would be built at the heart of the Taksim Square

- Erbakan (regarding the debates and opposition on the issue): When we ask a villager in an Anatolian city his opinion about the mosque project, he would only say "May God bless you!" So then, who are you to oppose?

9 January 1997 The Government issued a regulation and granted the military officials the right to intervene in political processes in provinces and municipalities. Accordingly military representatives were assigned to civil institutions such as the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTUK), The Council of Higher Education (YOK), and The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT).

11 January 1997 Erbakan hosted an iftar dinner in the official Prime Minister's housing in Cankaya. The guest comprised of the leaders of the Sufi orders (Tariqah) in Turkey. It was the

first time in the history of the Republic that the very Sufi leaders that the Kemalist state declared war in 1923 were hosted in an official state building by the head of the Turkish government.

- Hurriyet: The Sultane of the Tariqahs
- Bulent Ecevit (the leader of the DSP and former head of the CHP): In a period in which the legitimacy of some tariqahs is being questioned, this iftar gave the impression that the state itself has been protecting them.

22 January 1997 High-rank military officials hold a summit in Golcuk and discussed the threat of “irtica” (reactionary movements) governing the country.

30 January 1997 Sincan mayor, a member of the Welfare Party, organized the Jerusalem Night celebrations. At this rally, under the posters of the leaders of Hamas and Hizbullah, Sincan Mayor Bekir Yildiz and the Iranian Ambassador to Ankara, Mohammad Baghari, warned some powers in Turkish society about the anger of Muslims. After this event, Sincan Mayor Bekir Yildiz was put in prison.

- Bulent Ecevit (the leader of the DSP and former head of the CHP): We are getting closer to a threat called “the Welfare Party” each day.
- A high-rank military official: Sincan incident is a shame, a disgrace. Turkey is not Iran. The Turkish state is strictly attached to secularism. I condemn this incident with hatred and curse.
- Necmettin Erbakan: Turkey is a secular country. Nobody has a problem with that. The problem is that some people want to apply secularism as the enemy of religion. To ring the alarm bells for the regime just because some people went somewhere and hanged a picture by mistake is just ridiculous.

31 January 1997 Erbakan granted extraordinary rights to the Secretary of the National Security Council. By virtue of these rights, the “Western Study Group⁸³” was formed by the Turkish military under the auspices of the Office of Chief of Staff in order to "monitor Islamist sympathizers in the civil service and other state organs." Composed of "intelligence experts," the group reportedly has numerous "sub-departments" that investigate "fundamentalists' activities and potential threats from radical Islamists throughout the country and abroad," including various levels of government, the local administration of provinces and towns, the military, "pro-Islamist media outlets," and "pro-Islamist persons-controlled schools, and universities⁸⁴"

As part of its activities, the Western Working Group also monitored the Turkish press and there is "evidence that the highest levels of the Turkish military have exerted pressure on editors concerning content and employment of certain journalists with suspected Islamist sympathies⁸⁵"

- Necmettin Erbakan: They are trying to show our military as an enemy of the religion. Never. You will never achieve this goal.
- Minister of National Security (A member of the Tansu Ciller’s DYP): There is distrust towards the Welfare Party with regards to its stance towards the main principles of the Republic. I must admit that I do not trust them either.

Early February 1997 The military initiated a series of briefings on the threat of reactionary movements and invited secular mainstream media, judges, prosecutors, and governors.

Early February 1997 A series of videotape scandals, which was serviced to the media by some mystery hands, shocked the country for months. One of the early recordings belonged to

⁸³ Also referred to as Western Working Group, or in Turkish Bati Calisma Grubu (BCG).

⁸⁴ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3df4beb518.html>

⁸⁵ <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3df4beb518.html>

Sukru Karatepe, a member of the WP and the mayor of Kayseri (a conservative city in central Anatolia): Do not look at my modern outfit and come to the conclusion that I am a secular person. We as PMs, MP, or mayors have some obligations. Yet, you as ordinary Muslims shall nurse and preserve the hatred and vengefulness you feel inside until our day comes. This system will surely be changed.

