

The Role and Importance of the Centre-Right Wing Parties in Turkish Politics

A. Yasir EREN

(Ph.D. Candidate, Graduate School of Global Studies, Doshisha University)

Abstract: There is a general opinion in all around the world that normally democracy can improve with left-wing and secular parties. What about the political climate in Turkey? Even in Turkey there had been tradition of social democrats. Usually people think social democrats are representing the democratizations in Turkey. But why it was not realized? Because this is so called social democrats are at the same time elitist. And one of the most problematic point is that they had been always waiting military interventions against islamists. When analyzed in detail, it is obvious that positive contributions were made to democracy during the conservative and centre-right wing parties in Turkey. We aimed to explain this with examples in this study.

Keywords: Centre-Right, Democrat Party, Justice Party, Motherland Party, Turkey

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to understand the Centre-Right Wing Parties' effects on democratization in Turkey. With respect to this issue, Cem Erogul (1990) and Huseyin Cavusoglu (2009) provide some information. Mustafa Albayrak (2014) pursues this study and explains the events with actual and true-life examples. On the other hand, we can say that they have not studied on the subject in general as a centre right wing parties but more specifically. For example, some of them have studied only on Democratic Party, while others have only focussed on the Motherland Party. However, I think that these Centre-Right Wing Parties should be handled and compared at the same time. In my opinion, this is the only way that we can understand the centre-right wing parties' role and importance in Turkish Politics. So, the question posed for this research is; what are the effects of centre-right wing parties on democratization in Turkey? In this context, I analyzed the centre-right wing parties' election bulletins and interviewed with some scholars and journalists. The first chapter covers, Democratic Party and it's role. In the second chapter, through examples and interviews, I will analyze Justice Party. In the next chapter, I will give informations about Motherland Party. In addition to these, there are introduction and conclusion chapters.

Given the fact that most of the Turkish population has conservative values,¹ it will be clear that the centre-rightwing parties have received more votes during the historical process. That is the reason why, after the multiparty political system in Turkey (1946), the symbols of religion and religious discourses started to be voiced in the political arena by leaders. The parties that appeared in this frame in Turkish politics are listed as Democratic Party, Justice Party, and Motherland Party. These political parties have been able to win a large majority of votes in almost every election from 1950 to 1990. That is why I have focused on between these dates in this study. Centre-right politics are politics that lean to the right of the left-right political spectrum, but are closer to the center than other right-wing variants. Generally, it embraces liberal economic views. Centre-right politics can be called conservative, conservative democratic or liberal democratic. When we look at the meaning of the center-right politics, we can clearly see that it has some differences between Europe and Turkey. For instance, in Europe, closeness to the center is measured by nationalism and conservatism based on tradition. In Turkey, however, it is measured by secularism. What distinguishes centre-right and other right parties from each other is their stance against extremities. While centre-right parties are completely closed to extremities, others are parties, which can embody extremities to a certain extent, with more tolerance to radical ideas. Centre-right is to reach a common ground, maintaining balance in everything. Centre-right parties' closeness to the public, combined cultural differences together. Basic elements of centre right are achieving harmony between local values and universal values, and laying bridges, which connect public to the state and political life (Suter, 2004: 53-62). We can put forward the following two striking common points of the parties positioning themselves on the center right spectrum in Turkey: The first one consists of liberal economic policies, respect for the beliefs and values of the society, and nationalism cherished by the center-right parties. The second one is that the success achieved by the center right parties is largely dependent on the leaders of the parties (Cavusoglu, 2009: 277).

II. DEMOCRAT PARTY (1950-1960)

Founded on January 7, 1946 under the leadership of Celal Bayar, Adnan Menderes, Fuat Koprulu and Refik Koraltan, Democratic Party (hereinafter referred to as DP) was based on such beliefs that the political power must depend on the will of the people and superiority of the citizen rights and freedoms over those holding power in their hands (Ahmad, 1994: 28).

The program of the DP all the founders of which were from the Republican People's Party (hereinafter referred to as RPP) was divided into two parts: The first part included general provisions and the second part included governance affairs. The political themes put forward in the first part concentrated on liberalism and democracy. While it was stated in the first article of the program that the DP was established in order to realize a broad and advanced understanding of the democracy in the Republic of Turkey and to ensure that the general politics was carried out with a democratic mindset, the 9th and 10th articles put forward the free and first-degree elections as a way of this (Democrat Party Program, 1946).

