

BAŞLIK DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS OF AKP ELITES'
DEMOCRACY UNDERSTANDING

İSMAİL TÜRKER ÇELİK
102605028

İSTANBUL BİLGİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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DOÇ. DR. AYHAN KAYA
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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Political Islam and Democracy

Since the terrorist attacks on 9/11, one of the most popular discussion topics within the public and the intellectuals has been whether democracy and Islam are compatible or not. In a monopolized world order, idealism of democracy - namely liberal democracy - is set as an ultimate stage that societies could reach.¹ As in the case of recent Iraq operation which underruled international law, this idealism is accepted as the main source of moral legitimacy. As a recent example in the cases of regime changes in the countries like Ukraine, Georgia and Krgzystan, civil resistances were mobilized through the propoganda of liberal democracy.

On the other hand, lack of democracy and liberty is considered as the main source of Islamic terrorism which has been the main issue on the security agenda of Western states since 'September 11'. Though they had different approaches in terms of method, the Western countries were motivated to liberate and bring democracy to non - democratic Muslim countries which were considered as the potential source for terrorism. Recently 'Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA)' was developed as a US initiate to bring democracy to the Muslim countries lying in the geography between Northern Africa and India.

BMENA is not the first comprehensive project that is launched to achieve democracy idealism in the missing countries or regions. Especially liberal Western

¹ Fukuyama, *Tarihin Sonu ve Son İnsan*, (İstanbul: Gün Yayınevi, 1999), 1:19.

countries had initiated several projects whose main target or one of the several targets was to achieve democracy idealism. One of these political projects was Marshall Plan that helped European countries to develop infrastructure for liberal economy and to attain democracy.² Perhaps, European Union (EU) is one of the most important and comprehensive international political projects targeting the development of permanent peace and democracy. It is the civilization project that idealizes establishing liberal democracy through its members. It has the criteria of liberal democracy to be fulfilled by the candidate states who want to join the union. In that respect, during its history EU accelerated the democratization and the liberalization process in candidate and new member states which were formerly governed by authoritarian or non-liberal regimes.

EU also gave momentum to the democratization process of Turkey as a candidate state. But some European political leaders and intellectuals question whether Turkey as a Muslim country could fulfill the EU membership conditions or not. Some politicians who are against the membership of Turkey argue that Turkey may destruct the common cultural and political values and the identity of the EU. Those who question Turkey's membership support their thesis by reminding the fact that it is a Muslim country. Mainly, these approaches depend on the tough question that whether Islam is compatible with liberalism and democracy or not. On the other hand, many non-Western intellectuals try to address these questions: "Whether liberal democracy is the most advanced type of democracy or not? Shall we think of liberal democracy when only the word democracy is mentioned?"

Despite their popularity, the questions about the relation between Islam, namely political Islam and democracy are difficult to answer. The reason is that both

² Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations*, (Atlantic Books, 2003), 134.

political Islam and democracy are quite subjective and vague concepts. There is no consensus about the definition of main concepts such as political Islam, Muslim countries and also the characteristics of ideal democracy.

These discussions have also been very hot issues in Turkey in the last few years. And notable number of Turkish intellectuals, politicians and bureaucrats criticize Turkey's categorization as a Muslim country. They point out that religion has nothing to do in public sphere in Turkey as it is in the Western countries. It is also noticed that the Western countries are not described according to the religion of their citizens.

At this point, we need to set the definition of democracy. Firstly, it should be underlined that in this dissertation when democracy is stated, liberal democracy shall be understood. In that context, the democracy approach of Alexis de Tocqueville will be referred to. Regarding Tocqueville, democracy has essentially two meanings: One was a political regime defined by the rule of people, with all institutional and procedural mechanisms that had been specified by earlier theorists of democracy; and the other was a condition of society characterized by its tendency towards equality.³

There are other concepts to be dealt with such as Muslim country, Islamic state and political Islam. First, the country is a vague concept which contains nearly everything in its territory. When the term 'country' is used in a political terminology, the society living in it is intended mostly. As majority of the population living in Turkey is Muslim, Turkey can be categorized as a Muslim country. On the other hand, Islamic state refers to a state that is structured and managed with respect to the

³ Kaldor, Vejevoda, *Democratization in Central and Eastern Europe* (Pinter, 1999), 3.

Islamic references. So that, Turkey is not an Islamic state as it is designed according to the laicist laws.⁴

What is more, to conceptualize and to understand the concept of political Islam, it must be taken into account that it is not possible to talk about Islam and democracy in general but rather about Muslims living and theorizing Islam under specific historical circumstances.⁵ So that, when we refer to the term political Islam we will understand the political movement where the Muslim identity is one of the main characteristics of its members' political view. Regarding that definition, it is not important whether the political understanding of the movement is structured with respect to Islam or not. Moreover, though there should be no main reference to the religion in the official program of any political movement it can be accepted as a political Islamic act if its members' political understandings are shaped with a personal sensitivity to Islam.

1.2. AKP: A special democratization case

When the above mentioned definition is considered, it is seen that AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - Justice and Development Party) can be accepted as the movement of political Islam to a certain extent. First of all, the majority of the founders of AKP had been the members of MGH (Milli Görüş Hareketi - The National Vision Movement) which was a powerful movement of political Islam in Turkey. Additionally, AKP is sensitive about the issues related to Muslim identity. Discussions related to headscarves and İmam Hatip High Schools were two of these issues. One of the main indicators of the Muslim identity of AKP is that; the wives of all important figures in the party wear headscarves. Researches which were conducted

⁴ Aköz, "İslam Devleti, İslam Ülkesi" *Sabah* April 2005.

⁵ Kramer, "Islamist Notions of Democracy" In: Beinin, Stork, *Political Islam* (Middle East Research and Information Project, 1997), 71:83.

about the social and economic status of AKP voters support these argument. The public survey conducted by Dr. Şaban Kızıldağ shows that 38 percent of AKP voters say “One of their family members is dressed in accordance with Islamic principles. 28 percent of them host their visitors in line with Islamic principles.”⁶ These figures support the fact that Muslim identity is a very powerful reference among AKP voters.

The election triumph and the government of AKP attracted the attention of scholars and politicians globally. In the context of history of democratization, it was the first time that an Islamic rooted political movement came to power with free elections and performed for certain period. What is more, AKP contributed to the democratization of the country by making legislative changes which satisfied the democracy criteria of the EU.⁷ That is quite important because in the same era in the Western countries lack of democratization in Muslim countries is accepted as the main reason of Islamic terrorism rooted from Muslim countries.

First of all, it must be underlined that AKP differs from traditional political Islamic movements in Turkey. After the ‘post-modern’ coup of ‘February 28’, the Islamic party RP (Refah Partisi – Prosperity Party) which had been represented in the government was banned. After that the reformists within RP who would be the founders of AKP in the future, started to search for a new type of politics. This was also mentioned by the founder and the president of AKP, Tayyip Erdoğan: “We have left behind conducting politics with religious symbols. On the other hand, we shall show everybody how believers should act in politics.” He was implying that they would no longer use a discourse that would seem as an inclination towards Shari’ah rule for the secular establishment.⁸ In that respect, the government of AKP made

⁶ “Yüzde 28’de Harem Selamlık Protokolü”, *Milliyet* 20 June 2005.

⁷ Fuller, *Siyasal İslam’ın Geleceği* (Istanbul: Timaş Kitapları, 2004), 15.

⁸ Heper, Toktaş, “Islam, Modernity, and Democracy in Contemporary Turkey: The Case of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan”, *The Muslim World*, vol. 93, Issue 2, (April 2003), pp. 17.

important democracy reforms to fulfill the EU Copenhagen criteria. The AKP government is considered as an important stage for Westernization and democratization process for Turkey as it also maintains the society involvement within the process. Also it is argued that Turkey was going through a paradoxical period in which statist-Westernizing elites are forced to move into anti-Western positions and the West was defended by the Islamic movements.⁹

Despite the above mentioned solid facts signaling for the democratic conversion of AKP leadership, there are still doubts about the sincerity of the democratization process citing the party's Islamist lineage and the religiously conservative character of its leadership.¹⁰ Actually that kind of discussions which question the sincerity of any radical rooted political movement which came to power and moved to center politics, are observed all over the world in different times. Regarding this discussion Dankwart A. Rustow indicates that: "We should allow for the possibility that circumstances may force, trick, lure or cajole non-democrats into democratic behaviour and that their beliefs may adjust in due course by some process of rationalization or adaption". In the same way, the doubts about sincerity of AKP do not mean much in terms of scientific approach.¹¹ The recent discussion related to Kurdish and Armenian issues was also supporting the democratic conversion of AKP leadership.

1.3. Major concepts

The topic investigated in this dissertation is quite popular. It is hard to study such a topic in a scientific frame since the related concepts and terminology are still

⁹ Insel, "The AKP and Normalizing Democracy in Turkey", *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, (Spring/Summer 2003), pp. 305-6.

¹⁰ Özel, "Turkey at the Polls", *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 14, Number 2, (April 2003), pp. 93.

¹¹ Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model" In: Lisa Anderson, ed., *Transitions to Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 20.

evolving. Setting main concepts is very crucial to go forward. The main concepts to be referred in this study are as follows: Political Islam, democracy, conservative democracy, formal democracy, substantive democracy and political elite. These concepts need to be defined in the context of this dissertation.

Two of these concepts, political Islam and democracy are mentioned in the first section of my dissertation to some extent. But it must be recognized that the majority of the arguments about the theory of democracy are still problematic as democracy is used as a term of rhetoric, rather than of definite substance. As a practical ideal it remains unclear, incomplete, sometimes self contradictory. Under these circumstances, democratic theory should come by showing that embracing democracy means fostering specific practices and institutions.¹² This approach will maintain the method of measuring governments regarding democracy. Therefore, concepts of formal (procedural) and substantive democracies need to be compared.

Formal democracy is defined as a set of rules, procedures and institutions. The main criteria of formal democracy are: Inclusive citizenship, rule of law, separation of powers, elected power-holders, free and fair elections, freedom of expression and alternative sources of information, associational autonomy and civilian control over the security forces. On the other hand, the substantive democracy is a process that has to be continuously reproduced, a way of regulating power relations in a way to maximize the opportunities for individuals to influence the conditions in which they live to participate in and influence debates about the key decisions that affect the society. In that sense, the existence of formal mechanism and procedure is a necessity but by no means a sufficient condition for democracy.

¹² Saward, *The Terms of Democracy*, (Mass: Polity Press, 1998) 1:2.

To understand the concept of liberal democracy, the relation between liberalism and democracy should be examined. Liberalism is a rule of law that prevents certain personal rights or free spaces from the control of state. On the other hand as it is mentioned above, democracy is the concept where all citizens had right to govern the certain portion of political authority. Citizens have right to be elected and to vote. In that respect, political participation which is the main practice of democracy is also the most essential right of liberalism. So that historically liberalism and democracy are interrelated.¹³

Conservative democracy will be another concept to be investigated under the topic of democracy. Even though it is not a concept that has a well established theoretical base, it is important for my study since it is accepted as the official party ideology of AKP. The party's understanding of the concept can be summarized as: "The conservative democracy which is the formal view of AKP proposes universal democracy understanding which does not conflict with the values of common public. The main dynamic of that democratization is the support of public."¹⁴

As the concept of political Islam is mentioned in the first section of the dissertation, I will not repeat the same issues. To understand the place of political Islam in the global context of politics, I will refer to Daniel Bell's arguments: "While the old nineteenth-century ideologies and intellectual debates have become exhausted, the rising states of Asia and Africa are fashioning new ideologies with a different appeal for their own people. In the distinctive difference between the two kinds of ideologies, the ideologies of 19th century were universalistic, humanistic and fashioned by intellectuals. The mass ideologies of Asia and Africa are parochial, instrumental and created by political leaders. And in contrary to functionalist or a

¹³ Fukuyama, p. 57-58.

¹⁴ Fırat, *Uluslararası Muhafazakarlık ve Demokrasi Sempozyumu*, (Ankara: Ak Parti Siyasi ve Hukuk İşleri Başkanlığı, 2004), 20.

Marxist view, culture and social structure are not always related to each other.¹⁵ What's more, classical ideological vision had been framed in terms of the total transformation of the society. On the otherhand the normative consensus held that civil politics could replace ideological politics that no comprehensive changes should be introduced and no changes in the way of life should be undertaken.^{16,} As it is seen above Bell takes the culture, identity and religion as the recent spaces of new ideology. That outlook is quite user friendly to understand the ideology of AKP, as it differs from other center right parties via of it's approach towards identity and culture.

The theoretical frame of the political Islam is quite vague because there is no consensus on a single definition. Therefore I shall use one of the most general and practical definition of it: Political Islam refers to the political concepts that accept Islam as a system of belief that has something to say about how the politics and society will be ordered in modern world.¹⁷ To create more academic frame for the definition, we need to apply constructivism as a theoretical approach. Basically constructivism assumes that any society is a human construction and subject to multiple interpretations and influences. That approach also maintains theoretical frame to understand how the civil politics replaced the ideological politics so that we can determine the places of culture, religion and identity in the political Islam. In that respect, Islamic political identity is accepted as a frame of reference that is unconsciously internalized through socialization and becomes politicized and objectified in relation to desired ends and a changing social context.¹⁸

¹⁵ Bell, *The End of Ideology* (Harvard University Press, 2000), 413:4.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 419

¹⁷ Fuller, p. 22

¹⁸ Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, (New York: Oxford University, 2003), 20:21.

Since I looked for the answers to my research question among the AKP elites, political elite is another important concept that I dealt with in the study. In sociology as a common place usage, the elite refers to relatively small dominant group within a larger group within a larger society that enjoys privileged status.¹⁹ According to C. Mills Wright, at the top of ruling structure the power elite has been shaped by the intersection of interests between those who control the major means of production and those who control the newly enlarged means of violence. In that respect, the importance of professional politicians are declined and the explicit political command of the corporate chieftains and the professional warlords rose. The absence of any genuine civil service of skill and integrity is one of the main reason of these trends. What is, the power elite is composed of political, economic and military men.²⁰

In the light of the above stated definition, in my study ‘AKP political elite’ refers to the people who are active party members and the ones in ruling position of the party or the state. So that, I interviewed with the party elites coming from different political tradition and reflecting that back ground in the current political environment.

1.4. Purpose

The relation between the democracy and the political Islam is one of the most popular and speculative topics. This issue had not been scrutinized properly in the context of Turkey. By the government of current ruling party AKP which is considered as the political representative of political Islam in Turkey, that question has begun to be outspoken much more also in academic area. But still there have not been indepth researches about the question. This dissertation aims to contribute to this discussion by trying to determine the democracy understanding of the people who are elites of

¹⁹ Daverger, *Siyaset Sosyolojisi*, (Istanbul: Varlık Yayınları, ed. 6, 2002), 160:2.

²⁰ Mills, *The Power Elite*, (New York: Oxford University, 2000), 1:20.

AKP which is accepted as the representative of political Islam in Turkey. In trying to provide answers to this question the democracy conception of political Islam in Turkey can be determined.

