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**AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ SİYASETİ VE ULUSLARARASI
İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI**

**THE ATTITUDES OF POLITICAL PARTIES
IN TURKEY TOWARDS THE EU AFTER
THE 2002 ELECTIONS**

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ONAY SAYFASI

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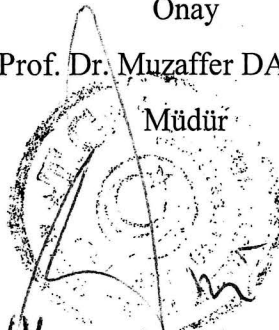
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Müdür



22.05.2012 tarih ve 2012/14 Sayılı Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararı ile onaylanmıştır.

To my parents Bora and Feriha Alagöz

ÖZET

Seçmen tercihlerini temsil eden tek meşru birim olarak siyasi partiler demokrasilerin vazgeçilmez parçalarıdır. Onların AB konusundaki duruşları ülkelerinin AB ile olan ilişkilerinin şekillenmesinde önemli rol oynar. Bu tezin odak noktası Türk siyasi partilerinin 2002 genel seçimlerinden sonra Avrupa Birliği'ne karşı tutumlarıdır. Bu bağlamda, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi ve Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi olmak üzere dört büyük parti ele alınarak 2002-2011 Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi hükümetleri döneminde bu partilerin AB yaklaşımları analiz edilmektedir. İncelenen partilerin AB yaklaşımlarının tutarlı olup olmadığı ve eğer tutarlı değilse AB duruşlarının neden değiştiği sorulmaktadır.

Tezde rasyonel seçim teorisi yardımcı kalitatif araştırma yöntemleri ile birlikte Türk siyasi partilerinin AB politikalarını analiz etmek için kullanılmıştır. Buna göre, Türkiye'deki siyasi partilerin AB yaklaşımlarının belli dönemlerde farklılaştığı tespit edilmiştir. Bir defa bu partilerin tutarlı bir AB politikası izlemedikleri çıkarımı yapıldıktan sonra, partilerin AB duruşlarındaki değişiklikler onların maliyet-fayda analizleriyle açıklanmıştır.

Partilerin AB politikaları üzerine yapılan araştırmanın tüm bulgularının ışığında seçmen davranışı, parti içi dinamikler ve parti kimliğinin partilerin çıkar algılamalarını etkileyen en önemli değişkenler olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Başka bir deyişle, bu değişkenler partilerin AB duruşlarını belirleyen temel faktörler olmuştur.

ABSTRACT

As the only legitimate units representing voter preferences, political parties are the indispensable elements of electoral democracies. Their stances concerning the EU issue play an important role in shaping their country's relations with the EU. The focus of this thesis is the attitudes of Turkish political parties towards the European Union after the 2002 general elections in Turkey. In this context, it takes four major political parties into account, namely the Justice and Development Party, the Republican People's Party, the Nationalist Action Party and the Peace and Democracy Party and analyzes their EU approaches between 2002 and 2011 during the Justice and Development Party governments. It asks whether those parties have consistent EU approaches; and if not, why they change their EU stances.

The thesis mainly employs rational choice theory along with supplementary qualitative research methods in order to analyze the EU policies of the Turkish political parties. It finds out that the EU approaches of the political parties in Turkey differ in certain periods. Once it infers that those parties do not conduct consistent EU policies, it explains the changes in EU stances of the parties with their cost-benefit analyses.

In the light of the findings of the research on the EU policies of the parties, the thesis concludes that electoral behavior, intraparty dynamics and party identity are the most significant variables which affect the interest perceptions of the parties. In other words, they are the main factors determining the EU stances of the parties.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
ANAP	Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi)
AP	Justice Party (Adalet Partisi)
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi)
CHP	Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyetçi Halk Partisi)
DEP	Democracy Party (Demokrasi Partisi)
DP	Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti)
DTP	Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi)
DYP	True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi)
EEC	European Economic Community (Avrupa Ekonomik Topluluğu)
EU	European Union (Avrupa Birliği)
HADEP	People's Democracy Party (Halkın Demokrasi Partisi)
HCJP	The High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (Hakimler ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu)
HEP	People's Labor Party (Halkın Emek Partisi)
MHP	Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)
MSP	National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi)
MÜSİAD	Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations (Sivil Toplum Kuruluşu)
PKK	Kurdish Workers' Party (Kürdistan İşçi Partisi)
RP	Welfare Party (Refah Partisi)
SHP	Social Democratic Populist Party (Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti)
SODEP	Social Democracy Party (Sosyal Demokrasi Partisi)
SP	Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi)
TEPAV	Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları Araştırma Vakfı)

TESAV	Turkish Economic Social Research Foundation (Türkiye Sosyal Ekonomik Araştırma Vakfı)
TESEV	Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı)
TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi)
TİP	Turkish Workers Party (Türkiye İşçi Partisi)
TÜSİAD	Turkish Industry and Business Association (Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği)
UN	United Nations (Birleşmiş Milletler)

INTRODUCTION

The research on political party studies indicates that political parties have always been one of the major areas of interest in political science even when they were thought to be in decline.¹ This study can be accounted for a sign of their still being an interesting study area. It places political parties in Turkey and one of their policy areas, their EU policies, at the center of its research.

The introduction part details the research questions, hypothesis, methodology and the purpose of the study. It offers a justification for the importance of the study by referring to the literature. Ultimately, it makes a brief summary of the study and introduces its outline.

The Research Focus

This study aims at examining Turkish political party positioning on the issue of European integration after the 2002 general elections. Four major political parties, namely Justice and Development Party (AKP), Republican People's Party (CHP), Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) are taken into account for they are the parties which were included in the Parliament after the 2002 elections. In the case of the BDP, its predecessor Democratic Society Party (DTP) is also examined because the BDP was founded in 2008 substituting the DTP due to the closure case of the party in the Constitutional Court.

In order to achieve this goal, the party programs, party publications, election bulletins, speeches of party members in Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) and their press conference statements as well as the relevant literature are scrutinized by employing diverse qualitative research methods. The findings of a survey with deputies in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) and in depth interviews with some of

¹ Richard Günther and José Ramón Montero Gibert, "Literature on Political Parties: A Critical Reassessment", **Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials Working Papers**, No. 219, Barcelona, 2003, http://ddd.uab.cat/pub/worpaper/2003/hdl_2072_1247/ICPS219.pdf accessed on 17.03.2011

them, which were held by the author in December 2010, are also sources of data used in the study.

The research questions and hypothesis upon which the structure of this dissertation bases are as follows:

Research Questions: Do the major political parties in Turkey have a consistent EU policy? If not, why do they change their EU policy stances?

Hypothesis: Major political parties in Turkey do not conduct a consistent EU policy and they do not have a comprehensive structuring on the EU issue. Political parties are rational actors as rational choice theory intends to explain, that is, they make cost-benefit calculations before they act in a certain way regarding a policy issue. Their priority is to take the political decisions which would secure their positions and maximize their power within the political system. Yet, the Turkish political parties do not conduct consistent EU policies due to the changes in their cost-benefit calculations which change in accordance with their interest perceptions.

This dissertation takes the EU policies of the political parties as dependent variable and indicates several independent variables which affect the formation of those policies. Lots of factors can be enumerated as independent variables affecting the EU stances of the parties such as the voter preference, party leadership, ideologies or the groups within the party; nevertheless, there is no single factor which could explain the motive behind the EU stances of the parties alone. The EU policy positions are rather combinations of some or all of these factors. In Turkish case, electoral behavior, intraparty dynamics and party identity can be indicated as the most dominant variables of the cost-benefit analysis of parties to determine the EU policy decisions of the political parties so that they are taken as the focus of attention in this study. Hence, the study utilizes two assumptions which were briefly mentioned above in order to answer the research question.

First, it is assumed that the political parties in Turkey do not have a precise and consistent EU policy during 2002-2011. The perspectives of the Turkish political parties on the EU accession process of Turkey and the general course of relations with the EU

change over time. Even when they seem to be constant, it is because there is no change in the interests at stake.