The views expressed by the constituent leader of the DP, Celal Bayar, in various occasions allow us to have an idea about the ideological inclination of the party. Bayar drew attention to a direct link between the Western civilization and democracy by stating in a speech he made on March 1948 in the province of Erzincan: *"Today's civilized world has determined democracy to be the best way of governance and cherished it. The works of the world of advanced civilization, which dazzle our eyes and we watch with envy, have come true through democracy. There is no doubt that democracy is the most appropriate administration for human dignity. This means the superiority of the will of the people based on the rights and freedoms of citizens"* (Daily Vatan, 25 March 1948).

DP boycotted the first local administrations elections it entered after its foundation specifying the antidemocratic nature of the legislation and caused a legitimacy problems in the country. Turkey's first-degree, open voting, secret counting and simple-majority elections were held on July 21, 1946. The 1946 elections were very important because they were the first elections of multi-party political life after two unsuccessful attempts earlier. As suspicious as they were, in these elections which were the first attempt for a multi-party political life, RPP managed to obtain 397 deputies while DP obtained 61 and independents 7 ones (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2012: 4-8).

2.1 1950 Elections and Single-Party Government

When people were asked "What is your choice?" in the 1950 elections and they had the opportunity to assert their opinions, they declared that they were not happy with the political status quo. In 1950 elections, Turkish People gave a landslide victory to the DP in the Republican era's first-degree, general, secret and equal voting supervised by the competent judicial organs in line with the open counting and simple majority principles. DP's main discourse in 1950 elections to the people who were fed up with the 27-year-long single party administration was "Enough, People will Speak!". RPP campaigned for the 1950 elections under the leadership of President İsmet İnönü and the propaganda materials were organized accordingly. RPP's propaganda visual had six arrows, two men and two women. At the bottom of the visual was the message "Atatürk and İnönü are the leaders of the RPP, Let's Vote for their Party" (Kose, 2014: 168). As can be seen from the propaganda materials, while the DP emphasized the people themselves, the RPP emphasized the founding father of the party. As a result of the election, the power shifted to the victorious party without any major turbulence. Those affected by the hardships experienced in the single-party period were seen to have reacted against the RPP in the 1950 elections. Especially the hardships experienced by the large sections of the society during World War II, Agricultural Products Tax, Asset Tax, National Protection Act and some acts of the security forces against people caused a reaction against the RPP.

While Celal Bayar was elected as the President, Adnan Menderes became the leader of the DP. Adnan Menderes promised *"each and every neighborhood will have a millionaire"* to people who endured great hardships due to the First World War, the War of Independence and the Second World War. First the first time, an economic motto was being voiced by the DP (Cavusoglu, 2009: 267). The DP's single-party governance especially between 1950 and 1957 was the beginning of the zoning and building activities in Turkey. Bridges, roads, dams and factories began to be established all over the country.

On the other hand, the DP is the pioneer of populism in Turkey until the late 1970s. Populism can be briefly described as "the currents and ideologies that question the dominant alliance or ideology that holds power, and act upon the masses that are out of power against this alliance." (Sunar, 1983: 2076). Speaking of populism, the DP discontinued the Turkish call to prayer (adhan) and reinstated the Arabic recital of the call to prayer. Furthermore, state-run radio stations allowed Quran recitals. This softening in the religious field created a great satisfaction among the inhabitants of the villages and towns, even though it was causing displeasure among the intellectuals (Karpas, 1996: 234).

The DP created a new initiative on secularism, (Karpas, 1994: 229) stating that the Turkish community was an Islamic society and that citizens could fulfill their religious obligations in the way they want without

using religious values for political purposes. Speaking at the second congress of the party held in 1949, Celal Bayar said that: *“Freedom of religion, like other freedoms, is sacred. Our program is secular. We have determined the principle of respect for religion in the most beautiful way. The Turkish nation is Muslim and will remain Muslim. And they will die as Muslim.”* (Tunaya, 1952: 680). Undoubtedly these statements are very striking and important when considering the circumstances of the period.

The softening of religion-related issues, which began in the 1940s and became more visible during the DP, enabled conservatism to take shape in social life as of 1950. Until the 1950s, religious groups and communities living in the "underground" began to be more visible with the DP government (Akdogan, 2000: 160). Secularism was seen by the people in general as anti-religion and anti-religious values because of the solid understanding of secularism applied in the Single-Party period. To address this dilemma on secularism, the DP reflected this in the party program as follows:

“Our party considers secularism as the separation of politics and religion and not allowing any of the religious beliefs to exert any influence on the regulations and applications of the laws and refuses the wrong conviction that secularism is against religion. Freedom of religion, like other freedoms, is a sacred right of mankind.”(Tunaya, 1952: 662).