1.5. Problem

As democracy is quite a subjective concept. Formal and substantive democracy concepts are developed to evaluate whether a political or governmental organization and their members are democratic or not. All around the World and in Turkey as well, the movements of political Islam are always questioned whether if they are democratic or not. What is more, their democracy criteria and to what extent of their democracy understanding is also questioned. In the case of Turkey, this discussion will gain importance due to the EU integration process, as most of the criteria for joining the union are pertained to liberal democracy. Current ruling party AKP, also known as the current leading political representative of political Islam in Turkey, took very important steps towards democratization for the purpose of the EU integration. Being the ruling party and carrying Turkey to EU membership through democratization, AKP makes quite an interesting case.

At this point the question to be asked is what the democracy understanding of the political Islam is in the country? Then sub-questions arise as well: What are the basic norms and the characteristics of this democracy understanding? Can we talk about the common, consolidated democracy understanding that is shared by the majority of its representatives? What kind of similarities and differences does this understanding have compared to Western (the EU and US) democracy practices? In that context, *I will analyze the understanding of democracy among the AKP political elite.*

In this vein, the hypothesis of my proposal can be summarized as: “*The representatives of mainstream political Islamic movement in Turkey share common norms of liberal democracy understanding, though they differ in some points like the perception of economic liberalism and plurality.*” As it will be explained in the following pages throughout the dissertation AKP will be accepted as the mainstream movement of political Islam in Turkey as it is the legitimate representative of political Islam in the democratic parliamentary system of Turkey.

1.6. Methodology

To answer my thesis question I am going to utilize a method of hermeneutics analysis. According to the method, people are born into a particular gender, culture and history. And any social problem must be determined in that context and it is not possible to bracket our assumptions of the world. So every single question is investigated in its own micro cosmos. In that cosmos main issues and concepts that affect the question take place. And that social question could be understood in that context. The concept of a hermeneutic circle was introduced to understand our Being – in – the - World. Regarding that circle, step by step we reach universality.

In that methodology, firstly the elements of my micro cosmos is need to be determined. The elements of my cosmos are AKP, political Islam, conservative democracy, formal democracy, substantive democracy, political elite and current political environment. To understand my question the relationships between these elements are to be determined. While determining these relationships, different methods and resources like theoretical readings and indepth interviews will be used.²¹

²¹ Kleining, Witt, “Discovery as Basic Methodology of Qualitative and Quantitative Research”, *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, Volume 2, No. 1, (February 2001), pp. 1-4.

After understanding the cosmos, I move along the circles step by step. My first circle is the current political context of Turkey. Second circle is the political environment of Turkey since 1980. Next circle is the political Islam globally in the same period. The last circle is the development of political context in that period. At the end of that process I find the answer of my question in the context of global politics. In so doing, democracy conception of political Islam in Turkey, both in the current Turkish political context and global context can be evaluated.

Current works about the political understandings of the AKP or political Islam in Turkey are discussed through the investigation of old policies of the movement. Written or verbal statements of that act and its leaders are other sources for research. In my work, the variables consist of complex concepts and there is no quantitative method to measure them. In trying to overcome that problem, the method of indepth interview with the AKP elites who are accepted as the party members and the ones in ruling position of the party is utilized. These elites were chosen by referring to the main sub-political fractions in AKP in order to represent the different views within the party appropriately. As verbal analysis are necessary, indepth interview is performed as the most appropriate data collection method. By that technique, we could also ask indirect questions to find out the true agenda of representatives concerning the norm and values of democracies. It is tried to determine how the current representatives of political Islam understand democracy in theory and in practice. Here liberal democracy can be accepted as an 'ideal' that the AKP tries to attain, as it is seen on the party and government program of AKP. In that respect, what the AKP people think about that ideal is much more important than what the people do or say about the issue. So that, this dissertation aims to determine the democracy understanding of party elites by the help of interviews made with them.

One of the crucial point to be successful in the method of indepth interview, is to structure proper medium. In my research, the set needs to reflect the general tendency of AKP members. AKP seems like the coalition of different political attitudes and backgrounds such as political Islam, liberalism and nationalism. Moreover, it is claimed that some party members from the South-Eastern Anatolia take political stand in the Kurdish issue. These fractions should be represented in my interview set.

The recent concrete case to determine the portions of those fractions in the party is the municipality elections. Recent municipality election is important as it is the last representative election. AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - Justice and Development Party) won the election in 59 cities. The portions of fraction is quite important. 23 mayors were formerly members of the political parties of RP (Refah Partisi – Welfare Party) and FP (Fazilet Partisi – Virtue Party) which were representative political Islam, 12 from ANAP (Anavatan Partisi – Motherland Party), 7 from DYP (Doğru Yol Partisi – Right Way Party), 1 from CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi – Republican Public Party), 1 from MHP (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi - Nationalist Movement Party). There are 15 mayors who had no political experience but most of them seems to stand in the liberal right-wing. AKP also won the election in four cities: Ağrı, Siirt, Bingöl and Van where traditionally support parties that refer to Kurdish issue. The result of ‘November 3rd 2002 General Parliamentary Election’ also provides important data to classify the ethnic portions of fractions in party. The percentage of parliaments from Southeastern Anatolia in total AKP parliaments is %14.²²

²² Tekin, *Ak Parti'nin Muhafazakar Demokrat Kimliği*, (Istanbul: Orient, 2004), 231.

Apparently, the ones coming from political Islam are nearly %40; the ones from liberal right are more than %30; the ones from the Southeastern Anatolia are nearly %15 and the ones from nationalist movement are nearly %5. As the portion of nationalist representatives is less than expected, we need more informal data. In the recent story covered in Turkish Daily News, it is argued that the number of nationalist AKP parliaments varies between 10 to 30.²³ If we accept it as 30, it means nearly %15 of AKP parliamentarians have nationalist tendency. As DEHAP could not overcome the %10 election barrier, AKP took most of the parliamentary seats that represent the cities which have dominantly Kurdish population. So more than %15 of AKP parliaments come from those cities. But it must be taken into account that most of them have political view of liberalism or political Islam. So %15 of my interview set is composed of AKP elites from South-Eastern cities. The rest of my set consists of party members who are originally from other parts of Turkey. That sub-set which represents the %85 of main set is composed of %15 nationalist, %30 liberal right and %40 political Islamist.

According to that distribution, 15 AKP elites are selected and interviewed with. The number was restricted up to 15 as indepth interview is quite time consuming and that could cause problem in terms of time table. While forming interview questions, both formal and substantive criteria of democracy were considered. As examples of formal criteria, 'inclusive citizenship, rule of law, separation of powers, elected power-holders, free and fair elections, freedom of expression and alternative sources of information, associational autonomy and civilian control over the security forces' were scrutinized. As the main criteria of substantive democracy, 'constitutional issues and legality, human rights and minority

²³ *Turkish Daily News*, "How Many Parties Are There in AKP", 19 July 2004.

rights, political rights, media, administration, local government and civil society' were investigated.

1.7. Scope of the Study

First chapter of the dissertation deals with 'liberal democracy' and 'political Islam' which have been two important issues both for Turkey and the World since the end of Cold War. The interaction between these two issues and the question whether Islam and liberal democracy are compatible or not, gained importance much more since 'September 11'. In that context, AKP which is a political Islam originated party came to the power in Turkey by November 3, 2002 elections. Since then, AKP is the governing party in Turkey. Till now AKP has been the main political actor for the democratization process by making legislative reforms to satisfy EU criteria.

The governance of AKP has been a very important experience both for Turkey and the World. It was the first time in the history that political Islamic movement came to power by a democratic process and governed the country without any anti-democratic intervention. Even more, it has been the main political agent for democratization. It is crucial to understand the democracy perspectives of AKP elites and supporters, so that we can grasp the democratization process that AKP has been going through and project what might happen in the future. In this chapter, the research method for understanding the democratization perspectives of AKP elites is set. Following the first chapter, second chapter deals with the global political Islam and its evaluation. Looking at the global picture I will try to analyze the prospective impact of global political Islam on the AKP in the upcoming chapters, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Chapter 2

Recent history of political Islam in the World

In my work, I deal with the question, “What is the democracy understanding of the political Islam in Turkey?” So that, the concept of “political Islam” lies in the heart of my work. As the political Islam is a global concept, its history and theory must be determined in a global context. In doing so, we can compare political Islamic movements in Turkey with their global equivalents; and determine similarities and differences.

2.1. Global political trends and their impacts

The history of political Islam can not be understood appropriately unless what Muslim societies and states has gone through is taken into consideration. It is seen that political Islam has been alive and enforced by the history of civilization of Islam dating back to 16th century. If it is accepted that political Islam refers to the political concepts which argue that Islam as a system of belief has something to say about how the politics and society will be regulated in the modern world, we should better understand the impact of that history.²⁴ The members of political Islam refer to that portion of history in their arguments and argue that Muslim countries were successful in the history as they were ruled by the law of Islam.

Emergence of the political Islam as a modern political act needs also to be evaluated in its historical context. First, an activist Hasan el-Benna initiated a political

²⁴ Fuller, p. 22.

movement and used the concept of Islamic state in 1950s. From that moment on, political Islam has gone through an evaluation. It is not a coincidence that political Islam emerged in that period. It is because, in the 19th century Muslim World encountered a series of Western military, ideological and cultural attacks. 20th century was the period of collapse of Muslim World and its institutions. In that era, the Ottoman, the Greatest Muslim Emperor in the history and Califate collapsed, Western imperials began to controll Arabic states directly and the Jewish state was established in the Muslim geography.²⁵

After World War II, most of the Muslim states achieved political independence. Muslim states have been under the impact of modern ideologies like socialism, communism, nationalism, facism. Almost in every Muslim states, the governments were held by small group of elites. Till the 1980s, it could be argued that the people in the Muslim World reacted to the dominant power of the West and the modernism by trying to understand and adopt them. With the decrease in oil earnings in Muslim countries; political Islam which refers to Islam religion to solve the problems of society, began to rise and gain power in Muslim societies. Iran Islamic revolution in 1979 gave important impetus to political Islam against Westernization.²⁶ In 1991 political Islamic party FIS won the elections in Algeria but the results were cancelled by state authorities.

By the end of the Cold War, new era for the polical Islam began. In the power balance of Cold War great social problems in Muslim World were able to be repressed easily. The end of Cold War initiated a new period for Muslim societies and for the states. It is argued that by the end of the Cold War the democracy began to spread through most of the world; and as a result, the globalization rose up through

²⁵ Ibid, p. 45.

²⁶ Noreng, *Petrol ve İslam*, (İstanbul: Sabah Kitapları, 1998), 10:12.

that democratic climate. In practice, people around the globe began to be more connected to one another more than ever and so did the Muslims. Information and money began to flow more quickly than ever. Goods and services which were produced in one part of the world were increasingly available in all parts of the world. International travels were more frequent. On the other hand, as critics of globalization, national societies are being integrated into a global economic system and buffeted by economic and technological forces over which they have little control. For them, the global economic problems of the late 1990s proved that costs of globalization were much greater than its benefits.²⁷

To criticize globalization, one of the most precise and referred definition is used especially by some oppositional American social scientists: It shows the hegemonic aspect of the globalization and helps us in understanding its impacts on terrorism: “The current trend for political, economic and cultural institutions of the West to be spread around the world is called globalization.”²⁸ This simple definition is consistent with two famous works written by Francis Fukuyama and Samuel Huntington whose views are perceived as the declaration of superiority of the West and its values, institutions. Furthermore some Muslim intellectuals believed that the ideas of these two social scientists are very important for understanding the US strategy that puts Muslim world in threat possessing position. According to them even though Westernization won the war against communism, it did not keep its promises to Muslim societies. In that respect Ahmet Davutoğlu states that:

“These observations and existing political realities necessitate a re-evaluation of the strategic position of the Muslim world in the post - Cold War era. First of all, we have to search for the veiled factors and reasons which lead policy

²⁷ Gilpin, *The Challenge of Global Capitalism: The World Economy in the 21st Century*, (New York: Princeton University, v. 5, 2002), 13:14.

²⁸ Sadowski, *The Myth of Global Chaos*, (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1998), 4.

makers of the systematic Great powers to intensify military and strategic operations in the Muslim world and which lead political theoreticians to present Islam as a threat to the World system. The basic reason for declaring the Muslim world as a threat is the geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-strategic potentialities of the Muslim world and the need for ideological justification for strategic and tactical operations in order to have a control over these potentialities.”²⁹

For Davutoğlu, presentation of Islam as a potential enemy has resulted in three phenomena related to the Muslim world: “It encouraged oppressive political tendencies in Muslim countries. Western powers which promote democratic values and mechanism in other parts of the world supported undemocratic regimes in the Muslim world. The rationalization was simple: a democratic system in the Muslim world may create Islamic regimes with anti-western sentiments. Such a rationalization shows that the basic motive behind this presentation is their political interests rather than democratic values.”³⁰

Whether they are right or wrong, it must be taken into consideration that the ideas above are the diluted expressions of critics to the idea of Western oriented globalization, which is accepted by a notable portion of Muslim World. As certain social scientists argued globalization in that respect is a new phenomenon and its unpredictable results is going to appear after a certain time. Regardingly, second half of the 1990s gave important signals: Financial crisis in many developing economies of the world like East Asian countries, Russia, Argentina; the ethnic conflicts in many parts of the world like Balkans, Caucasus and the rise of new types of fundamental terrorism. The ‘September 11’ was perhaps the most critical date when democracy

²⁹ Davutoğlu, “The Clash of Interests: An Explanation of the World Disorder”, *Journal of International Affairs*, Volume II-Number 4, (December 1997-February 1998), pp. 11.

³⁰ Ibid, pp. 14

and globalization were questioned and their probable negative impacts began to be discussed.

The two main types of ideologies, nationalism and religion based ideologies, had significant importance after the Cold War and are considered as one of the most negative impacts of globalization. Here fundamentalism is referred in general terms for all religions, rather than Islamic fundamentalism. In fact, these ideologies have deep roots in the history and had increasing trends for decades before the Cold War. In the late 1970s, fundamentalists began to rebel against the secularist hegemony and started to wrest religion out of its marginal position and back to center stage.³¹

It is obvious that they both had much more important definitive role in global politics in the last decade. The characteristics of nationalism and fundamentalism in the last decade were mainly different from what they have been before. Most of their fractions began to communicate with violence which is mainly terrorism. To understand their increasing importance, it should be recognized that both nationalism and religion based ideologies are not just doctrines, but a more basic way of talking, thinking and acting.³² They offer consistent alternative to the individuals who feel themselves under the attack of globalization and its features. They help individuals to define their identity.

To sum up, the collapse of Cold War opened new doors for religion based ideologies. The rise of political Islam in that term is the concrete example for that argument. By the end of Cold War, it became hard to answer the political demands by the manistream, modarate, statist political acts. Public feel free to go to the so called marginal acts as national threats to the states lost their importance by the collapse of Warsaw pact. As those movements took more support from the public they began to

³¹ Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 2000), 44.

³² Calhoun, *Nationalism*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 11.

move towards moderate lines. Those movements saw that the only way to legitimize their existence in democratic life is to accept the rules of global political system. On the other hand, global political system accepted the legitimacy of those movements as the Muslim countries need to be democratized and liberalized to integrate global system and those Islamic movements are important political tool for that democratization process. The acceptance of Taliban government in Afghanistan as legitimate leadership before 11th September was the extreme example of that approach. The government of AKP in Turkey and the rise of Muslim brothers as a legitimate democratic act can be determined by that approach. The election victory of Hamas in Palastine election help in 2006, is the recent result of that politics.