- Sevki Yilmaz (A prominent member of the Welfare Party, and a member of the parliament): If you love Allah, if you love Prophet Mohammad, do not follow the demons of Selanik (referring to Ataturk as Selanik was his birth place).If you attempt to close the vocational school during the rule of the WP, blood would spill. Turkey would be worse than Algeria.
- Hasan Huseyin Ceylan (a prominent member of the WP): Kemalism becomes an incredible injustice wheel. They state “It is more preferable to be a PKK militant than a member of reactionary movements.” You cannot solve the problem with this mentality. Do you want a solution? It is in Shariah.

4 February 1997 People living in Sincan woke up in the middle of the night to the noise of 20 tanks and 15 armored cars, passing through the Sincan streets.

- Turkish army: The tanks were transferring through Sincan for exercise.
- Tansu Ciller (the leader of DYP and coalition partner): Tactlessness. We cannot overlook what has happened in Sincan. Nor can we ignore what has happened there. If anyone is willing to harm the character of this state (referring to democracy), we will show him his place.
- Cevik Bir (Chief of Staff): During a press meeting in Washington, he announced that the army did alignment and balancing to Turkish democracy in Sincan.

5 February 1997 President Suleyman Demirel sent PM Necmettin Erbakan a letter demanding for an “immediate investigation on the reactionary elements in municipalities.

9 February 1997 Ismail Hakki Karadayi (The Chief of Staff): Turkish army has all the determination in the course of protecting the indivisible integrity of the secular and democratic Turkish Republic.

9 February 1997 Suleyman Demirel (President): Taking advantage of sacred religious values and using them for political purposes is both a sin and a crime.

11 February 1997 Women marched against the Shariah in Ankara.

14 February 1997 Minister of Justice Sevket Kazan paid a visit to the former Sincan Mayor, who was in prison. This visit instigated the opposition to the WP even more as it gave the impression that the government approved what had happened in Sincan even though they claimed otherwise.

17 February 1997 In a party meeting, Tansu Ciller (DYP) announced that she was not happy with the latest actions of the WP and added that she would warn Erbakan on the issue.

24 February 1997 Guven Erkaya (First Commander of the Marine Corps and a prominent member of the National Security Council): Political reaction is a more dangerous threat than PKK.

28 February 1997 The National Security Council was assembled. The military wing of the NSC demanded the issuing of a NSC decision consisted of 18 articles, some of which stated that:

1. “Compulsory education will be immediately extended to 8 years. [The measure was aimed at abolishing the secondary part of the vocational schools (IHLs)].

2. All Quran courses will be linked to the Presidency of Religious Affairs. [The measure was aimed to prevent the religious education in early ages.]
3. All activities of Sufi orders (Tariqahs) will be terminated.
4. The dressing code will be applied without any concessions. [Referring to the headscarf issue]
5. Restrictions will be imposed on green capital. [Referring to MUSIAD members⁸⁶”

Erbakan refrained from open confrontation with the military officials during the meeting and behaved in a more compromised manner. Yet, he refused to sign the final document and asked for further discussion on the stated issues. And more interestingly, although Erbakan did not sign the document, the final draft of the 28 February NSC was passed out to the major media organs by the military.

- Milliyet (a mainstream secular newspaper): Fine-tuning to the regime
- Cumhuriyet (a mainstream secular newspaper close to CHP): The WP makes difficulties
- Tansu Ciller: Nobody should expect democracy to be interrupted. Turkish military is the guardian of our democracy, and we are the warranty of secularism. The WP should not take advantage of religious values and use them for political purposes.
- The Secretariat of the NSC: Sanctions will be imposed if the measures are not implemented.

Erbakan, on the other hand, visited other party leaders during this period and sought for support regarding the NSC decisions. His efforts were fruitless.