Second, it is presupposed that the political parties are rational actors which perform within the political system by maximizing their benefits and minimizing their costs. As it is in other electoral democracies, political parties in Turkey are the only legally recognized, organized units that strive for legislative and governmental power and they work as a bridge between the state and its people. In other words, political parties are dependent on their electoral base to survive within the political system. For this reason, this study assumes that there is an incontrovertible correlation between the positioning of political parties in Turkey regarding their EU stances and the attitudinal orientation of Turkish electorate.

As rational choice theory asserts, the electoral behavior is the most important factor determining the change in the EU policies of the parties because electorate draws the frames within which parties act in a democracy by voting for them. No party can exist for a long time without electoral support so that the parties cannot develop their EU policies independent from the perceptions and policy preferences of voters.

On the other hand, beside electoral behavior, other factors shaping the EU policies of Turkish political parties cannot be underestimated. It can be noted that parties generally act according to the electoral preferences. However, they cannot adopt policy changes which entirely contradict with their party identity or the political groups supporting the party because this would, in turn, entail loss of credibility as well as loss of votes. Parties have to take those factors into consideration in order to remain in power. Hence, this study takes intraparty dynamics and party identity as the other important factors affecting the policymaking of political parties regarding the EU issue for the case of Turkey.

Each of the Turkish political parties in question acts in line with one or some of these factors in order to decrease its costs and increase its benefits within the political system. When the cost and benefits are balanced, the party reaches equilibrium or sort of status quo concerning its EU policy. If the interest perceptions change, the

equilibrium shifts to a new point. Sometimes this could mean to go for a decision which enjoys the maximization of benefits gained from one factor at the expense of others.

This study explores the EU policies of the Turkish political parties after the 2002 elections by comparing their “static” EU discourses that are simply found in their programs, election campaigns and publications to their “dynamic” discourses such as the statements of the party members in the TGNA group meetings as a response to the new developments in national and international conjuncture to evaluate when and under what conditions the parties change their commitment level to the EU.

It is argued that the political parties are rational actors and they adjust their policies to the developments in the conjuncture to be able to catch up with the electoral mood while pursuing the ideological interests and meeting the expectations of political support groups because they don’t want to risk their votes. Given that all of the last four governments had a pro-EU approach even though the parties forming those governments had different ideological backgrounds and had different EU perspectives before taking over the government brings about the fact that being government also has an impact on their approaches to the EU. However, from a rationalist approach, this can be explained with the existence of a traditional state policy towards the EU issue which is to be maintained by the party in government. Changing the state policy radically might be interpreted by political elite and electorate as a break with the state tradition which causes the party to lose its legitimacy. In this regard, it is eventually associated with vote concerns of the parties since the party in government has to satisfy the electorate by maintaining the state policies successfully to keep its position in the next elections.

Literature Review and the Purpose of the Research

This study makes use of the literatures of three major study areas: The literature on political parties, the literature on rational choice theory and the literature on the EU-Turkey relations. The former two have emerged quite earlier and have broader study perspectives; whereas the latter has developed after the sign of Ankara Agreement

between Turkey and the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1963 when the first initiatives started to be taken towards a new cooperation.

The development of modern political parties corresponds to the evolution of electoral democracies that made political parties indispensable elements for political science studies. As the only legitimate units that represent the will of electorate in contemporary democracies, the amount of scholarly work on political parties is overwhelming. A Europe-wide survey covering the period between 1945 and 1998 found out that there are approximately 11.500 published academic works dealing with political parties.² The survey also showed that scientific production on political parties peaked in the late 1970s and has significantly declined since then. Thus, it concluded that the “golden age” of political party literature has passed.³ However, a more recent study on party literature argues that there has been a revitalization of the subfield of party studies after the mid-1990s.⁴ In this respect, it might be said that rather than a decline in importance as a subfield of political science, the examination style of political parties has been modified.

There have been three types of assessment in overwhelming majority of previous publications on parties.

- 1- Non-comparative, monographic studies of individual parties or of parties within a single country;
- 2- Cross-national comparative studies of parties that focus exclusively on one region;

² Daniele Caramani and Simon Hug, “The Literature on European Parties and Party Systems since 1945: A Quantitative Analysis”, **European Journal of Political Research**, No. 33, 1998, p. 498

³ *Ibid.*, p. 520

⁴ Richard Günther and José Ramón Montero Gibert, “Literature on Political Parties: A Critical Reassessment”, **Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials Working Papers**, No. 219, Barcelona, 2003, http://ddd.uab.cat/pub/worpaper/2003/hdl_2072_1247/ICPS219.pdf accessed on 17.03.2011

3- More rigorous comparative analyses of specific sets of party-related themes, but restricted to the advanced industrial democracies (usually Western Europe and North America).⁵

Although today most of those deficiencies have been overcome by the rise in academic production, Biezen states that the literature on political parties continues to suffer from some weaknesses. First, it has been insufficient to explain the relation between parties and their structural environment and reflect their dual nature as both institutions and agents. Another weakness is the lack of developing existing party models and adding new models and typologies to them. Finally, there are not enough theoretical works on parties especially in the context of the role of parties in the consolidation of democracy.⁶ Notwithstanding those weaknesses, there is a generally accepted argument among scholars that political parties are becoming increasingly central in electoral democracies even though they fail to perform their essential functions so that it makes them paradoxical in modern democracies.⁷

In any case, political parties are indispensable part of national political systems and rising democracies. They are to be thoroughly analyzed to have an overall idea about the politics of a specific country. Therefore, the literature needs more contribution on the subject. This dissertation benefits from and contributes to the party literature by looking through a specific policy area of the major political parties in Turkey. In this sense, it offers useful data for comparative party studies especially between developing and advanced democracies.

The literature on rational choice theory forms the theoretical basis of this study. Imported from the field of economics, the theory has been widely used by political scientists since the 1950s in order to explain the behavior of different political actors such as individual voter, electorate, political institutions and political parties. Although it is a well-known theory of political science and international relations which is taught as master's and doctoral-level courses at political science departments of universities in

⁵ Larry Diamond and Richard Günther, **Political Parties and Democracy**, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, p. xiii

⁶ Ingrid van Biezen, "The Place of Parties in Contemporary Democracies", **West European Politics**, Vol. 26, No.3, July 2003, pp. 171-172

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 174

the US and Europe⁸, it is not commonly preferred theory by Turkish political scientists. In addition, no academic work, which employs the rational choice theory for the study of EU policies of Turkish political parties, exists in the literature making this thesis a unique contribution.

Another literature enjoyed in this study is the literature on the EU-Turkey relations. For nearly half century, Turkey has been part of the ongoing project of European integration. The number of academic publications on Turkey's EU accession process has increased rapidly as parallel to the progress made in integration over the years and the issue constantly keeps its priority on Turkish political agenda. However, until the end of the 1990s Turkey's EU integration has attracted little attention from political scientists. It has been mostly examined in terms of economical aspects of the integration process and the mechanical relations between the institutions of the EU and Turkey.

⁸ Here are some examples of the course syllabi of rational choice theory in randomly chosen graduate schools in Europe and the US accessed online:

New York University, "Political Engineering: The Design of Institutions",

<http://politics.as.nyu.edu/object/politics.ug.coursedescriptions>

accessed on 08.04.2012

University of Kansas, "Rational Choice Theory",

<http://web.ku.edu/~utile/courses/rct1/syllabus.html>

accessed on 08.04.2012

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Until the early 2000s, majority of those studies, which included Turkey and the EU together as the center of their research, tended to be descriptive rather than analytical since their purpose was to explain the accession process itself. From the beginning of the association relation between Turkey and the EU by the sign of Ankara Agreement in 1963 till the end of the 1990s the economic dimensions of the accession were on focus. By the acquirement of candidate status in 1999, a lack of information concerning the issue perceived by public as well as policy-making circles pushed comprehensive studies on the EU. The fact that Turkey started to take part in various EU programs as a candidate state also attracted the scholarly attention in the EU integration.⁹ Consequently, the number of works examining Turkey's EU integration from political aspects appeared to rise gradually.