2.2. Characteristics of political Islam

Even though it is not a well established concept, the definition of political Islam needs to be determined to build a frame for discussion. Political Islam can not be determined without referring to the above mentioned history of political Islam, as it is evaluated in a historical context. Though there are several definitions, I prefer to use the following definition: Political Islam refers to the political concepts which define Islam as a system of belief. It has something to say about how the politics and the society is going to be ordered in modern world. In that context, Islamist is the one who believes that idea and try to practice it in different extends.³³ Political Islam uses the sources and the references of Islam for a certain political goal. It must be underlined that political Islam is a concept, rather than an ideology.³⁴ It must be underlined that in the political discourse of political Islam, history always played crucial role. Political Islamists who believe that Islam has something to say about how the politics and

³³ Fuller, p. 22.

³⁴ Noreng, p. 9.

society will be ordered in modern world needs to refer history to proof that once in the history it succeeded to order the society. And referring history he/she argues that if Muslims come back to Islam again, it will be possible to establish happy social and political order. Also in Turkey political Islamic acts mostly referred to the history, mainly Ottomans. Same approach is also observed in the political elites I interviewed with. But it must be noticed in official papers and top level declarations such an approach is not observed.

Before talking about the characteristics of political Islam, first it must be determined that there are mainly three mainstream types of movements of political Islam: The fundamentalists, the traditionalists and the modernists.³⁵ The traditionalists and the modernists are the ones that have the greatest impact on politics and society. What's more most of the political Islamic movements have certain common characteristics in practice.

First, it must be noticed that political Islamic acts have also common characteristics in terms of socioeconomic classes which they depend on. Historically, traders have important status in Muslim societies since the birth of Islam. It is also argued that Islam is the ideological super structure of traders.³⁶ In modern political acts of Islam, that kind of relation between Islam and bourgeoisie is observed in Turkey. Furthermore, that kind of Islamic movements are mostly initiated with white collars. Rural originated teachers, doctors and engineers are the classes which supplied most of the political Islam leaders. This is also the fact for political Islam in Turkey.

Since political Islamic movements are mostly banned or their activities are restricted, they tend to organize in civil services and NGOs. For example, they offer free health and educational services. So that they establish organic relationship with

³⁵ Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam*, (Rand Corporation, 2003), 25:38.

³⁶ Noreng, p. 10.

large segments of community. The first political Islamic act in the history, the Egyptian Muslim Brothers is also the first example of those services. All political Islamic parties in Turkey organized different types of free public services under the organization of MGH (Milli Görüş Hareketi - The National Vision Movement). It resulted with a sympathy of large volume of poor citizens to the political Islam.

Except the fundamentalist ones like Taliban, most movements have modern characteristics in terms of trying to structure political solution to the daily life problems of citizens. They try to do so in the context of current historical and socioeconomical perspective. The adoption speed of Islamists to the new technologies is an important indicator for this.

Anti-imperialism and anti-Western rhetoric have great impact on the emergence of nearly all movements of political Islam. It is the fact that, imperialist heritage had important impact for the emergence of political Islam. But the interaction between anti-imperialist affluence and Islamic identity has the mechanism that feeds one other. Therefore, it is hard to set the cause and result relation between them. For example, in Egypt anti-imperialist tendency has always been dominant for the emergence of political Islam. On the other hand, in Turkey doctrination of political Islam which mainly underlines the Islamic identity of citizens, has utilized imperialist rhetoric.

* * *

To recapitulate, this chapter has dealt with the recent history of global political Islam. It covers the evaluation of political Islam since 1980s. Political Islam is a global issue because there is a high interaction among political Islamic movements around the world. The story of the modern political Islam is quite short. It goes back to 1950s. Having looked at its history, Chapter 2 also covers the basic definitions

related to the topic. Political Islam can be defined as follows: Political Islam refers to the political concepts that accept Islam as a system of belief that has something to say about how the politics and society will be ordered in modern world.³⁷ Following the end of Cold War era, political Islam has been the ‘rising star’. Political Islam has been the only threatening-opposing act against liberal democracy.

Having looked at the global history of political Islam, in Chapter 3 we deal with the recent history of the political Islam in Turkey. I will also try to figure out the impacts of global Islamic acts on the political Islamic movements in Turkey.

³⁷ Fuller, p. 22

Chapter 3

Recent history of political Islam in Turkey

This chapter will reveal the characteristics of political Islam and political environment of Turkey. For establishing microcosmos of my study I need to relate these characteristics. Regarding my methodology, I start first with determining political environment than investigate the impacts of global political Islam the political environment.

3.1 Political environment in Turkey

The military coup of 1980 initiated a new era for politics in Turkey. First of all, the new political center of the country shifted towards the right. It is believed that the state establishment began to approach political Islam with more tolerance, in order to balance the left-wing movements. In 1983 the free election was held and ANAP came to the power as the leading party. In its government period, ANAP took serious steps towards democratization. Actually, in ANAP there was a number of leaders who had political Islamic heritage. By the end of 1990s Islamic identity of citizens were mainly represented by ANAP. By the help of neoliberal politics of ANAP, Islam had the opportunity to be brought into public space to some extent. Of course, global political trends had considerable impacts over those policies. Anti-communism was the umbrella rhetoric for whole scale of right movements. In that term the issue of democracy is not mentioned seriously by the political Islamists in Turkey.

By the 1990s, the Iron Curtain collapsed and the communism threat was over in a way that shifted the agenda of politics both globally and locally. Since the

common threat of communism to right wing politics ended; covering the right political movements like nationalism and political Islam by a certain political party like ANAP, became harder. In that period nationalist and Islamist parties had reached considerable election success.

In that period, internal politics of Turkey experienced a crucial evaluation. First, ANAP as the liberal oriented party that represents nationalists and political Islamists lost that identity as a result of the decision made by the party leadership who tried to position the party as a Western type of liberal party that dismisses Islamists. By a series of economical crisis and corruption scandals in governing parties the citizens started to look for alternatives. Moreover, rising Kurdish terrorism polarized the society and shifted lots of parameters in the country. In that context, an Islam oriented party RP and it's successors FP and AKP rose their votes during 90s. In 1991, RP got 16.4 percent of votes in general election and began to be accepted as a major candidate for the government. In the next elections in 1995 it was the leading party by taking 21.4 percent of total votes. But mainly by the promotions of state establishments and TUSİAD which is the organization of big conglomerates in Turkey, the two center right parties ANAP and DYP built up a coalition. However, because of the political rivalry between the leaders of these two parties, the coalition collapsed in a year and RP had the opportunity of establishing the government. On June 28, 1996, for the first time, the Turkish Republic had a prime minister whose political philosophy was based on Islam.³⁸

In the process of RP election victory two facts have to be underlined. Despite the fact that citizens gave credit to the center right parties to govern Turkey, those parties wasted that credit with corruption scandals and personal ambitions. And the

³⁸ Yavuz, p. 240-2.

citizens began to code the liberal politicians at the center as the political opportunists. On the other hand, in the municipal election in 1994, RP won important cities, and it had a chance to show its political practices. Most of the RP municipal presidents performed much better than the former presidents and citizens had the chance to compare the RP's operations with the other parties.

After the coup of 1980, it is observed that the Turkish state has pursued a dual-track policy of co-option and containment by providing more options to Islamist groups to participate in political and economical processes. Meaningfully, it is observed that social and political basis of the Islamic movement had experienced a major transformation at the grassroot level. The rhetoric and politics of RP shifted from MSP which was the representative of political Islam before 1980. RP abandoned the politics of anti-global, market oriented, small merchant and farmer's party. Instead it demanded full integration into the global market and saw a reduced role for the state in the economy.³⁹

3.2. Impact of global political Islam

The concept of 'Islamic state' is used in 1950s for the first time by Hasan el-Benna who founded the political organization of Muslim Brothers in 1928.⁴⁰ The organization of Muslim Brothers could be accepted as the first modern political Islamic political group. So that, the term used in the 1950s could be accepted as the term when modern thought of political Islam emerged. Since then, political Islam differentiated as a numbers of acts which differ in terms of philosophy or practice. In that term serious interactions are observed between them. For example, Muslim

³⁹ Ibid, p. 213.

⁴⁰ Beinun, Stork, *Political Islam* (Middle East Research and Information Project, 1997), p. 6.

Brothers spreaded to other Sunni Arab countries. The Iran Islamic revolution had impact over mainly Lebanon which has important portion of Shia minority.

All these global acts of political Islam had also an impact over movements of political Islam in Turkey to a certain extent. The main reason that limited the impact is the social, political and historical heritage of Turkey that is mainly linked to Ottoman. Contrary to Egypt and other Arab nations, Turkey did not experience imperialism. Therefore, different from these countries, anti-imperialism was never quite important of a thought in the birth of political Islam in Turkey.

Islam in Turkey was never a revolutionary or political tool that is used to liberate the country, as once it had been in Egypt or in Algeria. Islam rather formed part of a peaceful and obedient society, not of violent and revolutionary politics. This quiescence was the result of the fact that from the beginning of its imperial phase the Ottoman Empire had tied religion to itself by controlling the education and appointment of clergy.⁴¹

Another important difference between Turkey and the other Muslim countries is that: Turkey tries to establish tax based liberal economy. It results with the rising middle class which also consists of conservative traders. For example, there are 700,000 small merchants all over the country who have mostly conservative thoughts.⁴² As one of the most dynamic segments of political Islamic movements in Turkey, they always maintained political Islam as a form of moderate and liberal politics. Many of the important figures of political Islam, like Erbakan, Ali Coşkun are associated with the business associations of that social class. They want to integrate and do business with the international markets.

⁴¹ Hermann, "Political Islam in Secular Turkey", *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Vol. 14, No. 3, (July 2003), pp. 1.

⁴² Fırat, "Yükselen Yeni Orta Sınıf", *Capital*, 1 June 2005. p. 78-82

On the other hand in Middle Eastern Muslim countries, nearly 90 percent of workforce works in state establishments of companies. So that in contrary to Turkey, Middle Eastern and North African countries has never been tax based economy. And the ruling class formulated that fact as: “No tax, no right of representation”.⁴³ In addition to these facts, though it was interrupted by military coup, free democratic elections was held in Turkey since 1950. Political Islamic movements are mostly indirectly represented in different parties. Therefore, political Islam had the opportunity to form relations with governments and state establishment. Since 1970 political Islam is directly represented by a political party which espoused an Islamist political philosophy.⁴⁴ The 1970s also witnessed the uprising of global political Islam in most of the Muslim World. Though this is a coincidence of chronology, there is not concrete interaction between the global political Islam and the ones in Turkey.

The Iranian revolution held in 1979, had an impact over some marginalized groups of political Islam. Iran helped some terrorist organizations which aim to establish Islamic state in Turkey.⁴⁵⁴⁶ The terrorist network Hizbullah which is established in the early 1980s is the most powerful one among these groups. But due to the differences between belief systems and historical heritage of Iran, it never had considerable impact over mainstream political Islam in Turkey.

1990s were perhaps the golden ages of political Islam in Turkey, where acts in the other Muslim countries encountered serious bottlenecks. For example; Iranian Islamic State could not satisfy its promise to people. In Algeria though FIS -political Islamic act- won the elections, it was banned by the army. To sum up, political Islam had not been successful in the democratic process. On the other hand, it took place in

⁴³ Noreng, p. 25-38.

⁴⁴ Margulies, Yıldızoğlu, “The Resurgence of Islam and the Welfare Party in Turkey” In: Beinin, Stork, *Political Islam* (Middle East Research and Information Project, 1997), 148.

⁴⁵ Demirel, Terör, (Istanbul: IQ Yayınları, ed. 7, 2002), 562.

⁴⁶ “Yargı: İran Terörist”, *Radikal*, 18 October 2005.

political agenda via terrorist or guerilla acts. Afganistan and Cechenya were two similar examples. 9/11 terrorist attacks to the US was one of the most terrifying moments for the history of political Islam when it is began to be seen equal with terrorism. It was great irony that AKP which is an important symbol for the democratization process of political Islamic movements, had been established nearly two months before that attacks. For the first time in the history of political Islam in the World, an Islamic originated party AKP succeeded to win the free democratic elections and held the government in Turkey.⁴⁷

* * *

To summarize, this chapter deals with the recent history and the evaluation of political Islam in Turkey. Both local and global political and social developments had a notable impact on the rise of political Islam in Turkey from 1990 and onwards. However no significant correlation is spotted between the global political Islam and political Islamic movements in Turkey in that period.

Having overviewed the evaluation of global political Islamic movements; in the next chapter we will discuss the interaction between the political Islam and democracy. Additionally, types of democracy and criteria of democracy are determined.

⁴⁷ Fuller, p. 14.

Chapter 4

Democracy

As I am looking for an answer to the question “What is the democracy understanding of political Islam in Turkey?”, I need to deal with the concept of democracy both in a global and local context. So, I need to relate the democracy to both local and global developments. It can be seen both in global and local media that the concept ‘democracy’ is very popular. It has been perhaps, the main concept that collects Western countries in the same political direction. It has been the main concept for the political legitimization of the states and the leaders. Also in local political context, democracy has been the main issue of political legitimization for the political leaders. In addition to those, both in global and local arena the relation between Islam and democracy is questioned a lot. So that, by considering the global issues the concept of democracy and its impacts on global and local political agenda are needed to be understood.

4.1. Different democracy understandings

The collapse of Cold War meant also the victory of ideals and values of Western World.⁴⁸ During the Cold War, liberal democracy is accepted as the umbrella ideology of Western Pact. By the end of Cold War, there has been no global ideology challenging liberal democracy. Consequently, leader of Western Pact, US was able to make use of liberal democracy as means of legitimization in international politics

⁴⁸ Fukuyama, p. 2-11.

more freely. In that respect, US also believed that the lack of liberal democracy in Muslim World is the main reason of terrorism which is rooted there.

So that, the main theoretical frames of democracy need to be determined. One of the most practical definitions of democracy is made by Alexis de Tocqueville. According to him, democracy had essentially two meanings. One was a political regime defined by the rule of the people, with all the institutional and procedural mechanisms that had been specified by earlier theorists of democracy; and the other was a condition of society characterized by its tendency towards equality.⁴⁹

As theory of democracy has normative characteristics and it evaluates or prescribes governmental conditions, it is hard to reach a consensus about it. In general, there are two types of democracy: Formal and substantive. Procedural view of democracy prescribes a set of normative principles for democratic decision-making. Formal democracy is defined as sets of rules, procedures and institutions. The main criteria of formal democracies are: inclusive citizenship, rule of law, separation of powers, elected power-holders, free and fair elections, freedom of expression and alternative sources of information, associational autonomy and civilian control over the security forces.

It can be argued that the key feature of procedural democracies is that much greater attention and importance is attached to the rules and procedures by which decisions are reached than to the particular decision itself. For example, political rights such as the right to vote, freedom of speech and assembly, right of privacy and travel are far more important than the economic rights.⁵⁰

On the other hand substantive democracies focus on the fairness or justice of governmental decisions and actions but the process by which they are reached is not a

⁴⁹ Kaldor, Vejvoda, p. 3.