⁸⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBHbFSFV8rU&feature=related>

- Mesut Yilmaz (The leader of the ANAVATAN): I told Erbakan that the interlocutor of your concerns was the NSC, not ANAVATAN party. If you were not happy with the final decisions, you should have told so during the NSC meeting.
- Bulent Ecevit: If you cannot accept this state with its fundamental principles such as secularism and democracy at this time, you will have to take the risk of being apart from the government for a while.
- The Secretary General of the NSC: We are not in accordance with Erbakan.
- Erbakan: The media is making up stories regarding the relationship between the WP and the military.
- A number of NGOs (including the workers' unions) gave their support to the NSC decisions.
- Tansu Ciller: The measures will undoubtedly be implemented.

5 March 1997 Erbakan finally signed the NSC decisions of 28 February.

March-April-June 1997 The military briefings on political reaction increased.

21 May 1997 The Attorney-general of the Supreme Court of Appeals commenced a closure case against the Welfare Party claiming that the Party became the focus of the reactionary movements. The Attorney General described the members of the WP as “blood-sucking vampires” and “malign tumors,” and used the statements of Sukru Karatepe, Sevki Yilmaz, and Hasan Huseyin Ceylan as evidence. It was the first closure case commenced against the governing party.

7 June 1997 The General Staff put an embargo on the firms that were accused of being involved in reactionary movements by the military.

10 June 1997 It was announced during a briefing “Turkish army [was] determined to prevent any domestic or foreign enemy by military force based on its duties on the Article 35 of the Inner Service Act of the Turkish Armed Forces.” Among the audience was the judges and prosecutors of the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court of Appeals, and the Council of State.

18 June 1997 Due to the several resignations from his coalition partner DYP, Erbakan had to resign from his post. While announcing his resignation, Erbakan emphasized that his motive for this declaration was to convey the PM chair to Tansu Ciller, his coalition partner.

19 June 1997 Instead of fulfilling the wishes of Erbakan, President Suleyman Demirel asked Mesut Yilmaz, who did not have a parliamentary majority, to form the new government.

30 June 1997 Yilmaz formed the ANASOL-D government with Bulent Ecevit’s DSP, Husamettin Ozkan’s DTP (Democratic Turkey Party).

16 Ocak 1998 the Constitutional Court closed The Welfare Party and banned the leader cadre of the WP from politics for five years.

6.2. THE AKP AND THE 27 APRIL MILITARY MEMORANDUM

22 April 1998 Tayyip Erdogan had to a ten-month prison sentence (of which he served six months) for reciting a poem in Siirt in December 1997. The poem was regarded as an incitement to commit religious or racial hatred under Article 312/2 of the Turkish Penal Code. It included verses translated as "The mosques are our barracks, the domes our helmets, the minarets our bayonets and the faithful our soldiers...." The conviction also stipulated a political ban, which prevented him from participating in parliamentary elections.

14 August 2001 The Justice and Development Party was established by the reformist wing of the former Welfare cadres.

June 2002 Bulent Ecevit (PM of the coalition government of DSP-MHP-ANAP): Early elections could create a regime problem.

12 November 2002 Bulent Ecevit: A future AKP government will cause problems for the secular democratic regime.

12 May 2002 An interrogation was initiated on the assets of Erdogan.

23 October 2002 The Attorney-General of the Supreme Court of Appeals commenced a closure case against the AKP on the basis that “Due to his political ban, Erdogan could not be the leader of the AKP.”

- Erdogan: Turkish democracy was hurt once more.

22 November 2002 The AKP won a landslide victory in 2002 general elections with 34.28% vote share.

- TUSIAD: The AKP is an opportunity for economic and political stability and for economic and social transformation that the country had been longing for.

25 June 2003 Deniz Baykal stated that the AKP might have other motives under the EU membership veil.

19 July 2003 The sixth reform package, which abolished article 8 of Anti-Terror Law and allowed for broadcasting in languages and dialects other than Turkish, was introduced.

- Hilmi Ozkok (The Chief of Staff): We have some concerns. The package should be discussed at NSC first. Broadcasting in languages other than Turkish is separatism, and abolishment of article 8 of Anti-Terror Law will encourage terrorists.
- An anonymous military official to Hurriyet: The time of watching the government is over. We are extremely uncomfortable.