Müftüler-Baç juxtaposed three factors that affect the relative lack of scholarly attention in Turkey to the EU before the 2000s. First, normative and legalistic character of Turkish political science had a tendency to employ the research questions and methods of history and philosophy. In the EU context, it was difficult to pose normative questions and the empirical work was limited and marginal which decreased the interest of political scientists in European integration. Second, the research of first generation Turkish political scientists who belonged to the traditional school of political science in Turkey, that is to say, the political science departments of Ankara and Istanbul universities was geared mainly towards domestic political issues. However, the research orientation of Turkish political science had begun to change at the end of the 1990s by the establishment of new universities which led the second or third-generation political scientists into Turkish academia. Finally, Turkish political scientists were inclined to perceive European integration either as a process of economic integration or as a new legal system.¹⁰ In the 2000s, not only did these obstacles in studying the EU integration disappear, but also the EU studies became an extremely popular academic subject of interest which would be taught in nearly all big universities.

⁹ Meltem Müftüler-Baç, "Turkish Political Science and European Integration", **Journal of European Public Policy**, Vol. 10, No. 4, August 2003, p. 656

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 657

First wave of those studies revolved around the topics such as the EU conditionality on Turkey, the reforms made by Turkey on the way of EU membership or the challenges and opportunities of the EU membership. Visier emphasizes that the sociological and interactive aspects of enlargement have been neglected by theoretical analyses for a long time.¹¹ The political action of candidate countries (why and under what conditions do non-members seek to join a regional organization?); the political action of member states (under what conditions do member states of a regional organization advocate or oppose the candidacy of a given country?); and the political action of the European Union (under what conditions does a regional organization accept new members or change its institutional relations with a third-party country?) were the issues around which theoretical approaches of enlargement were mainly developed within European studies.¹² Those studies reviewed enlargement as a matter of foreign policy by candidate countries and by the European system and they applied a conventional and realistic approach to international relations, whereby foreign policy is completely separate from and unconnected with domestic policy.¹³ Hence, they have mostly examined the EU integration process of Turkey from an international relations perspective rather than political science.

Despite the growing popularity of the EU-Turkey relations as an area of interest among political science scholars in the new millennium, there is still little work in the literature which goes through the EU policies of the political parties in Turkey comprehensively. In this sense, Çayhan and Kula's books should be mentioned as the

¹¹ Claire Visier, "Turkey and the European Union: The Sociology of Engaged Actors and of their Contribution to the Candidacy Issue", **European Journal of Turkish Studies**, No. 9, 2009, <http://ejts.revues.org/index3910.html> accessed on 08.04.2011

¹² Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, "Theorizing EU Enlargement: Research Focus, Hypotheses, and the State of Research", **Journal of European Public Policy**, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 504-507 in Claire Visier, "Turkey and the European Union: The Sociology of Engaged Actors and of their Contribution to the Candidacy Issue", **European Journal of Turkish Studies**, No. 9, 2009, <http://ejts.revues.org/index3910.html> accessed on 08.04.2011

¹³ Claire Visier, "Turkey and the European Union: The Sociology of Engaged Actors and of their Contribution to the Candidacy Issue", **European Journal of Turkish Studies**, No. 9, 2009, <http://ejts.revues.org/index3910.html> accessed on 08.04.2011

books written directly on this subject.¹⁴ However, Çayhan's book covers the time period until the signing of Customs Union Agreement between the EU and Turkey so that it does not include the numerous developments in Turkey-EU relations experienced in the last 15 years. Kula's book, on the other hand, makes an analysis of solely party programs which offers a limited overview of the parties' EU policies. In this respect, Joakim Parslow's study analyzing how Turkish parliamentarians frame the issue of adopting to EU conditionality and McLaren and Müftüler-Baç's study examining Turkish parliamentarians' perspectives on the course of EU-Turkey relations can be considered as two major attempts to handle the issue of EU membership within the context of party politics.¹⁵

In the last few years, a couple of articles on the positions of Turkish political parties towards the EU were published. Those studies mostly followed the works of Kopecky and Mudde as well as Taggart and Szczerbiak who suggested classifying the levels of support for and opposition against European integration under categories such as euroskeptics, euro-optimists, europhiles or europhobes by concentrating on political parties in the candidate states of Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁶ They usually touched upon only one party's EU perspective¹⁷ and applied those theories of euro-skepticism in their articles to analyze the EU positioning of the parties.¹⁸ This was more likely to be

¹⁴ Esra Çayhan, **Dünden Bugüne Türkiye Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri ve Siyasal Partilerin Konuya Bakışı (Turkey-EU Relations and the Positions of Political Parties on the Subject)**, Istanbul: Boyut Yayınları 1997; Onur Bilge Kula, **Türkiye'deki Siyasi Partilerin Avrupa Politikaları (The EU Policies of Political Parties in Turkey)**, Istanbul: SODEV Yayınları

¹⁵ Both studies examined the TGNA directly.

¹⁶ See Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde, "The Two Sides of Euroskepticism: Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe," **European Union Politics**, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 297-326; Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak, "Europeanization, Euroskepticism and Party Systems: Party-Based Euroskepticism in the Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe", **Perspectives on European Politics and Society**, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2002, pp. 23-41; Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak (Eds.), **Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroskepticism**, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008

¹⁷ Such as Erhan Doğan, "The Historical and Discursive Roots of the Justice and Development Party's EU Stance", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 6, No. 3, September 2005, pp. 421-437; Seçkin Barış Gülmez, "The EU Policy of the Republican People's Party: An Inquiry on the Opposition Party and Euro-Skepticism in Turkey", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 9, No. 3, September 2008, pp. 423-436.

¹⁸ Such as Mehmet Bardakçı, "Turkish Parties' Positions Towards the EU: Between Europhilia and Europhobia", **Romanian Journal of European Affairs**, Vol. 10, No. 4, 2010, pp. 26-41; Gamze Avcı, "Turkish Political Parties and the EU Discourse in the Post-Helsinki Period: a Case of Europeanization" in M. Uğur and N. Canefe (Eds.), **Turkey and European Integration: Accession Prospects and Issues**, London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 194-214; Ziya Öniş, "Conservative Globalists versus Defensive

an attempt to determine the EU stances of the political parties in order to define the level of commitment to the EU membership cause among the parties.

The main contribution of this dissertation is that it approaches the subject from the perspective of political parties and asks “why” question instead of “how”. The studies which are concentrated on the euro-skepticism indeed explore how the parties interpret Turkey’s integration with the EU so that they utilize the concepts like euro-skeptic, euro-enthusiastic etc. to identify the positions of the parties towards the EU. This study reviews the EU positions of Turkish parties; however the objective here is to understand why they prefer to take such position rather than others. In other words, the study explores the factors affecting the policy making of the Turkish political parties regarding the EU issue.

Another contribution made by this study is its suggesting a comparative research on Turkish political parties. The majority of published work on parties deal with merely single party and this makes it difficult to evaluate the influence of competition among parties. Nevertheless, sometimes party competition might be more determinative than other factors for the parties while making their political decisions because what they offer different from others make them votable for the electorate.

Finally, it is necessary to mention the studies on Europeanization although this thesis bases on rational choice approach in order to give a full picture of the literature combining the political party studies with the EU studies. When the literature on the EU-Turkey relations is reviewed, it is observed that Europeanization constitutes the theoretical ground of the majority of the scholarly work. The reason is that the EU policy is a sui generis policy area for its being more than an issue of foreign or internal affairs. The EU project is, once involved, a normative, two-way project of change within both the nation-state and the Union. It brings its process of transformation to candidate as well as member states, that is, it preserves constructive elements in it. This

Nationalists: Political Parties and Paradoxes of Europeanization in Turkey”, **Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans**, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2007, pp. 247-261,
(reprinted in S. Verney ed. Turkey’s Road to EU Membership, 2008)
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14613190701689902#preview>
accessed on 12.12.2010

constructive nature of European integration regarding its impact on political parties has been studied by many scholars under the title of “Europeanization studies” over the last decades.