⁵⁰ Berry, *Why Procedural Due Process is Essential to the Functioning of a Free Society*, (Howard University School of Law, 2002), 2.

major consideration. Political rights are far less important than economic rights such as housing, education and medical security.⁵¹ So, it can be argued that, substantive view evaluates democracy on the basis of substance of government policies. Substantive democracy is a process that has to be continually reproduced, by regulating power relations in such a way to maximize the opportunities for individuals to influence the conditions in which they live, to participate in and influence debates about the key decisions that affect society. In that sense, the existence of formal mechanism and procedure is a necessity but it is not a sufficient condition for democracy. For example, today some of substantive theorists require that democratic government must guarantee civil rights and liberties. As it is mentioned above, some should also add social and economic rights to be the list of substantive outcomes as democracy insurances.

4.2. Democracy understanding of political Islam

As West accepts liberal democracy as the ultimate phase of democracy, it tries to understand how the Muslim societies and states are compatible to democracy and liberalism. The answer is important, since regarding the answer they need to attain first liberalism then democracy or vice versa. The scholars did not reach any conclusion, as there happens to be more than one definition for both democracy and Islam. What's more, the Western scholars could not build up proper model to study and understand the democratization in Muslim societies. Actually, they tried to understand it in the historical context of Western democratization experience.⁵²

Except the culturalists like Huntington, most scholars argue that in theory there is not any reason for Islam and democracy not to be compatible. But in the

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 2.

⁵² Sadowski, "The New Orientalism and Democracy Debate", In: Joel Beinin, Joe Stork, *Political Islam* (Middle East Research and Information Project, 1997), 43.

current context of Islam and Muslim societies, there are several social, historical and economical reasons that prevent the development of liberal democracy in Muslim societies.⁵³

Gudrun Kramer investigates the recent and mainstream acts of political Islam and concludes that today moderate, pragmatic Islamists have come to accept crucial elements of political democracy. But they did not have adopted liberalism.⁵⁴ Another analysis of Muslim societies regarding democracy and liberalism is made by James Q. Wilson. He questions the links between democracy and Muslim societies as well as the links between liberalism and Muslim societies. Contrary to Kramer's conclusion, he argues that liberalism is much easier than democracy to be attained in the short run.⁵⁵

Acts of political Islam can be classified into three groups regarding their political attitudes and understandings: Fundamentalists, traditionalists, modernists. In that respect, it is hard to talk about a common approach of political Islam towards democracy. We should overview the approach of main fractions of political Islam towards Islam. Fundamentalists are investigated under two groups: Radical fundamentalists, scriptural fundamentalists. Radical fundamentalists gather democracy as a wrongful creed. They think that sovereignty and the right to legislate belong to God alone. On the other hand, scriptural fundamentalists accept Islam as a form of democracy. They argue that: The West has no right to define what democracy should be like, and the Islamic form is superior because it rests on the only correct and perfect religion.⁵⁶

⁵³ Hunter, *Modernization and Democratization in the Muslim World*, (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), 1:39.

⁵⁴ Kramer, "Islamist Notions of Democracy" In: Joel Beinin, Joe Stork, *Political Islam* (Middle East Research and Information Project, 1997), 71:83.

⁵⁵ Wilson, *Islam and Freedom*, (American Jewish Committee, 2004), 1:11.

⁵⁶ Benard, p. 8-13.

Traditionalists are also fragmented into two: Conservative traditionalists, reformist traditionalists. Conservatives think that there is some room for democratic instruments in the interpretation of Islamic practice in community life and in certain sectors of public life. On the other hand, reformists think that Islam at heart has been democratic from its inception; the communities of believers is sovereign, and even the earliest leaders were chosen by democratic means. As the last fraction, modernists argue that Islam contains democratic concepts that need to be brought to the forefront.⁵⁷

The classification of the above mentioned fractions of political Islam according to the segmentation under procedural and substantive democracies will help us understand these groups globally. Though radical fundamentalists reject the idea of democracy, we can evaluate scriptural fundamentalists under substantive democracy. On the other hand, both groups of traditionalists belong to substantive democracy point of view. As a last group, modernist could be evaluated between formal and substantive democratic point of view.

4.3. Democracy as an instrument of political legitimization

Though, it was not until the 20th century that democracy was widely regarded as a good thing, today it's popularity is such that only very few and marginal politicians or observers have a bad word to say about it.⁵⁸ Especially in the last two decades the concept of liberal democracy has begun to be argued as the highest level of democracy, that is accepted as one of the most powerful values for Western civilization. Hegel had been the first thinker who proposed that the end of history will arise when the humanity reached to the ideal form of society which is liberal

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 8-10.

⁵⁸ Saward, p. 1.

democracy. Nearly two centuries after Hegel, his follower Francis Fukuyama announced that the humanity reached its highest level of civilization by the collapse of communism.⁵⁹ Especially after the World War II, liberal democracy had been the most common political ideal and cultural value of West. Huntington as an influential culturalist historian, underlined the links between democracy and Western civilizations.⁶⁰ He determined the history of democracy in three waves of democracy, all of them emerged through or empowered by West. First long term democratization wave has begun in US when the majority of males got the right of voting in 1820s. Till 1926, 29 democracies emerged. By the end of the World War II, the second wave of democracy emerged. Till 1962, 36 countries began to be governed by democracy. In 1970s, the third wave of democracy started. The collapse of Soviet Block was the peak point of that wave.⁶¹

Since the World War II, liberal democracy had been at the top of political agenda of Western Pact. It legitimized its struggle or wars against the other political systems with the aim of attaining liberal democracy. World War II was the war among liberal democracy, communism and fascism. After World War II, the Cold War took place between communism and liberal democracy. By the end of World War II, US initiated comprehensive economical, political and social programs to build up liberal democracy in countries like Japan and Germany which were formerly totalitarian. By the end of Cold War, the US establishment announced that the new war should be between liberal democracies and totalitarian regimes. George Bush announced the concept of 'New World Order' which mainly depends on the values of liberal democracies. Spreading the ideals of liberal democracy to the World was the new challenging and also proactive project of the US.

⁵⁹ Fukuyama, p. 8

⁶⁰ Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations", *Foreign Affairs*, (Summer 1993), pp. 22-49.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 24-40.

Whether it is political or real means of war, the democratic countries need political legitimization, in practice public support to go to war. For that support, the public needs to feel the real means of threat. That threat and political legitimization were emerged by the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The US political establishment launched a strategy to combat with terrorism and announced that the current war was between democracy and terrorism. Though the totalitarian regimes are still called as enemies, the reformulated message given to the public could be summarized such that: “The direct enemy is terrorism but the target is not only terrorist groups but every sources and units which support terrorism. In other words, totalitarian regimes as they support terrorism.” And the policy evolved to the doctrine where hard power can be used if it is necessary. It was named as ‘War on Terrorism’. In that context, the US President George W. Bush stated in September 29, 2001 that, “Our war on terror will be much broader than the battlefields and beachheads of the past. The war will be fought wherever terrorists hide, or run, or plan.” It is clear that Bush administration has thought of the war on terrorism quite literally, as a real war.

The war was between liberal democracy and totalitarian understanding which results with terrorism. The authoritarian states namely North Korea, Iraq, Iran and Syria had been announced as evil states which support terrorism directly or indirectly. In that respect, US argued that it has right to use power to prevent terrorism.⁶² The intervention of Afghanistan in 2001, and of Iraq in 2003 were performed via this new US strategy regarding the ‘War on Terrorism’. These wars were legitimized that if liberal democracies are to be established in these states, they will no more be the units in global system that produce terrorism. So that, spreading liberal democracy had been the legitimization of fighting with these evil states.

⁶² Roth, “The Law of War in the War on Terrorism”, *Foreign Affairs*; (January/February 2004), pp. 68.

In parallel to the above mentioned ideals, US launched the project named as BMENA which aims to bring liberalism and democracy to the region in between North Africa and Pakistan. It declared that it will support the democracy demands of the citizens of countries in that region. The other G-8 countries which had opposed to Iraq operation, declared their support to this project. The aim was announced as fighting with the social, economical and political sources of terrorism. Nearly all countries in the region mentioned above are Muslim, it was argued that the aim was understood by some analyst as spreading democracy to the Muslim World.⁶³

On the other hand, new wave of democracy emerged in the post communist countries which were still under the political dominance of Russia. In Serbia, Ukraine, Georgia, Krygzistan the opponent groups had been organized against the governments which prevent free and transparent elections.⁶⁴⁶⁵ The US based organizations and the political support of Western countries played a crucial role in the success of these movements. In all these processes, the ideal of liberal democracy played a crucial role as a tool of legitimization.⁶⁷⁶⁸

Also for the European Union (EU) bringing and maintaing the values of liberal democracy had been one of the most crucial political targets. These values took place in the documents of EU.⁶⁹ During 1970s, Spain, Portugal and Greece joined the Union and EU helped them attaining liberal democracy. Similar process is seen in another

⁶³ Sharp, "The Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative: An Overview", *Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, CRS Report for Congress*, pp. 1-6.

⁶⁴ Thompson "Stolen Elections: The Case of the Serbian October" *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 15, No.4, October 2004, pp. 159-172.

⁶⁵ Tsomaia, "Georgia's Rose Revolutions" *Foreign Policy*, (September- October, 2004), pp. 89-90

⁶⁶ Way, "Ukraine's Orange Revolution: Kuchma's Failed Authoritarianism" *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 16, No.2, (April 2005), pp. 131-145.

⁶⁷ Kuzio "Ukraine's Orange Revolution: The Opposition's Road to Success" *Journal of Democracy*, Vol.16, No.2, (April 2005), pp. 117-130.

⁶⁸ Fairbanks, "Georgia's Rose Revolutions" *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 15, No.2, (April 2004), pp. 110-124.

⁶⁹ The European Union. The European Convention. Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution of Europe", Brussel, 2003.

enlargement process of EU towards Eastern Europe. These countries fulfilled the obligations which are in parallel to values of liberal democracy, to the member of the union. It also produced partnership strategy with Mediterranean countries, Ukraine and Russia in the aim of supporting democratization and liberalization process.

Western Pact legitimated all these efforts by the ideal of establishing and maintaining liberal democracy to where it lacks. That ideal is announced to its public or World community as democracy. Democracy is easier concept than liberal democracy to be understood and be accepted. It is also argued that except Muslim countries, liberal democracy is accepted as the most ideal system of government by most of the states in the World.⁷⁰ It is proposed that it brings freedom and prosperity which every human being has right to own.

4.4. Democracy record of Turkey

Turkey is accepted as the only Muslim country which is governed by democracy. Turkey has free elections for more than 50 years. Though there were some interruptions by military coups, democratization and liberalization process had been improved in that period. After all of the coups, military went back to its barracks in a certain period and free elections have been held. It is seen that by the coups military aimed to stabilize the political chaos, rather than governing the state. That fact must be underlined to understand the role of Turkish Army in Turkish policy. On the other hand, the religion and minority issues had the central role in the democracy discussions since the establishment of Turkish Republic.

To understand the political context that AKP emerged through, the period of Turkish politics since the military coup of 'September 12, 1980' need to be

⁷⁰ Fukuyama, p. 213-4.

investigated. The 1982 Constitution, which is referred as September 12 Regime, aimed to impose on the society an authoritarian and a conservative statist conception of politics. It placed the statism at the center of the principle of republicanism, and this principle narrowed the civil politics.⁷¹

Between 1980 and 1999, the only breach in the authoritarian state-centered view occurred through the economic liberalization under Özal's masterly leadership.⁷² Some attempts toward political liberalization were held under Özal's leadership. In that term, Özal as a modernizationist conservative took serious steps to fulfill the democratic rights of conservatives. The conservative liberal synthesis found fertile ground for self expression and integration to political system. Many former Islamists had the chance of integration to the political system.

In 1990s the main issue of state was the ethnic terrorism in the South East part of Turkey. For the sake of the struggle against the terrorism some human rights are restricted and the democracy eroded. What's more, populist economic policies of the government resulted with periodic economic crisis. As a result of economic problems and bad governance, religion oriented political party RP won the general elections in 1995 as the biggest single vote getter party with 21.4. It built up coalition government with DYP. But after a year in February 28, 1997 covert military intervention occurred and RP - DYP coalition government resigned. As it is called in Turkey 'The February 28 Process' was not limited to the political wing of the Islamist movement. Islamic networks, sects, associations, and the individuals were targeted for excoriation and sometimes prosecution or court-ordered bans on their activities. Accustomed to gentle official treatment, the larger community of Islamists was traumatized and left with

⁷¹ Insel, p. 293.

⁷² Ibid, p. 296.

deep new doubts with the benign character of the state authority.⁷³ Regarding political theory, it meant that, Islamists and conservatives were pushed to periphery.⁷⁴ So that, after 'February 28' Islamists had serious democratic problems: Ban of headscarves, handicap of İmam Hatip graduates. After that term ethnic terrorism in the South East part of Turkey continued. In that region RP had tried to create policy depending on the historical brotherhood of Muslims.⁷⁵ After 'February 28' political Islamists needed to develop more modern and comprehensive democracy perspective which tries to fulfill the needs of different groups in the society.

AKP leadership which came to power with the 3 November 2002 elections, performed good record in its first year regarding democracy. It made legislative reforms to fulfill Copenhagen criteria which mainly aim democratization of candidate states. Meanwhile it was great chance that the terrorist activities of PKK were weakened. Perhaps the most important aspect of AKP's election victory regarding democratization is that the Islamists and conservatives which were once pushed to periphery by the intervention of 'February 28', were represented in the system and took leading role in the democratization process.

It can be argued that Turkey moved towards liberal democracy in the first years of AKP. In that term, some EU institutions argued that though Turkey made democratic legislative reforms on paper, they were not executed properly. It can be translated that Turkey satisfied formal democracy criterias, rather than substantive ones. It must be noticed that European Union integration process is the most important and powerful political anchor for the democratization of Turkey.

⁷³ Özel, p. 88-89.

⁷⁴ Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" *Daedalus*, (Winter 1973), pp. 169-90.

⁷⁵ Kazan, *Refah Gerçeği*, (Ankara: Keşif Press, 2002), 243:5.

4.5. Impacts of external politics on democratization of Turkey

Since the first serious democratization experience in Ottoman Empire, foreign affairs has been one of the most important facts that reinforced the democratization process in Turkey.⁷⁶ In the periods of two global democratization waves which were 1950s and 1980s, Turkey had experienced important democratization processes.⁷⁷ The time of the other global democratization wave in 1920s was a special period in the history of Turkey as it has been fighting for its independence against imperial powers.

During the Cold War, as Turkey was a member of NATO and anti-communist pact it was not questioned whether Turkey was a democratic state or not. It was directly accepted as a member of Western Pact which consists of liberal democratic states. On the other hand, by the collapse of communism Turkey needed to satisfy the criteria of liberal democracy in order to be accepted as a Western state. So, the democracy became an important parameter in its relations with the democratic Western Pact. In other words, the static political relations between Turkey and US during the Cold War, has gone over.

By the end of Cold War, US as a superpower revised its global political strategy. New strategy proposed to bring liberal democracy to the states which lack it. The project 'Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA)' also needs to be investigated in that context. Now, most of the states in the Middle East are governed by authoritarian regimes and the leading opponent groups in that states are different Islamic movements. US policy argues that in the democratization process of these regimes moderate Islamic acts can play an important role. In that respect, Turkey as the only liberal democratic Muslim country took much more attention as an

⁷⁶ Stanford Shaw, Ezel K. Shaw, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Modern Türkiye*, (Istanbul: E Yayınları ed.3, 2000), 26.

