

Problems of the Turkish Political Parties and Turgut Ozal's Party ANAP

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Abstract

A lot of political parties have been established in Turkey, so far. But a large majority of these parties was dissolved or couldn't stand long-term. In this respect, the Turkish political history is also the history of short-lived political parties without CHP (Republican Populist Party). Both in the Ottoman Period and the Republican Period there were no durable political parties. Whereas, when we look at the United States and European Countries, we see long-lived and durable political parties, e.g Republican Party in U.S and Conservative Party in U.K. etc.

At this point, Turgut Özal's Motherland Party can be considered as one of the most excellent examples of a short-lived party in Turkey. This party established in 1983 and then, it finished its life in 20 years. What was the reasons for this finishing. In this view, our study aims to indicate the common problems of the Turkish political parties by analyzing the Motherland Party (ANAP). And for instance, the weakness of institutionalism, extreme leader-oriented and the patronage system etc.

Key words: Özal, ANAP, Turkish Political Parties, U.S Parties, European Parties, Weak institutionalism.

Concept Of The Political Party

In today's world, political parties are accepted as an indispensable element of the modern political systems. In one sense, they created the contemporary democracy (Özbudun, 1979: 1). In liberal democracies, political parties serve as a mediator between the citizens and the government. Without the well-organized party system, representative democracy cannot function fairly (Akgün, 2001: 71).

Especially, after the period when the countries which were being ruled by democracy (eg. England) came out with a victory after II. World War, it is seen that political parties appeared with adopting democracy in many countries of the World. In this respect, we are able to say that political parties have a crucial role in the rise of democracy (Özüerman, 1999:153). But it must be pointed that the political parties are not only seen in democratic systems. We are able to come across the political parties in totalitarian and fascist regimes. There are political parties in most of the states in the World. Because, political parties have important functions without looking at the types of the regimes. If we think about its functions such as carrying the public's wishes to the government, bringing up elite

administrators, representing the benefits etc., every regime feels the need to have political parties.

When we look at the existence of the political parties in the World, we see that political parties come out on account of too many different reasons. Some of them appear to carry out an independence war against the colonialists (CHP in Turkey, Congress Party in India etc.), some of them appear because of the participation crisis (eg. The Democratic Party in Turkey) or because of the crisis which is called the integration crisis, political parties may exist (Özbudun, 1979:25). These parties come out on account of differences such as language or religion (BDP, in Turkey). As a result, it is seen that political parties appear because of many different reasons.

Transition To Democracy In Turkey And Political Parties

The term of political parties is in fact a very new term. They were only in a few countries in the World in the 1850s (USA, England). But the political parties became common in the 20th century.

When we look at the Ottoman Period we see the İttihat Terakki Party, when we look at the Republican Period we see the Republican People's Party (Yanık, 2002:22). The latter was a leader-oriented party. In one period (1930s), the leader of the CHP İsmet İnönü was announced as the "national Chief". Then, DP was founded in Turkey in the year 1946 as an opposition party and multi-party system which was adopted with the election in the same year. It can be said that the multi-party system was accepted because of many different reasons. For example, the fans of democracy won the II. World War, the threatening of the Soviets to Turkey, also the discontentedness of the one-party government etc.

The elections which were held in 1946 were in fact unfair because the rule of hidden voting and open counting was not carried out. Infact, it can be said that Turkey practiced the multi-party system in the coming elections which were held in 1950 DP surprisingly won the elections of 1950 by an outstanding range. DP tried to carry out liberal policies, civilian police. Although the Democratic Party showed great success in the field of economy, it could not show the same success about political freedoms, it made pressure to the press and the civilian society. On the other hand, It could not place intraparty democracy and the culture of the widespread democracy. Some anti-democratic applications of the DP to the press and oppositional ideas disturb the a number of its own deputies, for that reason they left the DP and founded the new Party, the Freedom Party (Hurriyet Partisi). As They won the elections, they thought that they were the real representatives of the public and that they could do as everything.

Turkish Political Parties And Their Problems

Hunderds of political parties have been established from the year 1946 when multi-party political life was adopted in Turkey to the present date. However, noticeably, it is seen that these political parties didn't last for a long time. We should think of only CHP separate from these parties, because CHP was founded in the year 1923 (it was closed between 1981 and 1992) and has been able to survive until now. None of the parties except from CHP has lasted for as long (Tuncer, 1995: 1) . Increasing the number of political parties doesn't mean that itstrengthened the pluralism and the democracy. Institioanalisation of the political parties is important for a strong democracy. Besides, the multi-party system

should be carried on without interrupting. It doesn't mean that there is a pluralist democracy in a country, as in Turkey, where a lot of parties are established and then closed down.