Nevertheless, in the context of Europeanization of political parties there are also fewer works comparing to the Europeanization of other areas. One of the underlying reasons is that the EU does not require a political party system to be adopted by its member states so that Europeanization is not clearly visible in political parties as it is in other issues such as domestic legislatures or policy areas. As a result, political parties can be considered as actors which operate at a national level. However, scholars working on Europeanization claim that political parties are also affected by this process because most of the domestic political agendas, which they deal with, are already influenced by the EU.¹⁹ In this respect, a couple of works can be referred. Robert Ladrech’s *Europeanization and Political Parties. Towards a Framework of Analysis*, which focuses on the impact of the EU on especially the post-communist parties of Europe, can be argued as one of the most distinct works examining the Europeanization of political parties. It suggests a way of measuring the level of Europeanization in political parties by looking at the changes in certain aspects of parties.²⁰ Paul Pennings’ *An Empirical Analysis of the Europeanization of National Party Manifestos, 1960-2003* provides a detailed comparative analysis of the degree of Europeanization of national party manifestos during a period of 43 years which concludes that “the references to Europe in party manifestos do not only reflect the process of European integration itself, but are affected by both institutional and party strategic factors.”²¹ Goetz and Meyer-Sahling’s *The Europeanization of National Political Systems: Parliaments and Executives* is another valuable study on the Europeanization of the political systems of

¹⁹ Özlem Terzi, **The Influence of the European Union on Turkish Foreign Policy**, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010, p. 25

²⁰ Robert Ladrech, “Europeanization and Political Parties”, **Living Reviews in European Governance**, Vol. 4, No. 1, January 2009, http://www.astrid-online.it/Riforma-de/Studi-e-ri/Archivio-25/LADRECH_Living-Rev_UE-Governance_01_2009.pdf accessed on 28.01.2012

²¹ Paul Pennings, “An Empirical Analysis of the Europeanization of National Party Manifestos, 1960-2003”, **European Union Politics**, Vol. 7, No. 2, 2006, p. 257

the EU-15, in particular, their parliaments and executives.²² Geddes' article, which examines the Europeanization of British political parties, is significant as an example of case study on a developed EU member.²³ For the case of Turkish political parties, Gamze Avcı's *Turkish Political Parties and the EU Discourse in the Post-Helsinki Period: a Case of Europeanization* and Özlem Terzi's *The Influence of the European Union on Turkish Foreign Policy* can be referred as studies which provide an analysis of the political parties in Turkey from the aspect of Europeanization.²⁴

Applying rational choice theory, this thesis is distinguished from other studies which approach to political parties from the perspective of Europeanization since it explores according to what criteria parties take their EU policy positions rather than how political parties in Turkey are affected by the transformation process of Turkey's EU integration.

Yet, the main purpose of this dissertation is to analyze how the political parties in Turkey shape their EU policies by bringing together the alternative perspectives provided by the literature on political parties, the literature on rational choice and the literature on Turkey's EU accession process. For this reason the study, first of all, attempts to find out whether the Turkish political parties give a place to a consistent EU policy in their party discourses as well as their actions. Analyzing the EU policy discourse and actions of the major political parties in the TGNA, the thesis seeks to ascertain how the parties look at the issue and in this sense, what kind of policies they implement. In doing so, it puts the political parties under scrutiny and examines their efficiency on the embodiment of their EU policies.

²² Klaus H. Goetz and Jan-Hinrik Meyer-Sahling, "The Europeanization of National Political Systems: Parliaments and Executives", **Living Reviews in European Governance**, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2008
<http://www.livingreviews.org/lreg-2008-2>

accessed on 08.02.2012

²³ Andrew Geddes, "Political Parties and Party Politics" in Ian Bache and Andrew Jordan (Eds.), **The Europeanization of British Politics**, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 119-134

²⁴ Gamze Avcı, "Turkish Political Parties and the EU Discourse in the Post-Helsinki Period: a Case of Europeanization" in M. Uğur and N. Canefe (Eds.), **Turkey and European Integration: Accession Prospects and Issues**, London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 194-214; Özlem Terzi, **The Influence of the European Union on Turkish Foreign Policy**, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010

The study aims at bringing about the determinants which cause a party in Turkey to keep or change its EU policy position by applying a rational choice approach. It is assumed that electoral behavior, intraparty dynamics and party identity are the major factors playing role in decision-making process of the parties regarding their EU policies.

Methodology

This study utilizes the rational choice theory to analyze the attitudes of political parties in Turkey towards the EU issue between 2002 and 2011. It follows a deductive method and applies the rational choice theory to the policy making process of Turkish political parties in order to answer the research questions. Thus, the thesis goes through two main stages:

In the first stage, it profoundly investigates the EU perspectives of the parties within the period of time concerned. Accordingly, how the literature interprets the EU approaches of those political parties as well as how the parties themselves explain their own EU approaches are evaluated in one chapter. This step is required for answering the first research question which asks if the major Turkish political parties of 2002-2011 have a stable and consistent EU policy, or not. Once it is discovered that the EU policies of the parties differ during certain time periods, some turning points are determined in order to understand the driving forces behind these policy changes.

In the second stage, the thesis intends to answer the second research question asking the reason of change in the EU policies of those parties. Therefore, the main factors affecting the interest perceptions and as a result, the cost-benefit analysis of the parties are examined in two chapters. By following this two-stage method, the thesis puts forward the independent variables which shape the EU approaches of the parties and concludes that it is possible to explain the party behavior concerning the EU issue by looking at those factors in Turkish case.

A wide range of advanced research techniques are employed in order to achieve this two-stage analysis. First of all, a comparative method is applied by taking four different parties into account to enable comparisons among parties as well as

comparisons within parties. This provides the opportunity to avoid generalizations derived from single cases. A comparative approach is also benefited for detecting the similarities and differences in the EU stances of those parties more easily.

Due to the requirement of the examination of numerous party publications, discourse analysis is used as another research technique. This method helps evaluate the relation between the texts or speeches and the social or political context such as the spatio-temporal setting, participants and their various social and communicative roles, as well as their goals, knowledge and opinions.²⁵ Since this dissertation aims at examining the EU policies of the political parties within a certain time period, an amount of about eight hundred primary resources are studied while more than seven hundred being the TGNA group speeches of the parties which provides information about their weekly agendas. Discourse analysis is used to sort out this large data set collected from the publications and speeches and to make a synthesis in order to understand the changes in their EU discourses according to time. It helps detect the cases which indicate a shift in the EU policies of the political parties.

To examine the group speeches of the parties in the TGNA for a time interval of nine years, (2002-2011) content analysis is also used pragmatically as a method to measure the frequency of the references to the EU issue in parties' weekly agendas for each year. Thus, manifest coding, which refers to coding the visible, surface content in a text, is employed.²⁶ This is basically applied by counting the number of times the word "European Union" or its abbreviation "EU" appears in their group speeches. By this method, it is aimed to find out when the EU issue becomes a popular issue on party agendas to analyze the relation between the political conditions of the time and the EU stances of parties.

Apart from those research methods, a *survey* is used as supplementary source to diversify the data being analyzed. The survey was held by the author with the deputies in the TGNA in December 2010 in addition to the data collected on the EU policies of the parties by above mentioned methods because large majority of the

²⁵ A. Teun Dijk, **New (s) Racism: A Discourse Analytical Approach**, London: Sage, 2003, p. 35

²⁶ W. Lawrence Neuman, **Social Research Methods. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches**, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003, p. 313

publications and speeches obtained were the statements of the party chairmen or the vice-chairmen. It was very rare to find a publication authored or the TGNA group meeting headed by a deputy other than the party leader. Hence, it was expected that a survey held in the TGNA could give some clues about the individual opinions of the party members regarding the EU issue; how they perceived their parties' as well as the government's EU policies; and if there were differences between their individual EU approaches and their parties' EU approach.