⁷⁷ Huntington, p. 129-131.

example for these authoritarian states to establish democratic regimes.⁷⁸ But this political vision of Western policy makers irritated internal identity problems of Turkey and it was refused by the Turkish political establishment, because it is believed that this policy could damage the secular characteristics of state.⁷⁹ However, as the only democratic Muslim country Turkey is still a very important case and the stability of Turkey in the region as a liberal democratic state is very strategic for US. It is emphasized by the statements of US officials for many times.

The other target of US policy towards Middle East is to foster the regime changes in the authoritarian states; Iraq, Iran and Syria in the region. For Turkey, it meant that the neighbors of Turkey would be the enemy of US which has been the close ally of Turkey for more than 50 years. Turkey did not give support to this policies. In return US looked for new allies in the region, in Iraq case it was Kurdish groups. In Iraq War, US cooperated with Kurdish groups to topple Saddam regime and as a result Iraq Kurds took serious advantages in the country. Turkey believed that this will irritate the ethnic conflict in Turkey where its Kurdish minority could appreciate their relatives in Iraq. Actually, the official Turkey policy of Washington is that all these internal problems is going to be solved by the establishment of real means of liberal democracy in the country.⁸⁰

On March 1, 2003, Turkish Parliament (TBMM) narrowly rejected a resolution to allow American ground troops to use southeastern Turkey for an invasion of northern Iraq. That decision of TBMM needs to be determined regarding the democratization process of Turkey. Especially European and Muslim countries had assumed that Turkey could not reject that resolution as it has close political and

⁷⁸ Çağaptay, "The US and Turkey from the EU Perspective", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, (Winter 2003), pp. 107.

⁷⁹ Taşpınar, "ABD'ye Güvensizliğin Anatomisi", *Foreign Policy*, (May 2005), pp. 29.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 33.

military ties with US. In other terms it is thought that the freewill of public in the TBMM will be manipulated. But TBMM rejected the resolution as most of the Turkish citizens were against that decision. As a result the decision taken by TBMM increased the reputation of Turkish democracy in regional and global politics.

For Turkey in the last 10 years, the EU process has been the most important anchor for satisfying the criteria of liberal democracy. From that point of view, US have been supporting the integration process of Turkey to EU.⁸¹ To summarize among the relation aspects between US and Turkey in the last 10 years, it must be underlined that the democratization have been one of the most crucial parameters.

Finally, during the integration process of Turkey to the EU, the situation in Turkey regarding democratization have been one of the most important parameters. Especially by 2001, Turkey performed serious legislative reforms to satisfy Kopenhagen criterias which mainly measure whether the candidate state satisfies the criterias of liberal democracy or not. Since 2001 seven legislative reform packets were accepted.⁸² It should be noticed that AKP government gave very important impetus to this democratization process to satisfy EU criteria. Only in seven months four reform packets were legislated. That satisfies the party program of AKP where it declared that it will satisfy all the criteria to be a member of EU.⁸³ It is argued by the party leaders that they performed these legislative reforms mainly for bringing democratic conditions to their citizens, rather than EU political target. But it must be considered that it should be really hard to take the support of the great portion of the citizens and the state agents without such a strong political aim. To sum up, relations

⁸¹ Khalilzad, Lesser, Larrebe, *Türk-Batı İlişkilerinin Geleceği: Stratejik Bir Plana Doğru*, (Ankara: Asam, 2001), 98:99.

⁸² Akdoğan, *Kırk Yıllık Dış*, (Istanbul: Alfa, 2004), 67:68.

⁸³ Ak Parti, *Kalkınma ve Demokratikleşme Programı*, (Ankara: 2002), 107.

with EU have been one of the most crucial issue in the democratization and liberalization process of Turkey nearly for the last 15 years.

* * *

To recapitulate, this chapter was an attempt to reveal that democracy is a very vague concept. Today, majority of people refers to liberal democracy when they speak of democracy. Therefore, we dealt with the concept of liberal democracy in chapter 4. Since the end of World War II, the influence of liberal democracy rose in World politics. By the end of Cold War, it has been the only global political ideology without any serious alternative except political Islam. Liberal democracy is used as a tool of political legitimization for many political and military acts like Afghanistan and Iraq War. As it has been accepted as the main threat to liberal democracy, the interaction between political Islam and democracy has been a very popular issue among scholars, politicians and the media. This interaction is also very important for Turkey which is a Muslim country governed by democracy and having free elections for more than 50 years.

The AKP government is a new phase for the democracy experience of Turkey as it is accepted as political Islamic party. During its government AKP has been the main political actor for the democratization process of Turkey. As AKP is political Islamic party, that fact seems contradictory. In the next chapter, I will try to understand the social and political contexts which have influenced the democracy understanding of AKP. Also the ideological framework of the party is examined to determine the democracy understanding of the party.

Chapter 5

Justice and Development Party (AKP)

As a political actor, AKP stands in the focus of my micro cosmos. To determine the democracy understanding of mainstream political Islamic movements in Turkey, I investigate the democracy understanding of AKP, which is accepted as the main representative of political Islamic act in Turkey by most of the scholars. Because of this acceptance and other reasons that are mentioned in the study, AKP is accepted as political Islamic movement.

5.1. Social and political context through which AKP emerged

Though they are related with each other, it will help us to differentiate internal and foreign political environments through which AKP emerged for understanding its ideological framework. Regarding internal political and social context, it must be remembered that in 1990s Turkish economy met with several economic crisis. In that period, corruption and political scandals eroded the legitimacy of the current political parties and the institutions. In consequence, public voted for alternative parties nearly in all elections for punishing the current parties.⁸⁴ In that respect, AKP as a newly founded party with new names has been the most serious alternative. In addition, AKP as a conservative party, which referred to moral values utilized the lack of moral legitimacy of current political parties that are engaged with political corruptions.

⁸⁴ Özel, p. 81.

Though it demonstrated an important social phenomenon, one aspect of the election victory of the AKP did not take enough attention of the scholars and commentators. Serious portion of the rural population immigrated to the big cities and established ghettos there for housing since 1960s. The first political impact of this immigration wave began to be seen in 1990s. It can be argued that these former immigrants became the most powerful segment regarding voting power. So, they began to shape the politics. As an example, in the rise of RP and to some extent the election success of MHP that fact played crucial role. But in all these political movements these immigrants are represented indirectly by the political figures coming from other social classes. On the other hand, by Tayyip Erdoğan and other important figures in the AKP, ghettos for the first time were represented in the assembly by the names coming from that social - cultural segment of the society.⁸⁵

Above mentioned two main facts created suitable social-economic condition for the emergence of political Islam in Turkey. But some political phenomenon like 'February 28' process, also gave impetus to the emergence of AKP. So, the year 1996 is important for the rise of political Islam in Turkey. In 1996, as the winner of the last political election, the Islamic party RP succeeded building up the coalition with DYP. It was the first time that Islamic rooted party succeeded in the elections in Turkey. But in a year, both domestic and foreign policies of the government created tension between Islamists and seculars in the society and disquieted the state establishment. In the end, it was inability of the coalition government to satisfy a number of criteria for secularity outlined in a document by the National Security Council as its meeting on February 28, 1997 which brought the government to downfall.⁸⁶ Till the launch of AKP, political Islamic parties FP and SP founded as followers of RP could not

⁸⁵ Göka, *Türk Grup Davranışı*, (Ankara: Aşina Kitapları, 2006), 200.

⁸⁶ Tank, "Political Islam in Turkey: A States of Controlled Secularity", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1, (March 2005), pp. 9-10.

succeed to attract the public interest in the elections. This fact showed that classical way of making politics in political Islamic lost impetus and new alternatives are looked for. In that respect, AKP can be accepted as the transformation of classical political Islam in Turkey as it considers the realities both in domestic and foreign politics. In the political victory of AKP, the anger of conservatives who once voted for different parties in the right wing, towards the 'February 28' process must be considered. Also the political prohibition and imprisonment of Tayyip Erdoğan supported that public feeling. By the help of AKP in the leadership of Erdoğan, the conservatives again had the chance of taking place in the democratic political system.

The postmodern intervention of 'February 28' was perhaps the most important recent fact that played role in the transformation of political Islamic movements to its current line. That transformation was observed among the political elites and the public supporters of political Islam. AKP which has been established by the political leaders most of whom experienced that change can be seen as the clear result of that transformation. That new frame of politics is based on culture and identity which refer to religion.⁸⁷ But it must be underlined that this is different than the political acts which directly make politics with religion. In general it can be concluded that it is in parallel with Bell's definition that accepts the culture, identity and religion as the recent spaces of new ideology which it was noticed in the former parts of my dissertation. (See page 10)

The transformation after 'February 28' can also be observed in the rhetoric of charismatic leader of AKP, Tayyip Erdoğan. Regarding his new political perspective Erdoğan was declaring that: "By conserving fundamental principles, I have changed

⁸⁷ Bell, p. 419.

and will go on changing”.⁸⁸ That change had different dimensions. Regarding the place of religion in politics he told that: “We have left behind conducting politics with religious symbols. On the other hand, we shall show everybody how believers should act in politics.” He was implying that they would no longer use discourse that would seem to the secular establishment as inclination towards Shari’ah rule.⁸⁹ In the same term he explained his views regarding laicism: “If some one still talks about state governed by Shari’ah, I do not take him serious. I think that the only solution is laicism. State should be separated from religious. It will guard the rights of religious against non religious and also guard rights of non religious against religious. That is laicism and the state will be organized to give minimum level of religious service.”⁹⁰

One of the most important impacts of ‘February 28’ is that it brought the human rights and democracy issues to the agenda of broader portion of public. It was especially new issue for the conservatives who mostly favored for the statist politics. That impact is felt mostly on political Islamic acts and their supporters, which suffered the ‘February 28’ process. Till that time political Islam and its representative in Turkey MGH (Milli Görüş Hareketi - The National Vision Movement) did not give enough attention to human rights and democracy. They have mostly noticed the problems about the restriction to the so called Islamic life style practices. By ‘February 28’ they noticed that they need more universal democracy framework which will not only support the rights of the citizens who have Islamic identity but also other segments of the society. Only by that comprehensive democracy approach, they could struggle for the rights of their voters politically. In this vein their foreign politics differentiated from the previous Islamic acts. This difference is observed mainly in the EU policy. Though the former Islamic acts were against EU, AKP from

⁸⁸ Çakır, Çalmuk, *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan-Bir Dönüşüm Öyküsü*, (Istanbul: Metis Press, 2001), 231.

⁸⁹ Heper, Toktaş, p. 17.

⁹⁰ Çakır, Çalmuk, p. 180.

the day it is founded playing very clear pro - EU political strategy. The interviewees that I talked with, supported the EU policy of AKP. Democracy promises of EU is dominantly important than the other promises like economic and social benefits for most of them. However, by the recent discussions in EU about the secular state and related applications confused their mind. The comment of Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan regarding the decision taken by the European Court of Human Rights which gave the decision that the ban of headscarves in the universities in Turkey, reflects the reaction of AKP. Tayyip Erdoğan argued that EU Court of Human Rights have not legitimacy to give decision on such a topic about the belief.⁹¹

‘February 28’ process also had economic and business impacts. By ‘February 28’ new emerging conservative Anatolian companies and businessmen lost power. Some resources like the former interior minister Meral Akşener noticed the fact that via ‘February 28’ Istanbul based big conglomerates that stopped the power of Anatolian companies.⁹² The big banking and corruption scandals that resulted in economic crisis in years 2000 and 2001 supported that thesis to some extend. In that respect, traditional businessmen who have significant social and political impacts in rural areas gave great support to AKP.⁹³

In the last five years, the big business conglomerates and their owners began to take more important roles in politics. As they wish to integrate to the global business system, they took standings for democratization in that period. In that respect, they prepared and announced the democratization report. It was the first time that via TUSIAD backed up for the democracy.⁹⁴ In the coming years, they consistently fostered that policies and in accordance with that strategy TUSIAD has

⁹¹ “Ulema Tartışması Büyüyor”, *Hürriyet*, 16. Nov 2005.

⁹² “İstanbul Kırmızı Kart Gösterdi”, *Sabah*, 25 Dec 2005.

⁹³ İnsel, p. 297-8.

⁹⁴ Tanör, *Türkiye’de Demokratikleşme Perspektifleri*, (İstanbul: TUSIAD, 1997), 1:63.

been one of the most pro - EU institutions in the country. But it must be underlined that, this political vision is quite new and in 'February 28', they had indirectly supported state establishment. But in accordance with its new democracy vision, their historical relations with political Islam has been changed. On the other hand, AKP applied social economical politics that favored the integration of the Turkish economy to the global economical system. So TUSIAD has been one of the most important civil actors which supported the legitimacy of AKP government in the global political arena. That new relationship helped AKP to change the classical rhetoric of political Islamic acts, which was against the big corporations, especially the ones in the finance industry. As a result of this new relationship AKP began to see liberalization as an organic part of democracy. But most of the AKP elites that I talked with, argued that there is not a direct relation between liberalism and democracy.

One of the other significant issues regarding the political context of Turkey before AKP won the election is that the security issues regarding the Kurdish terrorism began weakening. This problem had helped the parties MHP and DSP to win the the recent elections. If this problem had been still in the top of the agenda of the public before the 'November 3, 2002' election, probably AKP should not have achieved such a big voting power.

5.2. Foreign political context

When we thought of the period which AKP has been launched and came to power, the most important foreign issue was 'September 11' terrorist attacks to US. AKP has been established just three months before the attacks. For US and Western countries terrorist attacks to US in 'September 11', resulted with a new security and political paradigm. Regarding that paradigm, Islamic terrorism is accepted as the main source

of threat to the democratic states and the lack of democracy and liberties in Muslim countries foster the terrorism. So that US should work for supporting democracies in Muslim countries. It was a shift from the former strategy of US towards Muslim countries, as it prevented democratic initiatives in Muslim countries where political Islamic acts were the most powerful opposition groups. As these acts have considerable legitimacy in public, US and Western states were afraid of these acts to come to power and establish Islamic states. But after 'September 11' it was thought that as the current establishments in the Muslim states surpass the political acts by violating principles of democracy and as a result the power of these acts rise continuously. That creates a suitable environment for Islamic oppositions which tend to terrorism as in the case of El-Kaide. To prevent terrorism from integrating political Islamists to democratic process is began to be supported. The project 'Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA)' was developed by US in that new perspective.⁹⁵

In that strategy as the only Muslim and liberal democratic state, Turkey has important place as a concrete case of the fact that democracy and Islam can live together. As it was mentioned above, by the government of AKP, it was the first time that an Islamic rooted political movement came to power with free elections and performed for certain period.⁹⁶ AKP as a party which has Muslim identity and also accepts the ideals of democracy seems like the ideal political partner for such a strategy. Before Iraq War, it was pointed that if a state which is governed by an Islamic rooted party like AKP cooperates with US in the Iraq War, it will be quite helpful to tackle with the legitimacy problem of war in the Muslim World. AKP did not give the open credit to US for the Iraq War. Though the resolution to allow

⁹⁵ Sharp, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, CRS Report for Congress, "The Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative: An Overview", pp. 1-6

⁹⁶ Fuller, p. 15

American ground troops to use southeastern region of Turkey for an invasion of northern Iraq is rejected, US went on working with AKP in many issues in the region, rather than working with the state establishment which it used to do so. But because of the Iraq intervention, the AKP elites had deep suspicious about the US political agenda towards Muslim countries. On the other hand, an important portion of the AKP elites underlined that they appreciate US democracy conception in its hometown but not in the foreign states.