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

“As a result of the attempts to exploit religion as a political tool or to gain votes and, however small in scale, the emergence of reactionary activities seen in social life, the DP enacted a law prohibiting the exploitation of religion for political purposes. In addition, the DP advocated that religion must not be allowed to be used as a political tool or in a way to disturb the love and solidarity between people and activate feelings of bigotry against the freedom of thought.”(Tunaya, 1952: 664).

Religion and beliefs are of utmost significance for the right-wing parties. As stated by Bahadır Dülger, a DP deputy: *“But for religion, the DP would be deemed as a communist political party. The DP has 4 main features: nationalist at a moderate level, conservative at a moderate level, democratic at a moderate level and free-market supporter at a moderate level. DP is a humanitarian movement rather than a political act. The DP's primary objective was to ensure the sovereignty of the people. DP wanted the will of the people to be the dominant factor in a democratic order, that the people had a say in the state affairs (from the interview by Hüseyin Çavuşoğlu with Mehmet Dülger, April 17, 2008). In this regard, the DP executives emphasized the superiority of the nation's will in their rhetoric*(Cavusoglu, 2009: 268).

The DP adopted a majoritarian democracy during its rule. As the opposition rose, it reduced the power of authority which it associated with the with national will to a parliamentary majority. A quotation from Samet Ağaoğlu, one of the leaders of the DP, reflects this approach in a concise way: *“Democracy is a number regime. In this regime, what the masses say matters. We, as ruling elites, must comply with the wishes of the masses, not the criticism of a handful of intellectuals and their commotion.”* (Akin, 2002: 915).

When the DP which received a huge support from the academia on its path to the power lost the support of the academia and kind of turned into an opposition party, it forbade the teaching staff from actively engaging into politics through the Law No. 6185 dated 21.07.1953 and then, in an effort to passivize the universities, it subordinated the universities to the Ministry of the National Education. The opposition between the university and the government increased even further after 1957(Akin, 2002: 915).

2.2 1954 Elections and Beginning of the Authoritarianism of the Democratic Party

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

In the 1954 elections, it was observed that the political parties were engaged in an intense propaganda activity, which was different from the two previous elections. As reflected on the election results, the expected economic recovery in the first four years of the DP government was not achieved, and this failure affected voter preferences. The failure to achieve the promised economic recovery seems to be a source of inspiration for the RPP's electoral campaign. During those same years Turkey became a member of NATO. The DP wanted to make up for its economic failure with the achievements and alliances that it established in international relations using in the 1954 elections a visual reading "we used to be alone but now the whole world is with us" (Kose, 2014: 161).

In an interview with Emin Yalman in the aftermath of the success of the 1954 elections, the Prime minister Menderes stated that the policy they were pursuing were being enthusiastically supported by the people and indicated that they would continue to follow the majoritarian understanding of democracy they had been following (Albayrak, 2004: 340-341).As a matter of fact, the DP government managed to preserve the support

of the Turkish people, despite all kinds of restrictions on the press, the university and the judiciary. A radio broadcasting period in which Turkey's radios were being used as a mouthpiece of the governing party rather than public property and those in governing positions were propagating their publicity; radio was turned into a means of expressing the views of the state.

According to Erik J. Zürcher,

"In 1955 opposition to the DP's authoritarian line and also opposition to Menderes within the DP started to grow. While the DP, almost from inception, had been broad coalition, with supporters in every conceivable section of society, parts of the coalition, gradually became estranged from the party over its authoritarian policies vis-a-vis the press, the universities and the judiciary. During 1956 the trend towards authoritarianism continued. It was the year in which the 'National Defense Law' of 1940 was revived to control prices and supplies. In June the press law was again changed, not to liberalize it (as Menderes had promised during the December crisis) but to strengthen further government control of the media. Another law prohibited political meetings except during an election campaign." (Zürcher, 2013: 230-231).