- Cumhuriyet: Young military officials are nervous. (Referring to a well-known phrase of 27 May 1960 military coup)
- 22 May 2003 Milliyet (newspaper): Contending that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Kemalism is an obstacle to Turkey's EU membership means that independent, democratic, secular, and unitary Turkey is an obstacle to EU accession.
- Dengir Mir Mehmet Fırat (Vice President of the AKP group in the parliament): I do not believe that the Secretary of the NSC has the authority to warn the government. (Referring to the earlier demands of the military to discuss the issue at the NSC)
- After the completion of the reform package, the Government sent it to the President Ahmet Necdet Sezer for approval. The President instead returned the package to the Parliament for further discussion and had to sign it after the second round.

7 August 2003 The seventh reform package was put into effect. The package brought about significant changes concerning the role of the National Security Council. "As a result of this reform, the NSC became an advisory board responsible to the prime minister and its secretary-general was divested of his executive and supervisory powers," (Uğur & Yankaya, 2008, p.591).

3 November 2003 The government finished working on a resolution, which granted more autonomy to local administration via decentralization⁸⁷. Before presenting the resolution to the Parliament, the AKP government asked for the opinion of the military and the President on the reform. The resolution was brought to the Parliament only after all the changes asked for incorporated into the text.

⁸⁷ Radikal, 3.11.2003

- The CHP: Demanded the immediate withdrawal of the resolution, which they claimed, were degrading the fundamental principles of the Republic⁸⁸.

5 November 2003 The European Commission published its regular progress report on Turkey's performance regarding the Copenhagen criteria. The Commission welcomed the reforms, but also highlighted the weaknesses in the implementation.

28 March 2004 The AKP increased its vote share from 34.28% to 41.67% and declared another victory in the 2004 local elections.

24 April 2004 After Rauf Denktas, the President of Northern Cyprus, was finally persuaded the Cyprus referendum based on Annan Plan took place. The referendum resulted in the majority Greek Cypriot population voting down the UN Plan (75.38% against), whereas the minority Turkish Cypriot population (including the settlers from Turkey who outnumbered them) voted for the Plan (64.91% in favor). The controversy over the Annan Plan and the future of the Cyprus issue was the topic of the conversation all over Turkey.

- Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Insisting on a deadlock is not a solution. (Referring to the official state policy of Turkey and Northern Cyprus, that applies “no solution – preserving the status quo” as the solution to the Cyprus problem.”
- Deniz Baykal (the leader of the CHP): Cyprus no more. If the plan becomes active, the Turkish side of the island will become Greek in 20 years. Who in the world is Erdogan trying to make up to?
- Hilmi Ozkok (The Chief of Staff): Cyprus is not only about Turkic Cypriots. Turkey's security is at stake.

⁸⁸ Hurriyet, 15.01.2004

- Tuncay Ozilhan (The President of TUSIAD): The solution of the Cyprus problem should be based on Annan plan.
- Ali Bayramoglu (The President of MUSIAD): Annan Plan is not right for the Northern Cyprus. Turkey is using Anna Plan to be able to get into the EU.

7 May 2004 The AKP government responded with additional reforms, which addressed a number of issues such as “human rights, annulment of remaining death penalty provisions, strengthening the gender equality, broadening the freedom of press, abolishment of the State Security Courts, and establishment the supremacy of international agreements over national legislation in the area of fundamental freedoms,” (Ugur & Yankaya, 2008, p.592).

14 July 2004 The AKP government introduced the eight-reform package, which replaced the military representatives in civilian bodies such as the RTUK, YOK and TRT with civilians.

- Pekin Baran (Vice President of TUSIAD): AKP had demonstrated an astonishing performance. Contrary to the common expectations, they did not take any wrong steps informed either by their Islamic identity or by their economic preferences.

September 2004 During the discussions of reform in the Turkish Penalty Code, the AKP government included a clause in the draft bill to criminalize adultery, which only to be pulled back after drawing heavy oppositions.