In brief, when we considered the democratization strategy of Western states after 'September 11' which is mentioned in above parts of the dissertation, it can be argued that the emergence of AKP is in parallel with the global political trends. (See page 34) It can be argued that the process experienced in World politics after 'September 11' has contradictory impacts AKP elite's democracy perception. Firstly, new policy of US which foster democracies in Muslim World is seen as an opportunity for AKP elites to certain extent. That policy of US and relation of AKP with US; is seen as an important political support for AKP in Turkey against possible state interventions to their government. On the other hand, US policy both in local and international arena which suspects all Muslim as a potential terrorists frustrated AKP elites.

The EU integration process is another important issue in foreign relations. But it must be noticed that after 'September 11', EU also began to consider the threat of Islamic extremism. So that, the importance of Turkey as a Muslim democratic state trying to join the union nearly for 40 years has risen. In that context, also before its elections victory, AKP was the party that has announced aggressive political agenda to join the union. In its program AKP declared that it will make all the political reforms that are needed to join EU. When it has been the government as a single

party, it made all the needed political reforms. As EU process and the related political reforms weakened the power of state establishment, the EU process became an important political tool in internal politics for AKP. AKP hoped that the EU political reforms will help Turkey to overcome the restrictions against freedom of expression, headscarves and the Imam Hatip schools. Mainly these restrictions are accepted as a result of the intervention of the state establishment on politics and daily life. And as the power of state establishment weakens, to overcome the above mentioned restrictions will be easier. So that almost all AKP elites with whom I interviewed, underlined the importance of the EU process regarding that perspective. Nearly none pointed about the economic advantages of the EU process. It supports the above mentioned thesis to certain extend: Turkey is going through a paradoxical period in which statist - Westernizing elites are forced to move into anti - Western positions and the West was defended by Islamic movements.⁹⁷ But the recent politics in EU countries like France and Holland regarding the Islamic minority confused the minds of the interviewees. For example, the prohibition of headscarves in French schools made interviewees to conclude that EU is not clear about the issues regarding Muslim minority. As an example, one of the political elites mentioned that the major reason that he supported EU is the human rights regarding respect to beliefs, but by the recent decision taken in France to ban the headscarves in schools confused his mind about EU.

5.3. Its linkage with political Islam

One of the key issues in my dissertation is the relation of AKP with political Islam. As it is mentioned above the theoretical frame of the political Islam is quite vague and

⁹⁷ İnsel, p. 305-6.

there is no consensus on a single definition. Therefore, I shall use one of the most general and practical definitions of it: Political Islam refers to the political concepts which accept Islam as a system of belief that has something to say about how politics and society will be ordered in the modern world.⁹⁸

While determining the linkage between political Islam and AKP, hermeneutics analysis which accepts all social and political issues and facts to be determined in their own context is quite helpful. And in some sense, political Islam is a very local concept and needs to be investigated in its own specific circumstances. So that without considering the above mentioned part ‘The context through which AKP emerged’, it is hard to determine the Islamic characteristics of AKP.

Despite its local characteristics, the above mentioned definition of political Islam is a quite broad approach and produced by non - Muslim intellectuals. That ironic fact creates some bottlenecks in investigating the political Islamic acts. Because of this problem, most of the Islamic acts in the World and the ones in Turkey do not describe themselves as political Islamists, rather they underline that they are Muslim and, naturally, it is observed that, this fact has impact on their world view to certain extend, which is in very large range. Except four of the interviewees, the Muslim identity is felt in the answers of them to the interview questions. For example, one interviewee said that he is Muslim and prefers to live in the state whose legislative system is based on Muslim rules but it is hard to satisfy the regarding conditions in the political context of current World.⁹⁹ In other words, he perceived that his wish is utopic.

In addition to hermeneutics, another social concept that is quite helpful to understand political Islam is constructivism which has also been referred in the above

⁹⁸ Fuller, p. 22.

⁹⁹ Interviewee set

sections of the dissertation. First, constructivism assumes that any society is a human construction and subject to multiple interpretations and influences. That approach helps us to understand how the civil politics replaced the ideological politics, so that we can determine the places of culture, religion and identity in political Islam. In that respect, Islamic political identity is accepted as a frame of reference that is unconsciously internalized through socialization and becomes politicized. Furthermore, it is objectified in relation to desired ends and a changing social context.¹⁰⁰ To some extent that fact also exists for the case of AKP. It is observed in my interviews, official party documents, speeches of top names in the party. In all of these resources it is seen that, AKP and its elites try to define themselves out of any ideology. Instead, they underline their identities and cultures. If we determine AKP in that way of constructivism, it is possible to determine its linkage with political Islam.

The above given definition of political Islam is both very global and also local. It is global because nearly in all Muslim countries, political Islam exists and says something about how the politics and society will be ordered in the modern world.¹⁰¹ The global trends reinforce the political Islamic acts nearly in all Muslim countries.

The method of hermeneutics analysis helps to understand both global and local characteristics of political Islam. According to hermeneutics, every single question will be investigated in its own micro cosmos. In that cosmos main issues and concepts that affect the question take place. And that social question could be understood in that context.

On the other hand, political Islam is very local concept as it is noticed in the above mentioned definition that policies differ regarding how different societies understand Islam and what it says about how the politics and society will be differed.

¹⁰⁰ Yavuz, p. 20-21.

¹⁰¹ Fuller, p. 22.

Those interpretations differ from countries to countries and take different shapes regarding the history, the social economic structure and the geography. As in our dissertation the method of hermeneutics analysis is used, the relation between AKP and political Islam is needed to be investigated in its own cosmos, which is Turkey.

In the micro social-political cosmos of Turkey, the leaders and elites of AKP are accepted as political Islamists. Actually, this understanding is parallel to above given definition of political Islam. But none of the elites that I talked with define themselves as Islamists. Two of them said that the ideal political system is the one which is designed according to Islamic laws, but they do not see this is realistic.¹⁰² There are two more people who believe that Islam has something to say about how the social rules will be shaped to certain extent.¹⁰³ If the definition that political Islam refers to the political concepts which accept Islam as a system of belief that has something to say about how the politics and society will be ordered in modern world, is accepted all these four people can be categorized in a class of political Islamists.

As it is mentioned in the above parts, history always played crucial role in the political Islamic acts (See page 19). Political Islamists who believe that Islam has something to say about how the politics and society will be ordered in the modern world, need to refer to the history to prove that in the history Islam succeeded ordering the society for many times. It also exists for AKP elites to some extent. Certain portion of the interviewees also referred to the success that Ottoman attained in the history to prove how the Islam could play positive role in social and political life. That is the fact especially for the interviewees who come relatively from lower social-economic status of society. But it must be noticed that, in the official papers

¹⁰² Interviewee set

¹⁰³ Interviewee set

and the declarations of AKP leaders, such approaches and references are not observed.

Different researches, questionnaires and analysis also put AKP in the category of Islamist according to the related definition. For example, nearly 28 percent of the AKP voters arrange their daily life according to the Islamic principles.¹⁰⁴ To be more concrete ladies and men sit and talk in different rooms. And except one or two ministers, nearly all of the wives of ministers have headscarves. Without discussing whether headscarves and above mentioned discrimination between men and women are Islamic rooted or not, we only notice that these behavioral patterns are accepted as symbols of Islam in micro social cosmos of Turkey.

In the recent micro political cosmos of Turkey three main issues that caused political and social conflicts are; ban of headscarf, restrictions on the İmam Hatip High Schools and restriction of alcohol sales in some districts of cities. These discussions categorized the society in two parts: The ones who favor the impact of Islamic values in daily life and the ones who do not. AKP government is in the focus of these discussions and takes very clear position in the favor of formers. Actually, three issues have very important symbolic meanings regarding Islam for the Turkish citizens. AKP leaders and elites argue that their policies regarding these issues are in the extent of respecting to the values and beliefs of public.¹⁰⁵¹⁰⁶¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, AKP politicians do not seem to have common and clear opinions about the other issues like the demands of Alevi and the restrictions of alcohol sales in some districts. Regarding these discussions, AKP's general perspective can be summed up such as: The demands of these groups and minorities conflict with the demands and the world

¹⁰⁴ "Yüzde 28'de Harem Selamlık Protokolü", *Milliyet*, 20 June 2005.

¹⁰⁵ "Türban İçin Yol Haritası!", *Milliyet*, 19 April 2005.

¹⁰⁶ "Vallahi Halk Böyle İstiyor", *Radikal*, 23 April 2005.

¹⁰⁷ "AKP'liler 'Mistiklik' Topunu Alevilere Attr", *Sabah*, 12 March 2004.

view of majority who are called as public by AKP elites. For example, in the case of Alevis, significant portion of interviewees argue that the Islamic interpretation of the ones who call themselves as Alevi, is not proper according to the common Islamic interpretation of public.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, in the case of alcohol sales restrictions, it is argued that the existence of restaurants with alcohol in the city centers disturb the public. From that point of view, it can be argued that the alcohol consumption and the habit of going to restaurants with their family are very low in public. So that it can be assumed that the important portion of the public favors the decisions of AKP municipalities. But majority is not the only source of legitimacy in the liberal democracies.¹⁰⁹ That approach conflicts with AKP's stand regarding the issues like the ban of headscarf in universities. Though most of the students in the universities are without headscarves, AKP do not bother about the view of majority in that case. To conclude, it can be argued that AKP does not have democracy perspective for all cases.

5.4. Ideological framework

The main sources to determine the ideology of any political act are its official papers and documents. Before AKP is launched Tayyip Erdoğan had declared that the political identity of the coming party will be 'conservative democracy'. In a conference 'International Symposium on Conservatism and Democracy' held by AKP to discuss its official political philosophy, AKP leader Tayyip Erdoğan underlined that AKP accepted the concept of conservative democracy as its official political

¹⁰⁸ Interviewee set

¹⁰⁹ Franck, "Democracy, Legitimacy and the Rule of Law: Linkages", NYU Law School, Public Law and Legal Theory Working Paper No. 2 (1999).

philosophy.¹¹⁰ It is the first time that a political party needed to define its political philosophy and to declare it to be discussed by public and intellectuals. So, the concept of conservative democracy stands in the core of AKP ideology. It is a good starting point to discuss the ideology of the party.

According to the AKP, the conservative democracy proposes universal democracy understanding that does not conflict with the values of public. The main dynamic of that democratization is the support of public.¹¹¹ That concept is discussed by scholars and commentators, and it is noticed that there is not any concept in political science literature which is called conservative democracy. And that concept is called as eclectic as two concepts –conservative and democracy- that are not consistent with each other to be synthesized organically. It is proposed that, these two concepts, conservatism and democracy, contradict with each other as conservatism is about conserving the values of society, however, when anyone is democrat it is hard to conserve these values.¹¹² But that argument is rejected that: “The ones who call that concept as eclectic make such a mistake that they think conservatism is equal to statism. But actually statism is not the only concept under the topic of conservatism. There are some conservative political movements which performed very reformist politics. When that is understood it will be seen that democracy and conservatism can be integrated.¹¹³”

When the party program, election manifesto and ‘urgent action’ plan of the AKP is determined, three outstanding categories, which are not unfamiliar to Turkish, centre right parties come to the fore. The first feature that can be described as the

¹¹⁰ Erdoğan, *Uluslararası Muhafazakarlık ve Demokrasi Sempozyumu*, (Ankara: Ak Parti Siyasi ve Hukuk İşleri Başkanlığı, 2004), 5:7.

¹¹¹ Fırat, p. 20-21.

¹¹² Sarıbay, Ak Parti Siyasi ve Hukuk İşleri Başkanlığı, *Uluslararası Muhafazakarlık ve Demokrasi Sempozyumu*, (January 2004), 24.

¹¹³ Çelik, *Uluslararası Muhafazakarlık ve Demokrasi Sempozyumu*, (Ankara: Ak Parti Siyasi ve Hukuk İşleri Başkanlığı, 2004), 269-273.

‘synthesizing tendency’ is related to the self-definition of the party. AKP defines itself as democratic, conservative, reformist and modernist. It argues that AKP cannot be classified under left or right wings of classical political terminology. With the term democratic, the emphasis is on ‘a vision of Turkey... where differences are perceived not as a source of conflict but as richness.’ The conservative feature of the party is expressed in the perception of Turkish society as a big family with a common fate, sharing bitter and sweet memories. The reformist and modern aspects are lumped together in the assertion of the will to prepare Turkish society to meet the challenges of globalization.¹¹⁴

The above mentioned political frame puts AKP in civil politics, rather than ideological politics. As it is mentioned in the first parts of the dissertation, the mass ideologies of Asia and Africa are parochial, instrumental and created by the political leaders.¹¹⁵ In parallel to that, the normative consensus held that civil politics replaced ideological politics that no comprehensive changes should be introduced and no changes in the way of life should be undertaken if they could not be reversed.¹¹⁶ AKP refers to the common values of the public and underlines that it refuses to propose the alien policies and ideologies to the characteristics of nation and to the public. So, AKP shows normative understanding of politics. What’s more, AKP mostly refers to culture and identity and tries not to be categorized under any political ideology. In Turkey, identity and culture are related to the religion very much. And the main characteristics of civil politics are that it refers to culture, identity and religion as AKP did, rather than ideology.

¹¹⁴ Coşar, Özman, “Centre Right Politics in Turkey after the November 2002 General Election: Neo-liberalism with a Muslim Face”, *Contemporary Politics*, vol. 10, Number 1, (March 2004), pp. 62–63.

¹¹⁵ Bell, p. 413-4.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p.419.

The center and definitive role of Tayyip Erdoğan for AKP is also quite parallel with the political trends of the last century's Asia and Africa. As it is noticed in the above portions of the dissertation, the mass ideologies of Asia and Africa are parochial and instrumental and these mass ideologies and politics are created by charismatic political leaders like Tayyip Erdoğan.¹¹⁷ In parallel to this view, 46 percent of AKP parliaments said that the most significant reason for AKP's winning the 'November 3, 2002' parliamentary elections is the fact that AKP has charismatic leader.¹¹⁸

It is argued that the ideological frame of the concept conservative democracy has lots of similarities with the concept of conservative liberalism.¹¹⁹ But AKP accepted conservative democracy instead of liberal democracy as it does not fully accept the ideology of liberalism.¹²⁰ In the party program of AKP, it is observed that democracy and the values of the public are two of the concepts that were referred most.¹²¹

Though it refuses to define its ideology as liberal AKP has overtly displayed its neo-liberal leaning both in its pre-election discourse and its practices after coming to power. The neo-liberal and market based approach that dominates the party identity in the economic preferences has been symbolized by the emphasis on 'making Turkey an international trademark' and in Erdoğan's rather ambiguous description of his party's plan for transforming active politics into the politics of merchants. Thus, regulations in the socio-economic sphere are realized on the basis of privatization, creating incentives for foreign investment and compliance with the criteria determined by the IMF. Both prime-minister Tayyip Erdoğan and finance minister Kemal

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. 413-4.

¹¹⁸ Tekin, p. 237.

¹¹⁹ Sarıbay, p. 24-25

¹²⁰ Fırat, p. 21.