The DP was on the one hand engaged in positive services and on the other hand, it continues the anti-democratic practices and succeeded in that. Understanding that he had fully proved successful in the elections, the Prime Minister Menderes didn't hesitate to take strict measures against the press criticizing economic developments. In order to silence opposing newspapers, official advertisements were not given to these newspapers, newspapers and ink were not allocated, frequent cases were filed against the opposing journalists, and newspapers began to receive heavy penalties. In this period, the total number of cases opened against the press reached 1460. 577 of them resulted in convictions and 716 in acquittals (Erogul, 1990: 401). These punishments were significantly influential in the suppression of the press, and thus ignoring criticism directed at power.

Tampering with election zones was a frequent practice of the DP. The province of Malatya which was continually supporting the RPP was administratively split into two in 1954 and the district of Adiyaman was turned into the province center. Thus, the RPP would be prevented from being successful in the election. After the 1954 general elections, the DP government took a decision that was unprecedented in the world's politics history, and turned the province of Kırşehir into a district because it voted for the opposition (Albayrak, 2014: 304).

Before the 1975 elections, one of the founders and ideologues of the DP and the former Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Prof. Dr. Fuat Köprülü heavily criticized the Prime Minister Menderes and resigned from the party. Köprülü joined the Freedom Party the İstanbul provincial presidency of which was being carried out by his son, Orhan Köprülü and asserted that the DP deviated from its original program and identity (Daily Cumhuriyet, 7 September 1957). These explanations would further exacerbate the DP.

2.3 1957 Elections and End of the Democratic Party

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

The DP government faced significant problems from the first days of the period after the 1957 election. In the Turkish Grand National Assembly (hereinafter referred to as TGNA), tense sessions began to be experienced even on the first days. The DP government began to look for ways to reduce the effectiveness of the opposition in the TGNA from the first days. To this end, the DP Assembly Group discussed on November 14, 1954 such issues as stricter control over bureaucracy and the press, changes in Universities Act and changes in Bylaws of the TGNA. On November 28, the 27th article of the Bylaws of the Assembly was completely amended. According to this amendment, the parliamentary groups of the RNP and the Freedom Party were abolished and restrictions were imposed on the speech and conduct of parliamentarians in the TGNA. The ministers would have the right not to disclose what they think is necessary, the immunity of the deputies could be removed much more easily and the deputies could be punished more easily. Among these punishments were the removal of the deputies from the assembly and cuts from their salaries. In addition, subjects forbidden to be published by the judiciary will not be published, even if they are included in parliament minutes (Albayrak, 2014: 305).

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

The reasons behind the increasing authoritarianism of the DP are explained by Mahmut Akpınarⁱⁱ as follows:

“There was no Constitutional Court in the Menderes period and there was no institution or authority to supervise the compliance of laws with the Constitution. DP did what he wanted, and it was after a majoritarian understanding of democracy. When we look at the past of Turkey, we see that the failure to restrict the governments over time are causing problems. The DP is just a case in point. For this reason, in some countries, the term of governments is limited to time and / or period. Its absence in Turkey is a handicap.” (The interview with Mahmut Akpınar, 09.07.2017).

It is understood that the secret organizations the young military officers established against the government became more effective after the second term of the DP government and the members of these organizations started to control significant positions. It is also understood that in those days when political tension were constantly increasing and the ruling party and opposition parties were in the anticipation of early election, a secret military clique within the Turkish Armed Forces planned to stage a coup against the ruling party and accelerated their efforts in this regard (Albayrak, 2014: 309). The last authoritarian initiative of the DP before the May 27th coup d'état would be to set up the Investigation Commissions on April 28, 1960. The Investigation Commission banned political activities as its first job, putting a publication ban on the press (Giritlioglu, 1965: 583). Thus, Turkish democracy became a regime in which political activities were prohibited. The May 27 coup occurred in the wake of this incident.

In short, while the DP was expected to gain functionality to all the institutions of democracy during the decades it stayed in power, during this period, the ruling party established a full sovereignty over the legislative body based on its political majority, created a bureaucracy close to itself by establishing radical cadres in the bureaucracy and military, created a strict supervision over the press and media organs, judicial institutions, universities, non-governmental organizations, opposition parties and the economy and put an authoritarian sense of governance into practice and aimed at a new single-party power by creating the conditions of an environment prone to social conflict.