- Erdogan: The bill is necessary for gender equity and is meant to protect wives from cheating husbands.
- Günter Verheugen, (European commissioner for enlargement): This bill will tarnish Turkey’s image.
- Domestic media repeatedly reported the foreign reactions.

- Hurriyet: The course of the incidents is becoming scary⁸⁹.
- Deniz Baykal: The clause will absolutely harm the unity of the family. What will happen to those who are living in Anatolia with a religious marriage?
- CHP: Even if the gender equity is sustained in this clause, accepting adultery as a criminal act means going backward. Turkey abolished such clauses from its codes eight years ago.
- TUSIAD: Adultery is a moral problem, not a criminal one.
- MUSIAD: Adultery must be a crime.

22 October 2004 The Human Rights Commission, responsible to the office of Prime Minister published a minority report and offered “Turkiyeli (from Turkey)” as an alternative supra nationality to “Turk.”

- Deniz Baykal: Initiating a discussion on the borders of Turkey that were drawn with the Lausanne Agreement and creating artificial minorities are fruitless attempts⁹⁰.
- The Deputy Chief of Staff: Initiating a discussion on the unitary of Turkish state cannot be accepted by the Turkish army⁹¹.
- President Ahmet Necdet Sezer: In a unitary state, nation, country and sovereignty cannot be divided. The founding element of Turkish Republic is single , and it is Turks⁹².
- The AKP: An intellectual provocation⁹³. The government did not ask for such a report.

7 December 2004 The Municipality Law 5272 entered into force. The law granted the municipalities with the authority to aggregate alcohol-serving restaurant in a district outside the

⁸⁹ <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2004/09/13/521200.asp>

⁹⁰ Radikal, 29.11.2004

⁹¹ Milliyet, 03.11.2004

⁹² Radikal, 29.10.2004

⁹³ Radikal, 19.11.2004

public sphere. In order to clear away the confusion, Ministry of Internal Affairs issued a circular and confirmed the Law 5272 on 17 December 2005.

- Deniz Baykal: Prohibiting alcohol is the first step towards becoming the next Taliban or the Saudi Arabia⁹⁴.
- Hurriyet: Alcohol Ghetto⁹⁵
- Erdogan: There is no such thing as alcohol prohibition. We consider the issue in terms of public health.

12 August 2005 In a historic meeting in Diyarbakir, Erdogan announced that there is a “Kurdish problem” in the country, and the only solution to this problem was more democracy. It was not confined to a limited group of people. It was the problem of all.⁹⁶

27 November 2005 During a meeting in Siirt, Erdogan stated that Turkey is a mosaic, which consists of different parts. In a country full of sub-nationalities, Turkish citizenship is the supra nationality of all.

- Deniz Baykal: You must have your peace with the phrase “Turkish nation.” You must not be ashamed of using the word Turk.

Early May 2006 Cumhuriyet (which literally means “the Republic”) newspaper launched a campaign for the upcoming presidential elections on 16 May 2007. The campaign consisted of multiple short videos and newspaper ads on the “threat” Turkey faced. Some of the campaign slogans were “Are you aware of the danger?” “On 16 May, clocks will be put 100 years back,”

⁹⁴ <http://haber.mynet.com/baykaldan-icki-yasagi-tepkisi-152353-politika/>

⁹⁵ http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/3493506_p.asp

⁹⁶ Sabah, 12.08.2005

“Women of Republic are being destroyed,” and at the end of each video, the newspaper demanded from the society to protect their Republic⁹⁷.

5 and 11 May 2006 There was a bomb attack to Cumhuriyet newspaper, which is known for its secular stance and closeness to the CHP.

17 May 2006 There was an armed attack on the Council of State, which was famous for its decisions on the headscarf issue. It was reported that during the attack, the aggressor screamed, “Allah is great! (Allahuekber),” and warned that more attacks would follow⁹⁸.