The survey was accomplished in five steps. In the first step, a questionnaire comprised of seven questions was prepared with a simple, single-page design layout. Multiple-choice was determined as the response style of the questionnaire. The type of survey was decided to be self-administered questionnaire which means that the author would deliver survey sheets to respondents directly by hand. Three extra questions were added to the questionnaire sheet to observe the age, gender and education profile of the deputies.

In the second step, the author went to the TGNA on 13 December 2010 when the budget talks started and distributed the survey sheets to the deputies. This date was particularly chosen to be able to reach maximum number of deputies because it is usually very difficult to find the deputies in the Parliament due to their busy schedules. During the budget talks, the Parliament wouldn't accept guests and a majority of deputies would be required to approve the decisions taken about the new national budget. However, about 50 deputies out of a total number of 541 deputies²⁷ were still not reached as a result of the fact that they were working at various ministries located in other districts of Ankara. The questionnaire sheets were left with deputies till 18 December 2010 so that they took five days to answer the seven questions.

In the third step, the author went back to the TGNA at the end of the given time and could recollect 122 survey sheets, two of them being invalid. Yet, the sampling frame was determined as 120 deputies which represented approximately 22 % of the whole TGNA as of 2010.

²⁷ Although the 2007-2011 parliamentary term started with 550 deputies, this number decreased to 541 in 2010.

In the fourth step, all the data collected was entered into computer; carefully sorted without using specific software for complex statistical analysis and recorded. In the fifth and final step, findings of the survey are presented and evaluated in Chapter 2 of the dissertation.

As the last research technique, five *in depth interviews* were conducted with deputies who took part in EU related missions in their parties or in the Parliament. All the interviews took place in the chambers of those deputies in the TGNA and the survey questions were asked during the interviews. The data were recorded by a sound-recorder and those audio files were later transcribed at computer. In depth interview technique was remarkably useful as it provided an interactive platform to discuss and go into details of the EU policies of parties with their representatives. The findings and evaluation of the interviews are shared in Chapter 2 of the thesis.

Summary and Outline of the Topic

The ultimate goal of political parties in electoral democracies is, first of all, to maintain their existence within the system, and then, if they can, to form the government in order to have more power in such a competitive political environment to pursue their interests effectively. Although there are exceptional parties such as minority parties which do not have a prospect to become a government, those parties still endeavor being a powerful opposition party. That is to say, parties have to preserve their electoral support to exist so that power struggle is inevitable.

In electoral democracies, acquisition of power primarily begins with the election of the party to the parliament because the ones, which are excluded from the parliament, have basically no concrete power as they cannot take part in decision-making procedure of the state. If a party cannot manage to enter the parliament for a long time, it cannot exercise power to fulfill the expectations of the people it represents which would eventually lead the death of the party.

This study investigates political parties which have been represented in the TGNA after the 2002 elections and determines their policy approach on the EU during 2002-2011. In the meantime, it portrays the factors affecting the specific cost-benefit

calculations of the parties which oriented them towards taking such positions and sheds some light on the reasons behind the inconsistencies in parties' commitment level to the EU.

The research design of the dissertation is comprised of four chapters. The first chapter offers a theoretical background for the thesis by focusing on the main assumptions of political parties and the rational choice theory. The first half of the chapter gives an overview about the definition of the parties while referring to the basic terms and concepts in the political party literature. It attempts to explain the factors which affect a party while it makes its decisions concerning a certain policy area. In this chapter major subjects of political party studies such as their types, ideological classifications, functions, organizations, supporters, leaders, electoral base and position in the political system are addressed and key concepts about parties are mentioned. Then, the chapter marks the complexity of studying political parties by elaborating on the difficulties to deal with the sophisticated structure of parties as well as their changing nature, which does not allow the development of comprehensive methodology and well-established party theories.

The second half of the first chapter is devoted to rational choice theory. First, the origins of the theory in economics and its recognition by political scientists after the mid-1950s; then its core elements, assumptions and implications in international relations and political science disciplines are explained. Furthermore, the main application areas of the theory in political science are reviewed. In this part, the application of rational choice theory to voting behavior is not examined in detail because it is investigated thoroughly in the second chapter while analyzing party-electorate relations. Then, strengths and weaknesses of rational choice theory are laid on the table and discussed. Finally, the chapter makes a justification of applying rational choice model as the theoretical ground of this dissertation referring to the relevance of the theory to political party studies and explaining how the EU approaches of Turkish political parties can be analyzed by using this theory.

The second chapter aims at making an overall investigation of the attitudes of the four parties towards the EU during the last two AKP governments and searching out

whether they had a consistent EU policy in this period. Then, it attempts to determine the turning points which indicate a change in the parties' attitudes towards the EU.

To accomplish this goal, the chapter goes through the EU policy of each party one by one following a five-stage process. First, it looks at how the scholarly works interpret the EU perspective of the party's EU policy. Second, it evaluates the party program in terms of the importance it attributes to the EU issue. Third, it scrutinizes solely party publications to reveal the self-positioning of the parties. This forms the most original part of the chapter as it covers the entire TGNA group meeting speeches of party leaders or members, which include a reference to the EU and all other kinds of published materials of the parties concerning the EU issue such as books, leaflets, brochures and election bulletins during those nine years. Fourth, the findings and analysis of an interview²⁸ with a prominent party member playing role in the making of his party's EU policy, which was held by the author herself, are presented. Fifth, the results of the questionnaire held by the author in the TGNA are summarized. The survey contributes the already collected data by giving an opportunity to observe the EU attitudes of the deputies in the parliament separately by checking the answers they gave to the questions about different aspects of the EU issue. In this way, the study seeks to diversify the data collected on the parties' EU discourses providing a unique source of database on the subject.

The chapter is important for two main reasons: First, it reveals the EU stances of those political parties by viewing them both from the eyes of others and the parties themselves which, in turn, consolidates the objectivity of the study. Second, it provides the information which brings the thesis to the second stage: Analyzing the factors causing change in the EU policies of the parties. Therefore, the third and fourth chapters concentrate on those factors.

Since the thesis employs rational choice theory and makes an interest-based explanation for the party behavior in terms of its EU policy, it determines three factors that are considered to be the most effective ones from the inferences of the first and second chapters. Those are electoral behavior, intraparty dynamics, and party identity.

²⁸ Only in the case of the AKP, two interviews were made.

The third chapter focuses on the impact of electoral behavior on Turkish political parties. For this reason, first, it makes an overview of how policy making of political parties is connected to electoral choice from a rational choice perspective. Thus, the concept of rational voter and how the rational voter turns into rational electorate are mentioned by referring to collective action and inaction. Then, aggregation of preferences is explained with two well-known models which are applied to analyze voter-party and voter-politician relations. Moreover, the concept of information aggregation is highlighted to stress on the role of information in party-voter relations. After referring to the theoretical basis of the impact of electoral behavior on parties, the chapter examines the characteristics of Turkish voters and the elections. It looks into the election politics and evaluates the 2002, 2007 and 2011 general elections as well as the 2004 and 2009 local elections. It annotates the findings of relevant literature related to the changing characteristics of Turkish political system after the 2002 elections. It determines under what circumstances the current major political parties make their policies and refers to the changes in party system after the AKP government so that a broader picture of Turkish party system which these parties are belonged to is provided in this chapter. Finally, the chapter compares the attitudes of Turkish electorate and political parties towards the EU during 2002-2011 to display how electoral behavior affects the EU approaches of political parties in Turkey.

The fourth chapter handles the intraparty dynamics and party identity together as the other significant factors affecting the formation of those parties' EU policies. Here, the intraparty dynamics refer to the political groups which support the party in certain ways to pursue their interests and the party identity refers to all other components which constitute a party's characteristics differentiating it from others. On the other hand, the party identity mainly refers to the party ideology, party history, and party leadership which form a policy tradition for each party regarding each policy area. Yet, the chapter provides with the information about the crucial interests of the parties and reveals the perceptions of priority issues for each party when they are to take their political decisions. Eventually, the chapter ends up with explaining how these factors affect the EU policies of those parties.