We may assert that the Turkish democracy was in its infancy during the 1950-1960 period in which the Democrat Party was in power. When we look at the Turkish political history in general, we see that the parties started to move away from democracy after strengthening their power. The elections are partly democratic, but afterwards, the ruling powers are starting to move away from democracy. We can say that the DP is the first example of this. The reasons of this are explained by Erik J. Zürcher as follows:

“When we look at DP, Justice Party, and Motherland Party we can see the same thing. The reason, I think, is clear. In each case they started from a position of opposition to a state elite, dominated by a military-bureaucratic coalition. The only available source of power as well as legitimacy against that elite that was available to these parties was the “will of the nation” expressed in free elections. Once solidly in power, the parties domesticate the state apparatus to a certain extent (a process that takes years). The fact that their power relies on electoral victories also means that they tend to turn the “will of the nation” into an absolute and to classify all political opposition as essentially a refusal to recognize this will. We can see this clearly when we compare the late Menderes with the late Erdoğan.” (The interview with Erik J. Zürcher, 28.06.2017).

Mahmut Akpınar has put forward the following comment in the interview we have held with him:

“As put forward by Lord Acton, power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Ruling parties and leaders initially garner votes by pointing out that they would take democracy, human rights and universal values into considerations. However, if their term in power goes on for too long, the power balance change in their favor and the control mechanisms and check and balance systems weaken and the party in power start to control everything and use the state apparatus according to their narrow political considerations instead of laws and general principles. Moreover, we cannot say that the politicians and elites in Turkish politics could internalize democracy and the rule of law. The absence of intra-party democracy and the leadership-oriented politics are among the factors accelerating the shift towards authoritarianism.” (The interview with Mahmut Akpınar, 09.07.2017).

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

III. JUSTICE PARTY (1961-1980)

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

In the aftermath of the May 27, a new period started in the Turkish political life with the DP being replaced by the JP. This period is characterized by a time when the industrialization-led development is advocated and a concept of liberal economy is cherished. Under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel, the JP has created a conservative and rural-dominated political atmosphere, creating a discourse that religious elements are frequently mentioned with an anti-communist propaganda. Süleyman Demirel stated that the reason for his engagement in politics is "to reconcile the state with peasantry and religion". From this point of view, Demirel is closer to the religious values and represents more right-wing based values than Adnan Menderes. Now, the leader of the center-right was a peasant child who proved himself through engineering education rather than someone from the elite cadre of republican regime (Cavusoglu, 2009: 268).

In an interview, Süleyman Demirel said that there was not a right or left distinction in Turkey until 1965 but there were "those who were for the RPP" and "those who were against the rpp" and while the RPP defined itself as leftist party at the center, the JP was at the right of the political spectrum (Demirel, 2004: 338). Thus, he was clearly positioning the JP as a right-wing party.

The masses who voted for the DP rallied behind the JP after 27 May coup. Both the DP and JP aimed for the votes of the people. DP and JP strived for the social state and respected people's beliefs, religions, traditions and customs. The JP which strived to take the benefits of the civilization to the most remote corner of the country and had an understanding that "what is available at the cities must be made available in the villages and towns" (Cavusoglu, 2009: 269). The reason for the DP and JP being the most important parties in the center-right is that they kept the pulse of the people well. A policy understanding based on the needs of the people was followed. The DP and JP received support from broad sections of society. The power of both parties to move the masses was due to the social structure of Turkey rather than ideological reasons.

The JP won a landslide victory in the elections of October 1965, gaining an absolute majority of the votes cast and seats in the assembly. It was clear from the distribution of the votes that the JP had managed to capture the old DP support. Demirel proved to be a first-rate vote catcher in the countryside, where people could identify with his background and see his career as the embodiment of their hopes. Like Menderes before him, Demirel was an orator who could speak the language of the mass of the people - something İnönü and the other Kemalist political leaders had never been able to do.

With a solid majority in the assembly, Demirel had no problem getting a vote of confidence for his cabinet. For the next five years he dominated Turkish politics. As we shall see, the mid- and later- 1960s were good years for Turkey. Economic growth was high and real incomes went up almost continually, by an average of 20 per cent in the years between 1963 and 1969. One of Demirel's most important achievements was to reconcile the army with rule by civilians who were clearly heir to the Democrats the military had toppled only five years before (Zurcher, 2013: 250-251).

One of the greatest contributions of DP and JP to Turkish political life was to the culture of political parties. The DP and JP masses, whether the those in the senior management to those in lower positions had always showed love, respect, loyalty, and solidarity towards each other. In this, the personalities of party leaders were important. In particular, the JP made a great contribution to the formation of a bureaucrat and technocratic staff. The JP staff were firmly attached to their party. This commitment and volunteerism played a very important role in the JP's success. The role of Süleyman Demirel was great in the fact that the JP members were enthusiastic about their party. Dubbed as the "First Peasant Prime Minister", Süleyman Demirel was loved and respected by a great majority of people (Cavusoglu, 2009: 270-271).