- On May 18th, a group marched to Anitkabir (The mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk). The group consisted of members of the Constitutional Court, Council of State, Supreme Court of Appeals, Chamber of Accounts, Courts of Appeals for the Armed Forces, and Supreme Administrative Court for the Armed Forces as well as representatives of Turkish Bar Association, prosecutors, university rectors, and academicians. The slogan of the group was “Turkey is secular and will remain so.”
- President Ahmet Necdet Sezer: The attack is a black mark in Turkish history. These attackers are against the values and institutions that are guarantors of an independent, free and modern lifestyle. They will never reach their goals⁹⁹.
- The AKP: It is obviously a provocation.
- Erdogan: I curse the attack. It was aimed at the institutions of the Republic as a whole.
- Deniz Baykal: It is not an individual payoff. Our constitution was at target. The responsibility of the government is absolute.
- Hilmi Ozkok (The Chief of Staff): As the representative of the military forces, I condemn this nefarious attack.

⁹⁷ <http://en.vidivodo.com/video/cumhuriyetinize-sahip-cikin/280789>

⁹⁸ Hurriyet, 17.05.2006

⁹⁹ <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/373524.asp>

Early April 2007 It was announced that the birthday of Prophet Mohammad (Kutlu Dogum) (which is accepted as a sacred day by Muslims) would be celebrated on April 23rd. April 23rd was also the day when the Turkish National Great Assembly was founded, and Ataturk created the national celebration for the National Sovereignty and Children's Day.

- Cumhuriyet: The AKP government ordered the presidents (of Ministry of National Education) to be at present at Kutlu Dogum celebrations¹⁰⁰. (Later, a conservative newspaper –Yenisafak- proved that Cumhuriyet changed the original document and published the fake one¹⁰¹.)
- Hurriyet: April 23rd Provocations. A Quran recitement competition will be held at the very same gymnasium that has been used for the April 23rd celebrations for years¹⁰².
- Cumhuriyet: Kutlu Dogum week, which has been celebrated since 1989, has been turned into a show¹⁰³.
- Hurriyet: Kutlu Dogum is purposely being celebrated on April 23rd. The purpose is to make small children and student efface the terms such as national sovereignty, patriotism and being Turkish and rather learn religious concepts¹⁰⁴.

11 April 2007 Deniz Baykal: I believe that Prime Minister Erdogan will break the good news that he is not going to stand as a candidate in the presidential elections.

12 April 2007 The Chief of Staff Yasar Buyukanit shared his opinions on the upcoming presidential election and stated “After the elections, I hope a president who is loyal

¹⁰⁰ Cumhuriyet, 17.05.2007

¹⁰¹ Yenisafak, 30 April 2007

¹⁰² Hurriyet, 19 April 2007

¹⁰³ Cumhuriyet, 24 April 2007

¹⁰⁴ Hurriyet, 29 April 2007

-not only in discourse but also in heart -to the fundamental principles of the republic, the unitary, secular and democratic structure of the state will be elected

14 April 2007 President Ahmet Necdet Sezer (during his speech in the military academy): Islamic fundamentalist threat Turkey faces today is higher than ever.

14 April 2007 -13 May 2007 “Society became polarized regarding the issue, and meetings were held in major cities with the participation of hundreds of thousands, mostly claiming to protect secular political structure,” (Warhola & Bezci, 2010).

18 April 2007 Arzuhan Yalcindag (The president of TUSIAD): I feel that Erdogan will not stand as a candidate in the presidential election.

24 April 2007 Erdogan announced in a group meeting that AKP’s candidate for presidential elections would be Abdullah Gul¹⁰⁵. Gul’s wife was wearing a headscarf, and this fact spurred a huge debate. Headscarf in Cankaya was just unacceptable¹⁰⁶.

27 April 2007 The AKP failed to achieve a majority of 367, and Gul's candidacy failed in the first round despite a majority of those present voting in favor (361 votes). A majority of 367, on the other hand, was not a constitutional requirement¹⁰⁷. Yet, the CHP insisted on the 367 and applied to the Constitutional Court for the annulment of the first round of the presidential election. The Court was to reach a decision during the weekend.