In the conclusion part, all chapters are summarized briefly by underlining the vital points. The research aims and objectives are reiterated and the research question asked at the beginning along with the hypotheses is attempted to be answered in the light of the findings obtained through the research study. The contributions of this study to the literature as well as its limitations are mentioned. The dissertation is concluded with furnishing personal ideas and suggestions to the researchers intending to focus on the same or similar subject in the future.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. EXPLAINING THE TERMS AND CONCEPTS

1.1.1. What is a Political Party?

Politics in any democratic state in the world cannot be envisioned in the absence of political parties today. Together with citizens, political parties are acknowledged as two essential components of a democracy.²⁹ In this regard, they are the special political actors which are automatically involved in the competition for the legal power positions by getting their power directly from a group of people. As a result, the progress in political parties is significant for healthy and sound democratic regimes.

There is no consensus in the literature on the definition of the term “political party”; however many scholars have intended to define it in their distinctive way. In general, they are defined in terms of actors, actions, purposes and domain. Nevertheless, they can also be defined with their function and structure.³⁰ “A pragmatic and recent definition” of political party would be:

A political party is an autonomous group of citizens having the purpose of making nominations and contesting elections in hope of gaining control over governmental power through the capture of public offices and the organization of the government.³¹

One of the earliest attempts to define political parties was made in the 18th century by Edmund Burke who described the political party as “... a body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interest upon some particular

²⁹ Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971 in Edward Gonzalez Acosta, “Political Parties and Policy Development. The Conditions Which Lead Political Parties to Adopt Progressive Policies”, **Discussion Paper**, No. 15, UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, July 2009, p. 4

³⁰ Giovanni Sartori, **Parties and Party Systems. A Framework for Analysis**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 61

³¹ Robert Huckshorn, **Political Parties in America**, Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole, 1984, p. 10

principle in which they are all agreed.”³² However his definition became disrepute in the 1950s for its being normative and unrealistic.³³ Later attempts were relatively more from a realistic perspective. Schattschneider defined political parties as “an organized attempt to get power” and emphasized the competitive environment in which they act³⁴ while Joseph Schumpeter defined it as a group “whose members propose to act in concert in the competitive struggle for political power.”³⁵ Those conceptions were inclined to describe parties within a broader political system of power struggle.

In his *Parties and Party Systems. A Framework for Analysis*, Sartori argues that many scholars pursue a “minimal definition” strategy to define parties, that is to say, “as many attributes or properties as possible are dropped from the definition, with the understanding that attributes that formerly appeared as *definitional properties* are restated as *hypothetical* or *variable properties*”.³⁶ By synthesizing the political party definitions of many scholars including the above mentioned ones of Burke, Schattschneider and Schumpeter, Sartori makes his own definition:

A party is any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections (free or non-free), candidates for public office.³⁷

Those definitions can be augmented with a glance through the literature. In almost every introductory text book of political science, a definition of political parties is given for they are one of the fundamental actors in politics as the integral elements of contemporary electoral democracies. One of the difficulties in reaching a consensus on one single definition of political party stems from the fact that political parties can show a wide range of variety in shape, ideology, organizational structure and behavior depending on the political tradition of the state concerned. This variety could be illustrated with a comparison of parties founded in different regions of the world such as

³² Susan E. Scarrow (Ed.), **Perspectives on Political Parties: Classic Readings**, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 37

³³ Giovanni Sartori, **Parties and Party Systems. A Framework for Analysis**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 59

³⁴ Elmer Eric Schattschneider, **Party Government**, New York: Farrar and Rinehart inc., 1942, p. 35

³⁵ Joseph Schumpeter, **Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy**, New York: Harper & Row, 1942, p. 283

³⁶ Giovanni Sartori, **Parties and Party Systems. A Framework for Analysis**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 63

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 63

the communist party of Soviet Union, the Nazi party of Germany or the parties in the US or India.

In order to find a common denominator which might be of help to make a scientific analysis of the parties, the scholars resorted to searching for some criteria which would identify the common features of parties. Accordingly, a political party is, first of all, an organization which must possess a degree of durability, or permanence, in order to perform its functions properly. It consists of individuals or group of individuals, fluctuating in personnel and numbers and they are united by common principles or a common policy. The ultimate goal of a political party is the control of government through the carrying of elections and possession of office.³⁸ To this end, the parties in democracies are considered to act in cohesion.³⁹ The underlying reason for this is that the party's control of its representatives in the executive and legislature can only be achieved in the presence of a certain level of cohesion.

Leaving aside the discussions about the reliability of those party definitions in making generalizations, one should consider the fact that the empirical studies are not sufficient to cover all parties in the world. In other words, those definitions might not fit every party since each country has its own specific political culture. Thus, some political scientists have chosen to analyze parties by looking at how they function in a political system through comparative studies.

1.1.2. The Functions of Political Parties

The problem of finding a clear and universal definition of party drew the attention to its functions as they could give an idea about what parties were, basing on the empirical case studies from different countries.

Below, they are summed up to five basic functions; those which are more or less accepted among an overwhelming number of scholars:

³⁸ Ray Perley Orman, **An Introduction to Political Parties and Practical Politics**, New York, Chicago: C. Scribner's Sons, 1913, pp. 1-8

³⁹ A. Ranney, "Political Parties", **International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences**, California: Elsevier Ltd., 2001, pp. 11686

1- The political parties frame the issues concerning the demands and expectations of a particular group in society or society as a whole and they aggregate those interests in different policy options. This function is also called as “interest aggregation” by some scholars.⁴⁰ It is important how successful the parties are in performing this function for the stability and coherence of the policies in the long-run.

2- They select people for several positions to enable the party run properly and to be represented outside. Hogwood defines parties as “channels of recruitment of political leaders” by putting forward the fact that it is rare for the head of government or other ministers not to be long-serving members of political parties in Western European democracies.⁴¹

3- They develop policies on certain issues. Formulating policies is significant for the party because they determine their positions towards the issues on the agenda as well as legislation according to their policy decisions. Since their policies are the main reasons for voters to decide whether to vote for them or not, those policies are not shaped independent from their positions at the time, so to say, being government, coalition partner or opposition can affect their policy decisions.

4- They realize societal representation through elections in two ways. First of all, they offer an active way of political participation to the public by giving the opportunity to take part in the party organization directly as a member and to get selected for various positions within the party where they can practice politics.

Second way of political participation channeled through the parties is rather passive than the former one. Accordingly, they suggest candidates who would represent the interests of them in the elections. In this sense, however, it is necessary for the parties to gain sufficient support in elections to enter the Parliament. Only if they achieve to get into Parliament, are they entitled to practice legislative and executive powers that would enable them represent the societal groups which vote for them.

⁴⁰ Larry Diamond and Richard Günther, **Political Parties and Democracy**, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, p. 8

⁴¹ Patricia Hogwood and Geoffrey K. Roberts, **European Politics Today**, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003, p. 95

5- They exercise power through the formation of governments. Forming government places the party at the highest position in decision-making of an electoral democracy. It equips the party with necessary means to impose its political decisions. Power can be best realized by taking part in government, either alone or in coalition.

Those parties that fail to participate in government or coalition have the chance to act as the opposition party which is responsible for criticizing the government for its policy decisions. The opposition parties give the impression that “they could do the job better, given the opportunity.”⁴² To be an opposition party is especially an option for radical left or right parties which have no government perspectives in the short-term due to their representing the interests of a minority of the population and the ideological distance for central parties to ally with them to form a coalition. Then it is more down to earth target for those parties to be in the opposition and influence politics by criticizing the government.