The members of the "Nur" community supported the JP except for the 1973 election. The community shifted their support to the JP after 1973 (Mardin, 1992: 251). Likewise, another sect, "Süleymançılar" supported the JP, too. In the same way, Kemal Kaçar, a leader of the community, served as an MP from 1965-1973 and 1977-1980. A group organized around the *Yeni Asya Daily* and the *Yeni Nesil Magazine*, which were publications of the Nur community, supported Süleyman Demirel in all circumstances (Demirel, 2004: 52). By the way, Nur Movement, facilitated the first new Islamic discourse since the beginning of Turkish Republic. Nursi, 1873-1960, was a prolific writer and interpreter of the Quran, as well as expressing views on various religious subjects. In his writings, he emphasized the cultivation of the self in enhancing the spiritual wellbeing of the believer in order to attain the best of the Quranic teachings and Islamic values. His writings were popular

and generated a sizable number of followers who talked about the issues he raised and discussed his ideas. Those discussions continue to our present day surviving against the odds of many years in a difficult situation. And for many, Said Nursi's ideas and activities represented the first seeds of civil society action in modern Turkey (Salim, 2014: 36).

The party, with its emphasis on tradition, defended the understanding of the organic state and society, and adopted the notion of nationalism that advocated the Nation / State identity. The traditions and values identified with the religion that the right-wing parties insist on are the most important factors that reveal the viewpoint and mentality world of the JP (Demirel, 2004: 343). In the same way, JP's ideological society conveyed inspiration from conservative thinking. While Demirel talked his own family, he also gave information about the ideal society and the values he praised:

"We were a happy Istanbul family. We were a family who took the life seriously, didn't complain about the life struggle, didn't lose the battle in this struggle and who were realist, liked to work and didn't like luxury, waste, pomp and fanfare and who preferred a busy working life, never gave up humility, kind-heartedness and helpfulness and didn't have an eye on other people's properties, respected rights and laws and who liked society and was liked by society."(Demirel, 2004: 344).

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

The rise of JP stopped in the October 14, 1973 elections. In this election, while the RPP had 185 deputies as the first party, The number of AP's deputies fell to 149. The reasons for this decline were the right-wing divisions of small parties such as the DP and the National Salvation Party, which split from the JP as well as the rise of the RPP. Political instability, terrorism, external pressures, economic decline and the cost of living were the most important problems of the period. At the end of 1979s, the JP established a minority government with the parliamentary support from the former partners; however, all political parties were closed down by the military coup of September 12, 1980, and the JP ended in this way.

IV. MOTHERLAND PARTY (1983-2009)

"Anavatan Partisi" (Motherland Party, hereinafter referred to as MP) tried to identify itself as a party of the "middle class" basing its claims on theme encompassing social segments such as workers, civil servants, farmers and tradesmen. The concept of "middle class" is used to refer to junior civil servants, pensioners, artisans and farmers who depend on "low and fixed revenue". Middle class includes a large section of the society and is therefore an important actor of the country's economy and politics. The concept was first used by Turgut Özal as an election slogan (Arol, 1989: 72).

The National Security Council's vetoing the parties established as the continuation of the old political parties was influential in the success of the MP in the November 6, 1983 election which received 45.14% of the votes and became a single-party government. But it would be unfair to link its success to just that. Because the effectiveness of mass media usage; the moderate discourse that emphasizes economic issues; the influence on the masses of the themes such as "middle class", "knowledge-based works" and "practicality"; the appearance of being the only "civil party"; being effective on the social democratic constituencies as well as the right-wing voters and establishing the most effective and wide organizational network were among the reasons for the success of MP (Cemal, 1989).

Turgut Özal, founder of MP, argued that Turkey should be able to compete with Western countries economically and technologically in order to reach the level of modern civilizations and he asserted that wrong policies had been applied until that day and that Turkey needed a new understanding of politics in the short run. As a matter of fact, when Özal's economic, political and democratic policies are examined, it will be seen that the concept of traditional Turkish politics, which had a closed, statist, anti-individualistic and prohibitive mentality, was transformed along with this process (Oral & Erdogan, 2014: 39).