When we look at the political life of Turkey it is seen that the political parties are facing the problems of institutionalisation. From this respect, it is stated that the structure and the tradition of the state in Turkey is different from the Western Europe. According to commonly accepted opinion, while political parties appear based on the class system in the European Societies, the political parties in Turkey appear as fully leader-oriented parties rather than a class system (Özüerman, 1998: 95). On account of this, Turkish political parties become leader parties and the life of that party is limited to the life of its leader's life (eg. Demirel's party DYP, Özal's party ANAP etc.). Whereas, in 1950s famous political thinker Duverger was telling us to the importance of the political party organizations, not charismatic leaders. On the other hand, lack of the institutionalism brings about so much volatility in the vote rates of political parties. We have seen that, the General Elections in 1990s. After the Özal's leadership his party ANAP declined, similarly after the Suleyman Demirel's leadership his party DYP weakened politically. Both ANAP and DYP became ineffective ordinary parties in the beginning years of 2000s.

When political parties are talking about in Turkey, three basic features come to mind. Firstly the absolute sovereignty of only one person, secondly a common center which was extreme authorities and thirdly, weak local organizations. Deputy candidates of the party are mostly determined by the central organization, in fact the party leader determines them. The preselection results of the local organizations don't regard by the central organization and party leader. In this respect, one which is in front of all these is that the Turkish parties have the specialty of being the latter party. In some political articles, Turkish leaders are compared with well-known powerful German leader Bismark (Türmen, 2011: 15) In fact, even the source of the power that a leader hasn't a legal authority but he has "defacto" authority (Özdalga, 2005: 49). The leaders who are at the top of the hierarchical structure in Turkey's political parties, always use their authorities for protecting his or her surrounding's ruling. This situation is reminding of us the "Iron Law of Oligarchy". According to Robert Michels, a minority group in an organization use all power, and it causes the degeneration of democracy (Michels, 1959: 29-49). Generally, a new opinion or the existence of a new person is not well accepted by the leader or his surroundings. The relationship of a leader with his surroundings depends on loyalty not on meritocracy (Çapoğlu, 1997: 13). The local authorities that come into governing by the votes of the members of the party in the province or sub-province congresses, are taken out of their duties by the leader at any time, for instance, in my province (Kütahya) in February 2013, city organization of the MHP was dissolved by the central organization without a court decision. The will of the members who voted are neglected. In fact this situation is not a new situation in the Turkish political system, the central organizations or leaders of the political parties haven't noticed the local organizations since İttihat Terakki and CHP (Kabasakal, 1995: 130).

That is the process of the parties in the Turkish party system which goes on a net of the leader not to a democratic ground (Çarkoğlu, Erdem, Kabasakal, 2000: 36). The oligarchical structures of political parties in Turkey prevents the change and protects the status quo. Different views don't occur at the party except for the ones which the leader thinks about. This prevents the parties from improving themselves and to produce political views according to changing conditions. This causes a vicious circle. Leaders and their

surroundings had their ways to protect the governing with all their organizational efforts after they gain control of the party. The person who gains the control of a political party in Turkey cannot be taken out of his position easily, even if he or she had lost several elections (e.g. Mesut Yılmaz) (Akgün, 2001:86).

Nevertheless, there are a few exceptions in Turkey. Namely, in 1972 Bülent Ecevit won the party leadership competition against the current charismatic leader İsmet İnönü. Similarly, in 1991 former Prime Minister Yıldırım Akbulut lost the party leadership competition against Mesut Yılmaz. On the other hand, generally current party leaders win that competition, in Turkish politics. Because, selecting delegates are usually selected or appointed by the central organization. This anti-democratic inner structure is valid for most of the parties in Turkey. The leaders have always been dominant rather than the institutional identity of the party or the program of the party since the day we accepted the multi-party political systems up to now. Also, Turkish political parties have not fundamental principles. The in electoral process, the programs of the parties aren't debated in almost. At that time, The political party leaders tried to persuade people by using populist discourses, e.g. I remember that Suleyman Demirel said in the 1991 General Elections "I will give you five more liras from others". Also when they come to power they applied patronage politics. They distributed some sources to the supporters (e.g. Demirel). For that reason Turkish voters don't believe politicians and political parties. Populist politics and patronage system in Turkey alienated Turkish citizens to the political sphere. This negative image eroded the roots of political parties.