1.2. THE COMPLEXITY OF STUDYING POLITICAL PARTIES

A distinguished political scientist of the 1950s, Sigmund Neumann, enthusiastically welcomed political parties as a long-neglected study area of political theory in his article in which he reviewed six ground-breaking books of the time on political parties. While criticizing the underestimation of the role of political parties in political science, he appreciated those studies for their “detection of rich comparative data on different national experiences, delineation of sociological and ideological factors in political movements; and, above all, their developing sharper theoretical concepts.”⁴³ Awakening of academic interest in political parties which started in the 1950s has continued increasingly and reached its peak at the end of the 1970s as the studies of literature review on political parties in Europe shows it in the Figure 1.1 below.⁴⁴ In the figure “N” symbolizes the total number of publications per year. It is

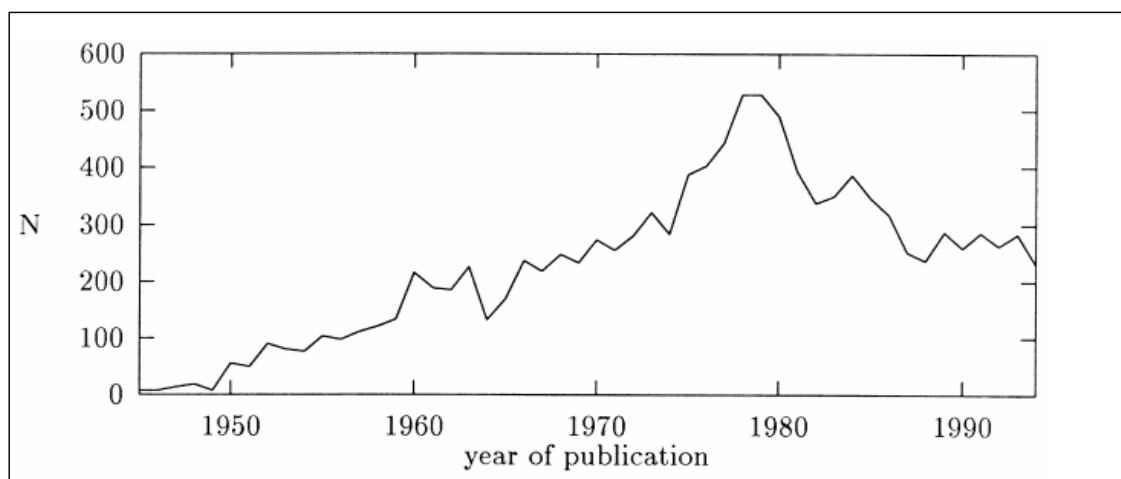
⁴² Ibid., p. 94

⁴³ Sigmund Neumann, “Toward a Theory of Political Parties”, **World Politics**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Vol. 6, No. 4, July 1954, pp. 549-550

⁴⁴ Daniele Caramani and Simon Hug, “The Literature on European Parties and Party Systems since 1945: A Quantitative Analysis”, **European Journal of Political Research**, No. 33, 1998, pp. 499

observed that starting from the late 1970s there is a considerable decrease in scientific production regarding the parties.

Figure 1.1: Literature on European Parties



Source: Daniele Caramani and Simon Hug, “The Literature on European Parties and Party Systems since 1945: A Quantitative Analysis”, *European Journal of Political Research*, No. 33, 1998, pp. 499

The apathy in the 19th and early 20th centuries toward researching on parties can be attributed to the infancy of the electoral democracies so as the parties. Duverger underlines that in 1850 there were trends of opinion, popular clubs, philosophical societies, and parliamentary groups, but no real parties and no country in the world except the US knew parties in the modern sense of the word.⁴⁵ In this respect, the scarcity of scholarly works on parties can be seen reasonable as the development of the modern party concept coincided with that of democracy after the World War I. However, the academic negligence after the late 1970s can be much better explained by the obstacles in studying parties.

Political parties are a rather complex area of study in political science for a number of reasons. It is useful to elaborate on those reasons which make them difficult as subject of analysis in order to explain the process gone through while building the theoretical basis and to justify the methodology employed during the writing phase of this dissertation. Yet, they can be summarized under three categories: structural difficulties, changing nature of parties and the problem of methodology.

⁴⁵ Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties. Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*, translated by Barbara and Robert North, London: Meyhuen & Co Ltd., 1967, p. xxiii

1.2.1. Difficulties to Deal with the Party Structure

One of the major problems of studying parties is due to their equivocal structure. As Duverger states, “the parties have somewhat seasonal characters since their activity is entirely directed towards elections and parliamentary alliances”. He describes the framework of their administration as “embryonic” and their leadership as “very markedly individual in form” and dependent on their parliamentary representatives. That is to say, there is not only a competition among parties but also a struggle for survival within the parties where “the real power belongs to a particular group revolving around a parliamentary leader and the life of the party stems from rivalry amongst such small groups”.⁴⁶

To put it in another way, ideology and doctrine which are supposed to provide the literature with systematic data about the parties illuminate very little part of their daily life concerns in reality because the parties spend most of their time for achieving political goals rather than discussing ideology. As a result, ideology or how the party identifies itself gives no clue about the inner mechanism of the party or its membership where the interests and habits are more in the foreground.

Accordingly, the parties have two structures in nature: the one they promote themselves to the outside world and the one they perform inside. The former can be relatively easy to explore from the party discourse; whereas the latter is hard to observe without belonging to the internal environment of the party.

In this context, stressing that parties are unusually endogenous institutions, Aldrich and Grynviski add two more reasons to the question why political parties present a challenge to formal theorists: First, they are nearly ubiquitous in democracies. Second, they are institutions so that they are appropriate to be studied from a new institutionalist perspective which deals with the impact of institutional rules on electoral or policy outcomes through the application of rational choice, game-theoretic

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 1

reasoning.⁴⁷ On the other hand, even if they were supposed to be studied as institutions, one should remember that they are very different than other smaller organizations so that “they cannot be judged by the standards used to measure those organizations”.⁴⁸ In other words, there is a question of standards for an institutional approach since parties have more complicated structures than simple organizations.

1.2.2. Change in the Nature of Parties

Another problem with party studies is that even when the country specific differences in political tradition are put aside, parties themselves do not have a static nature which would help confirm the validity of existing party analyses in the literature.

Referring to that problem, the answer of Duverger which is quoted in Sartori’s book can be mentioned. In his book Sartori criticizes Duverger for never raising the question “what do we mean when we use the term party?” Nonetheless he adds in his notes that Duverger preferred not to define parties because he believed that the definition changes over time by indicating that it used to be ideological once and it was based on social class for the time being (the 1950s).⁴⁹ Departing from this idea, it can be said that parties evolve along with the evolution of societies because no party can survive within the electoral system without adjusting itself to the needs and expectations of the society. Given that parties are dependent on their voters, change in parties is ineluctable when social change exists. Yet, this erratic nature causes problems in empirical studies.

⁴⁷ John H. Aldrich and Jeffrey D. Gynaviski, “Theories of Parties” in L. Sandy Maisel and Jeffrey M. Berry (Eds.), **The Oxford Handbook of American Political Parties and Interest Groups**, May 2010, p. 21,
http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/oso/public/content/oho_politics/9780199542628/toc.html
accessed on 11.01.2011

⁴⁸ J. P. Monroe, **The Political Party Matrix: The Persistence of Organization**, New York: State University of New York Press, 2001, p. 27

⁴⁹ Giovanni Sartori, **Parties and Party Systems. A Framework for Analysis**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 58-67

1.2.2.1. Evolution of Parties

Parties are not the same as once they used to be and they continue changing. Although there are different perspectives about what kind of change it is, scholars mostly agree on the fact that political parties have evolved through the history parallel to social evolution.

From a retrospective approach, it can be said that there have been many ups and downs of parties. Those fluctuations have been detected by looking at three aspects: 1- Party in the electorate 2- Party as organization 3- Party in government. Party in the electorate refers to the voters in an election who identify with a party and vote for its nominees. Party as organization addresses the electing of candidates to represent the party. Finally, party in government describes the power of the party in national decision-making.

Fiorina identifies party literature in the 1960s and 1970s with “party decline thesis” which contended that party organizations had disintegrated, party influence in government had fallen sharply and voter partisanship had eroded. On the other side, he points out a turn-around in scholarly judgments in the 1980s and 1990s as the party organizations, party in government and voter partisanship appeared to strengthen again.⁵⁰ Departing from this aspect, it can be argued that making general judgments independent from popular trends is not very possible in the case of parties.