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

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

"The Motherland Party is a political party that is of the belief that the establishment of the national will and the national sovereignty will be possible only within the free democratic order; considers human fundamental rights and freedoms indispensable; believes in nationalism and commitment to national

and spiritual values; aims for reaching the level of contemporary civilization in the direction of the principles and revolutions of the great leader Atatürk who is the founding father of Republic; values social justice and equal opportunity through the vision of "what matters is the happiness of the individuals and society"; strives for the acceleration of economic development, the elimination of unemployment and poverty; considers the main principles of the National Education to raise the youth who are committed to the modern and advanced Turkey ideal and who adopts national and moral values, are equipped with scientific knowledge and who is a civilized person who cares for love, respect and tolerance against all others and aims for attaining a democratic, political great and strong Turkey ideal." (Tasar, 1996: 310-312).

One of the criticisms leveled against Turgut Özal regarding the democratization of the country was his position he took on the reinstatement of the political bans in 1987. As it is known that during the process of civilian administration, the removal of the prohibitions brought by the 1982 Constitution of the old politicians came to the agenda, and the MP government presented this issue to the people in a referendum. Although Prime Minister Özal made propaganda for the continuation of the bans, the referendum on September 6, 1987 narrowly decided to remove the political bans. Turgut Özal's campaign to continue the political bans imposed by a military regime before the referendum led to a sharp criticism regarding the "democratization" against MP, especially Özal.

In addition to all these, MP, which based its politics more on conservatism or Islamism, did not hesitate to express this clearly in its discourses under Turgut Özal's leadership. Özal basically mentions 3 basic freedoms. These are "Freedom of thought", "freedom of religion and conscience", "freedom of enterprise". Freedom of thought, according to Özal, is freedom to express thought freely, without hesitation. According to him, "the truth arises from the clash of ideas" (Yazicioglu, 2001: 201). Freedom of religion and conscience is also one of universal freedoms for Özal. In a speech he had made, he expressed the following about freedom of religion and conscience:

"This is a freedom concerning many people. I am of the belief that the existence of this freedom gives a sense of peace. Peaceful people work well. Without peace of mind, they will be in constant chaos and you cannot expect any efficiency from them. This is nonsense. Our society must not have any disagreement over this issue" (Barlas, 2001: 322).

Özal, who clearly stated that the bonds that hold the nations together are religious ties, the factor of religion must step in where individual ideologies fail and it must be used in suppressing the reactions that may occur in society (Ulagay, 1991: 125).

Miss Hafize, Özal's mother and a Nakşi follower, was laid to rest at the Suleymaniyye Mosque by the grave of Sheikh Mehmet Zahit Kotku Efendi through a special decree to fulfill her will when she died in 1988 (Cemal, 1992: 155).

In October 31, 1989 presidential election, Turgut Özal was elected as Turkey's 8th President (Erandaç, Daily Takvim, 14.02.2014). This date is also a turning point for MP. Because MP started to gradually lose popularity in Turkey. MP, which could take part in coalition governments in the 1990s, suffered a major failure to enter the parliament in 2000, and in 2009 it decided to merge with the DP.

Prime minister (1983-1989) then president (1989-1993), Turgut Özal showed that he had vision. Embodying the combination of economic liberalism and Islamic values that bested overtly Islamist parties in gaining voter support, he reoriented Turkish politics more significantly than anyone since Atatürk. Economically, he replaced the inward-oriented, import-substitution policy pioneered in the 1930s with an export-led growth strategy, so adjusting to the global trend toward privatization. Education also changed significantly under Özal. Private universities began to be founded, starting with Bilkent University (1984). Academically enriched high schools known as Anatolian lycées grew greatly in numbers. Combining science and mathematics with foreign languages, they provided large numbers of Turks from non elite backgrounds for the first time with foreign-language education. The high schools for training mosque functionaries, the imam-hatip (prayer leader-preacher) schools, also expanded in number; and many girls enrolled in them (Findley, 2010: 355-356). These developments can also be noted as achievements of the Motherland Party for Turkey.

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

"The main reason I think is that the state played and plays such a dominant role in the Turkish political system and in Turkish society as a whole. Ultimately inter-party competition is not only about controlling a state that controls the everyday life of the citizens to an extraordinary degree. The close relation between dominant party and state can make it very difficult to accept dissent as a legitimate part of the political game. Another element is that dominant center-right parties always had the support of somewhere between % 40 and % 55 of the electorate. This plurality of small majority led them to constantly use a discourse of enemies and dangers (in Turkey and outside) to consolidate their own constituency behind them." (The interview with Erik J. Zürcher, 28.06.2017).