¹²¹ AKP, *Kalkınma ve Demokratikleşme Programı*, (Ankara: Ak Parti, 2002), 6: 24

Unakıtan used the rhetoric of ‘marketing Turkey’ in many times during the discussion about the privatization of the AKP. Tayyip Erdoğan also criticized the opponent parties as they make the nationalism of capitalism.¹²²

Adherence to neo-liberal principles is also prevalent in the party’s policy setting in the sphere of public administration. Both in the official documents of the party and in the draft of law on public administration reform prepared by the AKP government it has been repeatedly emphasized that there is a need for an overall transformation in the public administration system via privatization and decentralization in local government. It is seen that the AKP perceives decentralization as a means for more efficient conduct of public services in a managerial fashion. Underlying such a perception is the conception of the state as a mechanism for service to people which coincides with the dominant argument that shaped ANAP and DYP discourses in the eighties and nineties.¹²³

As it is noticed above, actually the liberal characteristics of AKP is more dominant than its democratic characteristics. The definitions of the concepts liberalism and democracy also support that argument. (See page 9) So that, it is important why AKP underlines that ‘conservative democracy’ is consciously preferred as official party philosophy, rather than ‘liberal democracy’. It can be assumed that that preference has also important pragmatic and instrumentalistic reasons. In most cases, liberalism is not so sympathetic concept for public, also in so called liberal and democrat countries like US. For example, in a research made in Turkey it is asked to the voters that “What is the characteristics you looked for while voting?”. Despite 28.4 percent of interviewees answered as that ‘being democrat’ is the main characters I am looking for while voting, only 5.3 percent answered that they are looking for

¹²² ‘Ülkemi Pazarlamakla Mükellefim’, *Milliyet*, 16 Dec 2005.

¹²³ Coşar, Ozman, p. 63.

'liberalism' while voting.¹²⁴ As most of the voters do not have indepth knowledge about the theoratical frame of ideologies like democracy and liberalism, their answers mostly depend on their perception of these concepts rather than their conceptual meanings. So that, it can be argued that while AKP choosing 'concerervative democracy' instead of 'liberal democracy' party elites also considered the public perception of regarding concepts.¹²⁵

When the interviews with the party elites are investigated it is seen that some comments of them are in parallel with the above mentioned analysis which depends on mainly the official texts of party and the party top leaders. Nearly none of them defined their political view directly as conservative democracy. It is normal that this political concept is quite new and that phrase is used first by AKP leadership. What's more, except four of them, they do not want to categorize their political view in any ideology. Instead, they prefer to refer political values to define their political views. Most common values which they referred are democracy, national values and human rights.¹²⁶ During the interviews it is also observed that the significant portion of interviewees refer to the views and policies of their party leader Tayyip Erdoğan. In that respect, AKP, again suits the condition of Daniel Bell's definition of mass ideologies and civil politics observed in Asia and Africa in the 20th century. As we mentioned in the above given parts of the dissertation, these ideologies are instrumental and they are created and manipulated by charismatic leaders.¹²⁷

Interpretation of the interviews shows that AKP elites do not think in the same way with the AKP leadership in some political issues. One of them is economic liberalism. Though nearly all of them defined themselves as democractic, they do not

¹²⁴ Özsoy, *Türkiye'de Seçmen Davranışları ve Etkin Propoganda*, (Istanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 2002), 112.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 77 - 96

¹²⁶ Interviewee set

¹²⁷ Bell, p. 419

see economic liberalism as a fundamental pre-condition of democracy. On the other hand, in the public speeches AKP leadership uses very neo-liberal rhetoric, especially, about the subjects related to the economic issues.¹²⁸ Despite this neo-liberal rhetoric, it is argued that the way of Tayyip Erdoğan's policies need to be defined as instrumentalist, rather than neo-liberal. When AKP and Erdoğan's views are evaluated in a broader range, they seem much more coherent to instrumentalism and pragmatism than neo-liberalism.

When the political perspective of AKP is compared with RP, which is the main political Islamic party after 1980, very sharp differences are observed. As Tayyip Erdoğan underlined, AKP has different way than the political perspective of National Vision, which is the political philosophy of RP. It is seen that AKP launched very different political vision regarding different issues like economy, foreign affairs, democracy and human rights than RP. When compared with RP, the policies of AKP can be accepted as much more liberal, democratic, realistic and in the axis of global values.¹²⁹

5.5. Democracy conception

When the party discourse and the documents on democracy are analyzed, it is seen that AKP satisfies most of the fundamental characteristics of liberal democracy. But still, some aspects of its view contradict with the liberal democracy model. This contradiction is observed in especially participatory principles. So, in some cases the AKP's interpretation of democracy seems like ambiguous. This interpretation can be determined on the basis of four dimensions that feature in party discourse repeatedly. Firstly, the party expresses its commitment to democracy with recourse to individual

¹²⁸ 'Ülkemi Pazarlamakla Mükellefim', *Milliyet*, 16 Dec 2005.

¹²⁹ Kazan, p. 167-302.

rights and liberties, and with tolerance towards difference, which is in line with the liberal democratic model. This is especially observed in the AKP's disposition regarding in the process of Turkey's membership of the EU.

The second dimension is related to the AKP's definition of democracy as "... a political race for serving the nation and a regime of tolerance". This definition can be read in terms of the metaphorical connection between the family and society – read as the Turkish nation – and the definition of political activity on the grounds of the 'revelation of national will' and 'consensual platform that excludes conflict'. Such a formulation is explicitly in line with an organic approach to society and politics, and thus contradicts with the above mentioned first dimension.¹³⁰

Third, the party also pays tribute to the pluralist conception of democracy. This is most evident in its economic preferences. What's more, its policies regarding Kurdish issue and Armenian genocide discussions is in parallel with that perspective. On the other hand, AKP does not encourage different portions of the society to take part in decision taking process in some issues like the ban of sales of alcohol in some districts. That contradicts with the party's claim to support participatory democracy. In this respect, the fourth dimension, which concerns the party's claim to support participatory democracy, is illuminating. The party tries to substantiate this support with recourse to the draft law on public administration. Such a connection might appear to be appropriate at first glance, especially, on the basis of governance principle, which stipulates a decision-making mechanism that is not concentrated in the centre/state but composed of a network of agencies participating in due course.¹³¹ But in some cases AKP tries to overrule law. It damages the law of freedom which also guarantees the rights of every citizen against the tyranny of majority.

¹³⁰ Coşar, Özman, p. 62-4.

¹³¹ Coşar, Özman, p. 64.

Democracy in the conservative democratic scheme is formulated with reference to an organic understanding of society -in AKP terminology- the Turkish nation. It is obvious that this scheme might in future conflict with the practice of individual rights and liberties. If it is accepted that the only hardship that Turkish democracy faces is the dominance of the military in civilian affairs, then AKP stands as the ideal candidate for a democratic opening up. A critical analysis of the AKP's ideological identity, which is relational to state - individual and society - individual relations, as well as to the issue of social rights. By some scholars it is argued that the transformation that AKP might possibly bring about does not connote a transformation from state - centered to society - centered politics, but a shift in state-centered politics with a different political cadre. This fear is mainly related with the fact that Turkey has not strong democracy tradition. What's more the three factors in the AKP's identity strengthen the doubts about the party policies. First, the shift noted above embodies conformity with neo-liberal principles. Second, the bulk of AKP members have a historical -if not organic- association with the National Vision Movement tradition. Third, Islam - though in an allegedly 'depoliticized' form - still occupies a significant place, especially, in the party's approach to democracy. The combination of these three factors tempts one to conclude that AKP rule means a neo-liberal policy with a Muslim face.¹³²

If we consider the opinions of party elites regarding the concept of democracy, one will see that they mostly refer to the restrictions of headscarves and religious education. That approach is quite normal as they meet with these problems in their daily lives. Following 'February 28', the importance of democracy and human rights had been understood more thoroughly. It is seen that the only way to guarantee human

¹³² Ibid, p. 68 – 69.

rights is developing a global democracy approach which considers different segments of the society. In that respect, it is an important fact that nearly 30 percent of the elites said that more rights to the people who are Alevi, should be given.¹³³ When the classical rhetoric of political Islam in Turkey is considered, it is a sign of important break from political Islam.

It is a good point to discuss why AKP defined its official political philosophy as conservative democracy, rather than liberal democracy. As it is mentioned in the above chapters of the dissertation, liberalism is the rule of law which prevents certain personal rights or free spaces from the control of state. On the other hand as it is mentioned above, democracy is the concept where all citizens had the right to govern the certain portion of the political authority.¹³⁴ If we analyze the interviews and the rhetoric of party elites, most of the problems they pointed out are the issues related with the lack of liberalism. So, it is seen that most of these problems can be solved by liberalism. The citizens have the right to be elected and to vote. In that respect, political participation, which is the main practice of democracy, is also the most essential right of liberalism. So, liberalism and democracy are historically interrelated.¹³⁵

* * *

To summarize, this chapter has tried to reveal that ‘Political Islam’ is also a vague and problematic concept. I preferred to use one of the most practical definitions of it: Political Islam refers to the political concepts that accept Islam as a system of belief that has something to say about how the politics and society will be ordered in modern world.¹³⁶ According to this definition AKP is regarded as political Islamic

¹³³ Interviewee set

¹³⁴ Fukuyama, p. 57

¹³⁵ Fukuyama, p. 57-8

¹³⁶ Fuller, p. 22

party. AKP has been the main political agent of democratization process in the country since its government. This fact is a signifier of the transformation of political Islamists in Turkey. There are different aspects of that transformation: Social, political, economical and foreign political conjuncture. Within these aspects, the intervention of 'February 28' plays crucial role. By 'February 28' process the democracy demands of conservatives in Turkey rose. Also, Islamist politicians understood that they need to establish a political framework which depends on universal democracy understanding. External political conjuncture also affected the new policy of political Islam in Turkey. Also, Western pact supported the democratization processes in Muslim countries.

In chapter 6, the democracy understanding of AKP elites was set out through indepth interviews made with AKP elites. While designing these interviews formal and substantive democracy criteria were taken into consideration.

Chapter 6

What do AKP elites perceive of democracy?

Before trying to address the question that what the AKP elites understand from democracy, few points should be measured carefully. First of all, this dissertation does not compare the democracy understanding of AKP elites to that of the other party elite's understanding. Instead AKP elite's democracy understanding is analyzed with respect to the formal and substantive democracy criteria.

When the answers of interviewees are considered, it is seen that world views of interviewees satisfy the basic criteria of democracy. As it is mentioned above, democracy is simply the concept where all citizens had right to govern the certain portion of political authority. The criteria of formal democracy are inclusive citizenship, rule of law, separation of powers, elected power-holders, free and fair elections, freedom of expression and alternative sources of information, associational autonomy and civilian control over the security forces. Except one of them, all elite said that they favor these criteria and underlined that they are democrat. But, mostly direct questions are misleading in interpretation so alternative questions were asked. Doing so, it is determined that dominant portion of the interviews perceive the attitudes; 'respecting to different values, beliefs and ideologies' and 'defending liberties' as the main characteristics of being democrat.¹³⁷ They mostly emphasized the importance of two criteria; elected power-holders, civilian control over security

¹³⁷ Interviewee set

forces and separation of powers. In addition, some also criticized especially the power of bureaucratic institutions like security forces and legislation.¹³⁸

As it is mentioned in the preceding chapters of the dissertation, according to theories of democracy, the existence of formal mechanism and procedure is a necessity but by no means a sufficient condition for democracy. So that, criteria of substantive democracy need to be considered.¹³⁹ The substantive democracy is a process that has to be continuously reproduced, a way of regulating power relations in a way to maximize the opportunities for individuals to influence the conditions in which they live to participate in and influence debates about the key decisions that affect the society. When we go over the interviews, we see that they lack the concept of substantive democracy. For example; ‘considering the ideas of society during the decision making process’ is not referred as one of the criteria of democracy.

On the other hand when the basic definition of liberalism is compared with the above given democracy perception of interviewees, it can be argued that democracy perception of AKP interviewees satisfy the criteria of liberalism, rather than democracy. But it should be noticed that it is hard to differentiate liberalism and liberal democracy as they have series of common criteria.

Parallel to that, the majority of the AKP elite referred to the countries like Japan, US, Canada and UK as examples of the most ideal democratic states, rather than Continental European states. The percentage that refer Continental European States as an example for ideal democratic state is significantly lower than the Anglo - Saxon democracies and Japan.

But one must notice that the interviews have contradictory feelings about US due to the current foreign politics of US especially in Middle East. Some interviewees

¹³⁸ Interviewee set

¹³⁹ Saward, p. 1-2.

emphasized that US is democratic in internal politics, but not in foreign politics. Such negative comments of interviewees can be taken as the consequence of US Middle East policy on the perception of AKP elites. These comments do not mean that AKP elites feel less sympathy to Anglo - Saxon democracies when compared with the other universal democracy practices.

It is also interesting that significant number of the interviewees expressed that they like Japan for its democracy understanding. They noticed that Japan succeeded to conserve its values and consider its public will while getting the universal democracy criteria. On the other hand, only one interviewee referred Nordic democracies as the most ideal democratic states. Despite the universal popularity of Nordic democracies, such attitudes of interviewees are quite symbolic.

On the other hand, it is observed that the elites are sceptic toward EU regarding its democracy understanding. Only 15 percent of elites told specifically that they appreciate EU democracy. As it is mentioned above they favor Anglo - Saxon democracies as they believe that Anglo - Saxon states favor personal liberties much more. One of the main reasons of that scepticism is the recent governmental practices towards Muslim minorities in these countries. During the interviews many of them referred the recent regulations like ban of wearing headscarves in public schools and hospitals.¹⁴⁰ Recent decision of the European Court of Human Rights which gave the decision that bans wearing headscarves in the universities in Turkey is not against human rights.¹⁴¹ These decisions had significant impact over the perception of elites towards EU and its democracy practices.

Another reason of the EU skepticism is the EU integration process of Turkey. EU criticizes Turkey because of not satisfying conditions of human rights. Especially

¹⁴⁰ “Fransa’da Hastanelerde Türban Yasağı Yürürlükte”, *Hürriyet*, 11 Dec 2005.

¹⁴¹ “Avrupa İnsan Hakları Mahkemesi’nden Başörtüsü Yasağına Onay”, *Hürriyet*, 5 March 2005.

discussions about minority rights fostered that scepticism, especially for nationalist elites. They believe that EU has hidden political agenda towards Turkey, rather than aiming democratization of Turkey.

6.1. Future perspectives

The election victory and then the government of AKP is an important case for the future of democracy both in Turkey and in the world. AKP will be the first Islam oriented political movement which came to the power with free elections and then ruled the country for certain period in the history.¹⁴² If AKP do not lose government by any anti-democratic intervention or process, it will be special case for proving the fact that political Islam and democracy can live together.

The case of AKP is also a strong message to the supporters of the political Islamic movements in Turkey who have been disappointed by ‘February 28’ process. By the government of AKP they have seen that a political Islam originated party is allowed to come to power and manage the state in the democratic regime. It should also be considered despite the ‘February 28’ intervention, mainstream Islamic movements preferred to struggle within the borders of democracy, rather than via illegal activities like terrorism. So the importance of that political experience could be seen better.

One can argue that the party elites integrated with democracy much more during AKP’s governance period. Negotiation and democracy practices had even played an important role in the establishment of the party. It is known that there are three main political fractions in AKP: Islamists, nationalists and liberals.¹⁴³ Though the roots of the party based on political Islam, that core fraction needed to negotiate

¹⁴² Fuller, p. 15.