27 April 2007 Later in the evening, Turkish Armed Forces released a statement in its website warning that "...The problem that emerged in the presidential election process is focused on arguments over secularism. Turkish Armed Forces are concerned about the recent situation. ... the Turkish Armed Forces are a party in these arguments and remains the absolute defender of secularism..."

¹⁰⁵ <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/417188.asp>

¹⁰⁶ Hurriyet, 29 April 2007

¹⁰⁷ See the statements of professors studying constitutional law at Zaman, 28 April 2007

28 April 2007 Cemil Cicek (The spokesperson of the AKP): “It is unthinkable that in a state governed by the rule of law, the Turkish General Staff (TGS), which is as an institution under the Prime Minister, would speak against the government. The TGS is an institution under civilian governmental command, and its duties and responsibilities are defined by the constitution. According to our Constitution, the Chief of Staff is responsible to the Prime Minister in terms of his stated duties and authorities” (Warhola & Bezci, 2010).

- Mustafa Ozyurek (The spokesperson of the CHP): This is surely a military memorandum. The government should act accordingly.
- Onur Oymen (Vice President of the CHP): We 100% share the military’s views. We will not surrender Turkey to the enemies of Ataturk.
- Onder Sav (The Secretary of the CHP): It is time to be happy for us! It is time to be happy for Turkey!
- Arzuhan Yalcindag (The President of TUSIAD): General elections must be held immediately in order to protect secularism and democracy.
- Liberals: Done right before the presidential election, statements of Turkish General Staff is not innocent.
- MUSIAD was one of the first groups to oppose the e-memorandum¹⁰⁸.
- **28 April 2007** Caglayan Republic protest was held.
- Cumhuriyet: This is civil memorandum¹⁰⁹.
- Vatan: And this is the civil memorandum¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁸ http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=0CHMQFjAD&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.birgun.net%2Factuals_index.php%3Fnews_code%3D1335691369%26day%3D29%26month%3D04%26year%3D2012&ei=M5UOUOHWHsbd0QHQ-4GQCw&usg=AFQjCNHjrzXv0fUjDqiogs87PVLJVNZSYg&sig2=PWtA8KndGN7r7JVJt6I4xQ

¹⁰⁹ Cumhuriyet, 28 April 2007

¹¹⁰ Vatan, 28 April 2007

- Hurriyet: The military has fulfilled the first stage of its duties. Initiating the 27 April process comforted millions¹¹¹.
- Hurriyet: Those who wish to have a modern and civilized lifestyle are trying to block those who wish to return back to Dark Ages¹¹².
- Hurriyet: It was the duty of Turkish General Staff to say “no!” to what was happening¹¹³.
- Zaman (a prominent conservative newspaper): It is apparently a democracy quiz for Turkey.

29 April 2007, Deniz Baykal There will be clashes if the Constitutional Court decides the unconstitutionality of the majority 367.

1 May 2007 The Constitutional Court announced its decision on the majority of 367 and supported the CHP stance.

1 May 2007 The AKP government announced that early elections would be held immediately.

11 May 2007 The Parliament accepted the constitutional amendment that cleared the path for presidential elections via referendum.

- Deniz Baykal: The amendment is an example of absolute irresponsibility.
- Tayyip Erdogan: How can those who see the election of the Turkish president by popular vote as a problem for the regime ask votes from the people?

¹¹¹ Hurriyet, 28 April 2007

¹¹² Hurriyet, 28 April 2007

¹¹³ Hurriyet, 30 April 2007

22 July 2007 The early elections, which had a turnout rate of 84.24%, resulted in yet another landslide victory of the AKP. The vote share of the Party in the Kurdish region also increased from 32.2% to 54.6%¹¹⁴.

- Abdullah Gul: The election results are obviously a message regarding the presidential elections.