According to some thinkers the military impacts are shown as the fundamental cause of the political parties not being able to institutionalize in Turkey. After the process in which Turkey entered the multi-party system, Turkey encountered three coup d'état. The first one was in 1960, the other was in 1971 and the last one is 1980. Beside this, in 1997 and 2007, some serious interventions in civil government and political parties were observed. Since 1983, approximately 15 political parties have been dissolved (Akgün, 2001: 86). Every coup d'état prepared its constitution in order to shape the political and societal sphere. Furthermore, the product of the 1980 Coup which is known that Law of Political Parties and Election Laws are still in force.

Military regimes moved civil governments from politics. Some of the politicians were hanged; many political parties and associations were closed. Numerous citizens were prohibited from participating in politics. Laws in which majority of the citizens was prohibited to involve in politics came into force. Citizens could not participate in the politics of the new established parties after the coup. During the same period, two constitutions which do not rely on civil negotiation are in force. Due to this, "coup d'état"s in Turkey created a gap in politic socialization (Çarkoğlu, Erdem, Kabasakal, 2000: 39-40). This situation prevented the existence of democratic political culture. Moreover, it shortened the life of political parties because of the fact that many of the parties were closed.

Beside this, it is claimed that party leadership emerged as a new and significant paradigm not only in Turkey but also in different parts of the world. During propaganda periods, marketing techniques were used and image selling made abundantly (Poggi, 2002). According to this, image of party leadership became significant dimension. Throughout the subordination of ideologies, differences of political parties were blurred; party leaders became the most important dynamic in the elections (Yıldız, 2002:88). This phenomenon

has especially valid for 1980. When we look at the political parties of Turkey, we can easily detect that almost all of them has charismatic leaders such as Demirel, Ecevit and Özal.

Turgut Özal's Party: ANAP

Actually, Turgut Özal and ANAP is a beneficial example to understand the Turkish political party question. Özal drew such a profile that he has the ultimate authority since he established his party in 1983. Even if he became President of Turkey, acted as ANAP party leader. He chose the way in which decisions were made only by himself without asking anybody. For instance, he informed Yıldırım Akbulut at the last moment when he appointed Akbulut as a Prime Minister (Acar, 2002: 170). During the Akbulut's period, Gulf Crisis exploded, Özal intervened the governmental policies, for that reason General Staff of Turkey resigned. At the same time, Özal intervened economic affairs, he tried to prevent populist applications of Akbulut, then Mesut Yılmaz. During his premiership hadn't applied populist politics without any exceptions.

On the other hand, he interested in intra-party issues of ANAP. Although it was a short period, his wife was elected as a party chairman of İstanbul prominence by Özal. He selected the most of the deputy candidates. This circumstance can be observed in most of the times in Turkish politics. ANAP had the same characteristic with former political parties. It is hard to say that there was an intra-party democracy in ANAP. M. Keçeciler, who has strong and close ties with Özal, says that it is a must to bring democracy in the party level (Keçeciler, 2000:33). Although Özal was a clever reformist Turkish politician, he made many significant reforms. He liberated Turkish economy; he opened it to the liberal system of the world. He terminated the importation barriers; he ended the absence of some products. Beside this, he minimized public bureaucracy and destroyed the negative image of the state. He internalized the philosophy of "state for people". He opposed the "National Security State". After he became president of Turkey, he ended the Kurdish speech prohibition. He defended freedom of religion, thought and conscience (Erdogan, Acar, 2012: 3) However, mostly Özal did all this expansion by himself. He did not choose the deliberation method. While he was making liberal reforms, a large majority member of his party opposed these changes (e.g Kurdish speaking law). Özal's his own wasn't thinking state-oriented, but his friends were. Probably because of this reason, he defended the Presidential system.

Unfortunately after Özal's party leadership, his party downed to opposition. And ANAP encountered intra-party problems, and party politics changed sharply. Unlike Özal policies under the leadership of Mesut Yılmaz party adopted the state-oriented policies, not liberal policies. If ANAP wasn't a leader party, It couldn't change its politics easily. In this respect, political parties should have fundamental politics. That is, should be institutionalized. It can be said that, due to the lack of institutionalization, later his party was eradicated from political life. At this point, it must be stated that, In 1997 ANAP leader Mesut Yılmaz cooperated with military to become Prime Minister. Because of this cooperation Turkish voters rejected ANAP. Actually, he and his party was a summary of Turkish political leadership and Turkish political parties. As we tested before, When the military supports a party which lose elections.

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