¹⁴³ “How Many Parties Are There in AKP”, *Turkish Daily News*, 19 July 2004.

with and compromise different political views to establish a political party which will come to the power and win the election. For AKP leadership, it was a choice between being core Islamic movement or being Islamic rooted conservative movement. Tayyip Erdoğan and the other party leaders chose the second alternative. In the interviews there is no sign that this choice is questioned or criticized even by Islamist elite.¹⁴⁴

AKP elite still experience democratization process in the party. Even though AKP leader Erdoğan seems like an authoritarian leader, he is tolerant to the discussions within the party to some extent. In some cases internal party opposition is greater and more effective than the opposition of different parties or external opponent groups. When the tradition of political parties in Turkey is considered, AKP can be accepted much more democratic than most of the other parties. It can be argued that such democratic experience will make AKP elites more tolerant to different views. The social impacts of that democratic environment on the political Islamic movements should be observed better in the long run.

Apparently there are some certain threats on that internal democratization process. Firstly, majority of the AKP elite think that state establishment which consist mainly army and legislation bodies is obstacle to the democracy.¹⁴⁵ Most of them think that state establishment prevents democratization especially in some issues. They believe that owing to the state establishment the citizens lack basic human rights which are mainly related to religion.¹⁴⁶ The ban of headscarves in public spaces and the problems of Imam Hatip High School graduates in university entrance examination are the two common symbolic examples for these rights. But they are still optimistic about the solution of those problems. It is felt that AKP leadership,

¹⁴⁴ Interviewee set

¹⁴⁵ Interviewee set

¹⁴⁶ Interviewee set

mainly Tayyip Erdoğan plays critical role in that respect. He is able to control the reactions of its supporters whose demands are not fulfilled.

Regarding the above mentioned demands and problems, AKP leaders and elites mostly use rhetoric of opposition. They imply that despite the fact that they are government, they could not take the necessary steps for the solution of the problems. The party leaders give message to their supporters that they do not want to cause regime problems and discussions. In that respect, they advise the supporters to be patient. Under certain circumstances this is a problematic situation in terms of democratic regime. If those demands continue and the problems could not be solved; the feelings of disappointment can take the place of hope and patience among the party supporters and elites. At the end, it is possible that they can feel disappointment towards democracy and democratic regime. Then a crucial question comes up to one's mind: What will be the reaction of AKP elites in such a condition. At that point AKP leaders, especially Tayyip Erdoğan will again play important role.

As it is mentioned above the basic demand of the AKP elites regarding democracy, is the restriction of the sovereignty of state establishment in certain areas. For example, two of the elites told that the army staff in the Western countries are normal officials who do not have any exceptions and report to the government but in Turkey they have very large rights and that is anti-democratic. Also important portion of the elites said that in Turkey legislative bodies have political characteristics and do not perform their duties properly. The elites believe that these state bodies create pressure and restrictions over citizens with regards to religious beliefs.¹⁴⁷

Having conducted 15 indepth interviews, it is felt that if these problems are solved AKP supporters and elites will not have any serious demands relating to

¹⁴⁷ Interviewee set

democracy. Nearly 50 percent of the elites argued that if the above mentioned problems which restrict the private space of citizens, are solved Turkey should be much more democratic than the Western states. However it is observed that they do not give adequate attention to the substantive democracy criteria. As it is mentioned in the former parts of the dissertation the substantive democracy is a process that has to be continuously reproduced, a way of regulating power relations in a way to maximize the opportunities for individuals to influence the conditions in which they live to participate in and influence debates about the key decisions that affect the society.

From a point of view, it is perceived that the democratic demands of AKP elites and supporters are mainly about liberalism, rather than democracy. In Western liberal democracies, economic freedom is an important parameter. However AKP elites and supporters do not deal with economic freedom as an important aspect of democracy at all. Nearly 80 percent of the elites told that economic liberalism is not a prerequisite for the democracy. On the other hand nearly 70 percent of the elites underlined the importance of civil society as an important institution for properly working democracy. This perspective is closely related with the tradition of political Islam in Turkey. Most of the political Islamic movements, even AKP has its roots stemmed from MGH (Milli Görüş Hareketi - National Vision Movement). Different foundations and NGOs -most powerful was National Movement Foundation- played important roles in the organization and politics of MGH especially when there are restrictions on the political Islam. Moreover, historically NGOs have taken important place for different religious communities and sections in Turkey. These groups organized their activities via these NGOs historically. To summarize AKP elites focus mainly on the religious freedom of citizens and the border of private space in daily

life, rather than how the individuals influence the conditions in which they live. Therefore, it is hard to argue that public and also AKP supporters have a strong motivation for further democratic reforms.

One of the weakest points of democracy is that it can create a tyranny from the majority. So, that fact is also questioned in the interviews. Nearly all the elites told that for establishing a new regime like Islamic or socialism, taking the support of the majority of the citizens is not enough. In other words, they think that any party or political group who wants to establish different type of regime and took the public support, still does not have the legitimacy of changing the current regime. That approach can be considered as a signal that regime discussions can lose its importance in the future.

EU process will be significant both for the future of democratization and the AKP. From day one, AKP had been a keen supporter at EU process. AKP used the EU process for democratization and doing so; fulfilling the demands of its supporters. For breaking the power of state establishment EU is leveraged as a critical tool.

Obviously strategy of AKP has certain bottlenecks. Firstly it is not clear to what extend EU process will help to fulfill the demands of AKP supporters regarding the ban of headscarves and Imam Hatip Schools. In the last year some EU countries restricted the use of headscarves in public spaces in their own countries. European Human Rights Court also rejected the file of Turkish girl who argued that his university right is restricted because of headscarves. What's more publication of the cartoons of prophet Mohamed in some EU countries in the name of press rights was risen questions regarding the values of EU. All of these cases signal that EU process could not fulfill the demand of AKP supporters. In the meanwhile rising minority terrorism in Turkey causes the rise of nationalist tendencies in the country. Some

politicians relate the rise of terrorism to the result of EU democratization process which gave many rights to minorities. In that internal political conjecture it will be problematic for AKP leaders to support EU process.

The interviews also support the above mentioned rising skepticism about EU among AKP supporters and elites. Nearly 40 percent of the elites told that they do not believe that EU is sincere about democratization request. It is observed that above mentioned cases has important part on skepticism. But still nearly 70 percent of the elites accept that EU accelerated the democratization process of Turkey. For example, one of the elite told that it was impossible to perform the recent democratization reforms. Majority of the elites accept EU as a tool on the way of democratization and the development of the country, rather than Turkey's being the part of EU.

In parallel to the EU skepticism it is seen that the AKP elites have different approaches to certain issues. Firstly, important portion of them do not recognize crucial democracy problem if the issues like headscarves and Imam Hatip Schools are solved. Except two ethnically Kurdish elites no one thinks that there is an important minority issue in Turkey. What's more these elites do not except Kurds as minority and believe that their problems should be solved under the topic of human rights, rather than minority rights.

Though the support given by the public to the EU process has weakened, EU is still the most important tool for AKP to restrict the power of state establishment. But in the future it will be harder for AKP leaders to use EU tool for democratization. So they will probably need to look to alternative strategies for fostering liberalism and democracy.

* * *

To summarize, the interviews made with AKP elites illustrate their political perspectives satisfy the fundamental criteria of democracy. It is seen that their democracy understanding is mainly about protecting civil liberties of public from state authorities. So it can be argued that from a certain point of view their understanding has a tendency towards liberalism, rather than democracy.

The basic demand of the AKP elites regarding democracy is the restriction of the sovereignty of state establishment in certain areas. So that, they hope the problems like the ban of headscarves in public space and the disadvantageous of Imam Hatip High School graduates will be solved. Seemingly, the elites argue that except these problems there are no serious problems regarding democracy in Turkey. It is possible that if these demands of AKP supporters are satisfied in the future they will probably not demand the democratization of Turkey. On the other hand, if these demands are not fulfilled, politically problematic scene will take place. AKP supporters and conservatives could feel disappointment towards democracy and democratic regime. Moreover, both cases are problematic for EU integration process of Turkey.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

In the last 10 years two political issues; liberal democracy and political Islam drove attention more and more both in local and global political levels. The spread of liberal democracy and the role of political Islam are questioned and discussed in that term. By the end of Cold War, liberal democracy has spreaded globally and political Islam has risen as the only mainstream alien ideology to liberal democracy especially in the Muslim World.

In that period very important interactions between political Islam and democracy are observed in Turkey. Though Islamic originated party RP won the election and governed for a year, it was overthrown in 1997 by 'February 28' process. From that time and onwards, political Islam refreshed its organizations and politics. Main political Islamic movements continued struggling in the limits of democracy, rather than working with illegal methods like terrorism. In that period, a notable number of the political Islamic leaders and elites have been liberalized. By this new perspective, a group of former RP leaders established AKP and won the elections in November 2002.

When the last three years of AKP in the government is considered it is seen that it fostered democratization of Turkey and in that respect it has been the main and most powerful political actor that has supported EU process. All these efforts are observed by skepticism by the significant portion of society from different opponent groups. It was argued that AKP uses democratization and EU process to break the

power of state establishment which is the main protector of the current laic regime. Such speculative ideas are to be left out academic discussions and do not make any sense to this dissertation.

On the other hand, to observe the liberalization of AKP elites and leaders, this view should be considered: It should be allowed for the possibility that circumstances may force, trick, lure or cajole non democrats into democratic behaviour and that their beliefs may adjust in due course by some process of rationalization or adaption.¹⁴⁸ When the rhetorics and political views of MGH and RP are compared with the political views of AKP elites, it is seen that the views of AKP elites are considerably more liberal. Furthermore, it must be noticed that political Islam originated party AKP set the democratization in its agenda and fostered the EU process. It is especially important in the period when political Islam is began to be accepted as an alien ideology to democracy in the Western World.

Regarding internal politics, it is an important fact that political Islamists and conservatives who were disappointed by the coup of 'February 28', again integrated to the democratic process via AKP. They had the chance of being represented in the political system. For the future of democracy and political system in Turkey, that issue is much more important than the daily politics. If the certain of AKP elites has been transformed into more democratic behaviour, it will have positive impacts on the daily life and politics of Turkey.

Our research is based on indepth interviews with 15 AKP elites, and introduced the democracy perception of AKP elites in detail. As AKP is the main representative of political Islam in Turkey, it also helped to determine the democracy understandings of political Islamic movements in Turkey. It can be said that the

¹⁴⁸ Rustow, p. 20.

results of research supported our thesis which is; *“The representatives of mainstream political Islam in Turkey share common norms of liberal democracy understanding, though they differ in some points like the perception of economic liberalism and plurality.”* As it is noticed in the thesis AKP elites who represent the current political Islam commit to the fundamental values of liberal democracy. The democracy perceptions of AKP elites are investigated by two main sets of criteria: Formal and substantive criteria of liberal democracy.

The answers of AKP elites to interview questions satisfy the formal criteria of liberal democracy in general. As it is mentioned in the above parts of the dissertation the main criteria of formal democracies are: Rule of law, separation of powers, elected power-holders, free and fair elections, freedom of expression and alternative sources of information, associational autonomy and civilian control over the security forces. By direct and indirect questions the perspectives of elites to these issues are investigated. There is nearly no answer that is not appropriate with these criteria. What is more except one interviewee, they argued that democracy in Turkey lacks some of these criteria. They especially referred to these four criteria: Rule of law, separation of powers, elected power-holders and civilian control over the security forces. More than half of the interviewees sign state establishment which consist of army and legislative bodies as the main reason of violation of these criteria.

The main substantive criteria of liberal democracy are: Constitutional issues and legality, human rights and minority rights, political rights, media, administration, liberal economy, local government and civil society. Measuring these criteria is harder than measuring the formal ones. So the answers of the interviewees are more heterogeneous and confusing. Furthermore it is problematic to decide whether the interviewees are democrat or not, by the questions prepared in that perspective. These

criteria are mainly produced by the experiences and realities of Western democracies. But at the end these are the universally accepted main criteria of liberal democracy.

Direct questions does not work too much to determine how the interviewees approach to these criteria. So indirect questions are used mostly. In that respect it is seen that minority rights, liberal economy and civil society are the three main topics to be discussed to understand the democracy perspective of AKP elites. For example, AKP elite's understandings of minority is different than the EU proposed. In that respect, except three of them, none accepted Kurds as minority. To underline the fact that this democracy perspective is not specific for AKP elites only, it must be remembered that Kurdish political leaders also dismissed the classification of Kurds as minority by EU.

The missing issue which is not investigated in detail in this dissertation is that: What is the relation between the concepts; 'laicism' and 'democracy'? What is the laicism understanding of AKP elites? In that respect how do their laicism understanding affects their democracy understanding? In further researches these questions need to be determined.

If the answers of interviewees are analysed by considering the above mentioned facts, it could be argued that dominant portion of the elites accepts the values of liberal democracy. Only three elites refuses most of the substantive criteria. On the other hand, the rest of the elites have different approaches towards some values and criteria of liberal democracy. For example, except three of the interviewees, the AKP elites do not accept free market as an important criteria for democracy. In the contrary, majority of the elites believes that civil society and NGOs are important institutions for properly working democracy.

These different attitudes show that while determining the democracy conception of Turkish citizens and Turkish political Islamists, the criteria and their approaches should not be compared one - to - one with liberal democracy understandings of Western people. Some differences regarding details shall not be taken as the clue of non - democratic world view.

To conclude, AKP elites stil experince active democratization process. Stil, most of them accepts and favors the values of liberal democracy. It can be argued that in the coming years, AKP elites who are also the representatives of political Islam in Turkey will be much more democrat.

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Appendix I

Interviewee Set

Age	Gender	Position in AKP
72	Male	Founder
61	Male	Founder
42	Male	Founder
38	Male	Vice-President in İstanbul Organization
39	Male	Vice-President in Beşiktaş Organization
55	Male	Vice-President in Kartal Organization
51	Male	Member in Eminönü Organization
48	Male	Member in Üsküdar Organization
57	Male	Member in Üsküdar Organization
34	Male	Member in Sarıyer Organization
39	Male	Member in Fatih Organization
36	Male	Member in Avcılar Organization
33	Female	Assistant to Vice President in İstanbul Organization
28	Female	Member of Youth Committee in İstanbul
45	Female	Member of Gebze Organization

Appendix II

Interview Questions

- 1- What are the basic characteristics of ‘being democrat’?

- 2- Which of the above mentioned characteristics do you have particularly?

- 3- In all over the world, which are the most democratic states that you appreciate?

- 4- Do you believe that the democracy models of above mentioned states can fit to Turkey?

- 5- There is an argument that, in Turkey state institutions protect state instead of persons. What do you think about it?

- 6- To what extend is Turkey democratic state? Do you believe that Turkey needs to make improvements?

- 7- Do you believe in that the relation between politics and state institutions could be as it is in Western democracies?

- 8- Do you believe that ‘the rule of law’ could be suspended in extraordinary conditions?

9- Do you believe in that are civil society and liberal economy basic requirements of democracy?

10- What do you think about the discussions in Turkey regarding minorities in the country?

11- If your children want to marry with so called a person from so called minorities in Turkey what will be your reaction?

12- What do you think about the role of EU process in democratization of Turkey?