According to Mahmut Akpınar:

“First and foremost, democracy needs intellectuals and masses who will protect and sustain it. We must look at this issue not just from the angle of the center right parties but in a more general perspective. Today, it is regrettably observed in Turkey that neither the intellectuals nor the masses has not the consciousness and courage to protect democracy against the risks. It is also clear that our education system does not ensure democracy and the rule of law is constant and effective. Since our democracy is often interrupted, democracy education has left its place to an authoritarian understanding of education in times when coup management is at work. Why we frequently drift away from democracy will be better understood when we take into consideration the patriarchal, paternal culture and obedience which are hereditary in Turkish society and a perception of the state that is sacred and hard to criticize. I am convinced that these breakdowns explain why our current democracy does not go beyond the ballot boxes and why a pluralistic and participatory democracy has not been evolved.” (The interview with Mahmut Akpınar, 09.07.2017).

V. CONCLUSION

Center right-wing parties in Turkey have generally defended the private ownership in the economy and national culture in the socio-cultural area. The introduction of widespread religious education, the promotion of publications about religious information, the increase of the number of mosques, the softening of the pressure on the works of legally prohibited cults and nationalism characterized by the Islamic tones are some of the policies adopted by center right-wing political parties starting from the DP in accordance with the expectations of their constituencies. Centre-right politics in Turkey seems to follow a liberal conservative tradition.

As can be seen from this article, after transitioning to the multi-party system in Turkey, the DP which advocated basic rights and freedoms such as democracy, human rights and freedoms, freedom of the press, right to strike and liberal economy while in opposition was successful in its first period (1950-1954) and won the 1954 election by a landslide but in its second period (1954-1957), it failed to resolve challenging internal and external problems. The DP, which started its the third period (1957-1960) with a loss of votes in the elections, preferred to solve political, economic and social problems by means of restricting rights and freedoms instead of resolving them with consensus, silence the opposition through legal arrangements, neutralize the press, take full control of the economy, universities and judicial institutions. It almost completely cut off its ties with social groups and institutions that it had cooperated when it was in opposition. In other words, as Fuat Köprülü stated, "it was completely away from the basic principles and objectives of his establishment..." (Daily Cumhuriyet, 7 September 1957).

The same was observed during the period when the JP was in power. As a matter of fact, the founders and members of the JP clearly stated that they are a continuation of the DP and adopt the program of the DP (Akkas, 1989: 53).

In fact, the center-right parties are the parties that open the way for democratization in Turkey. So much so that the development of democracy seems to be almost the main establishment purpose of the center right parties. Liberalism has been accepted in terms of freedoms and economic order; certain human rights and freedoms have been emphasized, and in particular, freedom of association has been attached great importance.

Many reforms, innovations, developments and advancements were observed during the center right parties' periods. Developments in democracy and law, economic leaps have been seen during the period of the DP, JP, and MP. Each center right party undertakes many successes in their first period of power; however, then the pace of development, advancement and democratization slows down and as the time passes, there occur regression. This is a problem faced when in power rather than a problem faced by the right-wing parties. This problem is due to the fact that the authority to control and balance the power in Turkey is not yet developed. Furthermore, acting in a partisan manner just like being a supporter of a soccer team is one of the reasons for the degeneration and shifting away from democracy. I also think that the abuse of conservative values and religious beliefs helped authoritarianism of the centre-right wing parties. All right-wing parties have used religious beliefs in their policies. These include the DP, and MP.

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- [32]. The interview with Mahmut Akpınar, 09.07.2017.
- [33]. The interview with Erik J. Zurcher, 28.06.2017.

Notes

ⁱ 'Conservative values' or the concept of 'conservatism' in Turkey does not bear the same implications as the concept of conservatism in the West. First of all, conservatism in Turkey is a paternalistic conservatism. Also, while the concept of conservatism is generally perceived as religiousness and commitment to traditions in Turkey, it is a political ideology which is against radical changes, and especially in favor of preserving class distinctions in social structure, in the West.

ⁱⁱ Mahmut Akpınar, Assoc. Prof. Dr., Well-known Journalist Writer, Political Scientist.

ⁱⁱⁱ Later, this success will be realized in 2002 by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

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