28 August 2007 In the third round of the election, Abdullah Gul was elected president by the Parliament with 337 votes.

7. CONCLUSION

While contemporary research on the political success in semi-democratic countries focuses primarily on the election victories, the findings of this study indicates that election success may change governments, but does not necessarily change the existing power structure. Therefore, with a focus on the governments of Welfare Party and the Justice and Development Party of Turkey, this study argues that in addition to election victories, shifting the balance of power in one's favor is also a significant aspect of the process, namely reining in the power of the authoritarian structures.

The findings of this study indicate that discourse plays a significant role. In the same line with the studies of Bermeo (1992) and Cavdar (2006); my findings suggest that the usage of a more moderate, inclusive and compromiser language helps political parties to appeal different segments of the society. On the other hand, exclusive and radical discourses estrange some of the groups in the society and create a perception of threat among those that do not share the same values with the political party. For example, Welfare Party's insistence on Islam as the sole

¹¹⁴ Ali Bulac, Kurt Secmenin Oylari <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=569630>

reference point for its political agenda and its hatred toward the West hindered its relationship with some of the most dominant power centers in the Turkish society, such as TUSIAD. At the same time, such attitude towards the West in addition to the Party's stance on secularism created were perceived as a threat to the regime by Kemalist state structure and moderate citizens.

On the other hand, the findings also suggest that appealing to a group with a moderate agenda is not sufficient in and of itself. Joel Migdal's (2001) "State in Society" approach, which differs from traditional views on state and its relations with the society, explains this phenomenon with differentiating between power centers in the society and their utility functions. Accordingly, a political party that aims to appeal to a power center should pay attention to its utility function and try to convince the center that it will be incorporated into the utility function of the party. The AKP's group-specific policy strategy is a good example of this coalition building. The Party offered identity recognition and cultural rights to Kurds, EU membership and a stable economy to TUSIAD, promotion of small and medium-sized firms and closer economic and political relations with alternate power centers in global politics to MUSIAD, a solution to the oppression towards Muslim population to conservatives, and a more democratic, human rights oriented country to the liberals. This coalition, in turn, played a significant role in critical junctures when the tension between the Party and Kemalist state structure increased. The power centers in the coalition showed their support for the AKP through ballot boxes, media, and their statements. The Welfare Party, on the other hand, depending solely on conservatives and MUSIAD, lacked the necessary support and had to fight with the Kemalist structure alone.

Third, the findings suggest that a source of legitimacy –either domestic or foreign- that is accepted by most of the society is important for institutionalization of the change in the balance of power. In Turkish case, this was the EU membership, or specifically the EU conditionality.

Initiated by the Kemalist elites back in 1960s, the EU process granted the AKP with the necessary means to find a scapegoat for radical reforms, which eventually led to limiting the authority of Turkish military on civil institutions. The WP, on the other hand, wanted to make use of Islam, which has been one of the most (perceived) threatening enemies of the Kemalist state besides separatism. In other words, the reference point of the Welfare Party was a threat to the Kemalist state and any policy that refers back to that reference point was used as an opportunity to attack the government, even though the policy was in accordance with the state interests.

As for the limitations of the findings, it should be noted that electronic archives are of limited availability in Turkey, which obstructs reaching the data. A field study on this interesting question might reveal different aspects of the phenomenon that has been the subject of this study. Moreover, this study lumps some of the power centers together and misses the nuances among them. Future research might look deeper into different groups within the conservatives or liberals to be able to assess the political struggle and their relationship with the AKP more accurately.

Finally, the findings of this study have direct implications outside of Turkey. Defeating authoritarian regimes -transition to democracy- has long been debated among scholars of democratization. The sharp -yet smooth- balance of power change in Turkish politics in recent years might shed light onto the path of other illiberal democracies that have a powerful authoritarian actor, or those that have a limited democratic setting. In a region with burgeoning electoral success of Islamist parties in the fall of authoritarian leaders one after another, the AKP experience could also be used as a reference point by the optimists to show that the political agenda of the Islamist parties could be shaped, contained, and transformed by the broad social

coalition they depend to survive, which eventually helps them weaken the authoritarian structures that are strongly rooted in these countries.

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