Below, both trends are concisely referred to give an overview of the party evolution over the last half century.

1.2.2.1.1. Party Decline Theory

Party decline theory was originated in the 1960s from the idea that the parties were becoming less relevant to politics due to a decline in three aspects of parties: parties in electorate, party organizations and party in government. With respect to this theory, parties were supposed to fall short of the depth of involvement and emotional

⁵⁰ Morris P. Fiorina, “Parties and Partisanship. A 40-Year Retrospective”, **Political Behavior**, Vol. 24, No. 2, June 2002, p. 93

and ideological attachment that they commanded a century, even two or three decades ago.⁵¹ The theory was supported by many scholars who found out indicators of a decline in three aspects of parties, namely party organization, party in government and party in electorate.

The party organization was the first realm of parties where dealignment was observed. In the 1950s public policies and socioeconomic change were started to be marked as the reason of the deterioration of party control over material benefits and access to the office which nourished the parties until then.⁵² The declining party in government followed it. An ambiguity in party unity and party differentiation was perceived especially by the scholars researching on the US Congress. Eventually, in the context of party in electorate a weakening of party identification was regarded. Until the 1980s the theoreticians tried to interpret the party decline from different angles.

Linz assumes that decrease in confidence of ordinary citizens towards parties may derive from attitudes that are inherently contradictory, or from unreasonable expectations of party performance that are impossible to meet, particularly in light of the increasing number of demanding roles that parties must perform in democratic systems.⁵³ Schmitter relates the failure of parties to increasing diverse array of interests and skills of citizens and the emergence of interest associations and social movements as vigorous competitors to parties for the opportunity to represent and mobilize citizens outside of the electoral arena.⁵⁴ According to Inglehart, major political parties were established in eras defined by class conflict and the preeminence of economic issues, whereas the more recent, “post-materialist” generations are concerned more with “cultural and quality of life issues” that cut across the established party divisions. He argues that parties have weakly adapted to deep currents of normative and social change

⁵¹ Larry Diamond and Richard Günther, **Political Parties and Democracy**, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, p. 3

⁵² Morris P. Fiorina, “Parties and Partisanship. A 40-Year Retrospective”, **Political Behavior**, Vol. 24, No. 2, June 2002, p. 94

⁵³ Juan J. Linz, “Parties in Contemporary Democracies: Problems and Paradoxes” in Richard Gunther, Jose Ramon Montero, and Juan J. Linz (Eds.), **Political Parties: Old Concepts and New Challenges**, Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 2002 in Larry Diamond and Richard Günther, **Political Parties and Democracy**, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001

⁵⁴ Larry Diamond and Richard Günther, **Political Parties and Democracy**, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, pp. xvii-xviii

and this resulted in weakening party loyalty.⁵⁵ Diamond and Günther draw the attention to what extent electoral pessimism towards parties reach by referring the German term “Parteiverdrossenheit” which means “alienation from parties or being fed up with political parties” and they claim that this trend cannot only be confined to Germany.⁵⁶ In any case, all these assumptions share in common that parties are in decline because there is a discrepancy between the society and them although each defines this discrepancy in another way.

As a result of growing popularity of party decline thesis, several surveys were held in different countries to investigate electoral support for parties. The focal question of those studies was “why has support for political parties declined?” For instance, Dalton indicates the evidence of such a survey which demonstrates that both the proportion of the population identifying with a political party and the strength of party attachments have declined in the past quarter-century in almost all the advanced industrial democracies including 17 of 19 for which time-series data are available.⁵⁷ Despite the large-scale quantitative studies that supported the theory, the party decline argument would fade out in a few decades.

One remarkable contribution of those who favored party decline thesis was the argument that “parties have moved from ideologically distinctive and compelling mass-membership organizations that dealt with a large proportion of the citizenry toward more generic *catch-all* parties over the past century.”⁵⁸ The concept of catch-all party would be useful to explain the decline of the role that party ideology plays in a party.

⁵⁵ Ronald Inglehart, **Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies**, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997, p. 311 in Larry Diamond and Richard Günther, **Political Parties and Democracy**, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001

⁵⁶ Larry Diamond and Richard Günther, **Political Parties and Democracy**, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, p. 101

⁵⁷ Russel J. Dalton, “Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies” in Pippa Norris (Ed.), **Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance**, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 65-66

⁵⁸ Larry Diamond and Richard Günther, **Political Parties and Democracy**, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, p. xii

1.2.2.1.2. Resurgence of Parties

A scholarly reversal toward the party decline theory began in the 1980s. The findings of further research on parties indicated that the accessibility of party frameworks in the electorate appeared to decline between 1952 and 1972; however it rose well above the 1952 level by the 1980s and only fell dramatically in 1992. This was also evidence for “a decline did not necessarily entail the perceived irrelevance of parties as accountability mechanisms.”⁵⁹ First the critiques of party organization, later party in government and finally party in electorate were discredited. Huckshorn, Gibson, Cotter and Bibby claimed that party organization was flourishing since there was a progress in standard indicators of party organization such as number of staff members, offices, activities or their budgets. They stressed on weaknesses of party decline theory:

One such flaw is the underlying assumption that the various dimensions of party-commonly distinguished as party-in-the-electorate, party-in-government, and party organizations-are changing in the same direction and at the same rate. Hence, perceptions of declining partisanship in the electorate have led to inferences of equivalent change in parties as organizations. Perhaps the most unsettling for the thesis is the persistence and growth of strong party organizations at the national, state and local levels.”⁶⁰

Parallel to the development in party organization, the party in government and later party in electorate have revived. For instance, in the US case, the election of Reagan intensified the party unity and differentiation which in turn caused the rise of party in government. Moreover, a reversal has occurred in the electoral departisanization. The resurgence of the parties proved that sporadic changes keep it hard to reach general theoretical inferences for political parties.

⁵⁹ Jay A. DeSart, “Information Processing and Partisan Neutrality: A Reexamination of the Party Decline Thesis”, *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 57, No. 3, August 1995, p. 776

⁶⁰ Robert J. Huckshorn, James L. Gibson, Cornelius B. Cotter, and John F. Bibby, “Party Integration and Party Organizational Strength”, *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 48, No. 4, November, 1986, pp. 976-977

1.2.3. Problem of Methodology

Another reason which can explain the visible diminution of scholarly interest on political parties over the last decades is of relevance to the methodological problem in party studies through the history. Their dependency on external factors made parties unreliable units for analysis so that theoretical models were essential in order to measure and interpret their political behavior. Hence, the rational choice theory has emerged as a response to the question of methodology to analyze parties.

1.3. RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY

1.3.1. The Roots of Rational Choice Theory in Economics

Rational choice theory has been developed in the late 19th century within the domain of economics as a positivist research approach to examine human behavior. Taking individual as the basic unit of analysis, it has gradually formed the fundamental paradigm of microeconomics by providing the basic assumptions of choice behavior of decision-making individuals, that is, consumers or firms in the context of economics.

Until the mid-19th century, the study of economics was largely based on verbal arguments dominated by normative concerns. It started to change after the emergence of marginalist school pioneered by William S. Jevons, who emphasized on the importance of mathematical analysis in economics.⁶¹ Marginalist revolution in 1890 paved the way for the reformulation of the study of the price mechanism, which, in turn, helped develop a “decidedly mathematical, deductive, and positive” school of economics in the next decades.⁶² Nevertheless, this new positivist school has not been accepted immediately by the majority of economists. The mainstream methodological approach, which is self-evident and unfalsifiable in principle, dominated until the employment of mathematical models on the analysis and solution of economic problems was incontrovertibly widespread.

⁶¹ Gary J. Miller, “The Impact of Economics on Contemporary Political Science”, **Journal of Economic Literature**, Vol. 49, September 1997, p. 1173

⁶² Ibid.

Particularly in the 1940s and 1950s the problems within empiricism triggered a re-assessment of the relationship between explanation and prediction. One of the scholars responding to those problems was Mises, who was concerned with establishing universally valid knowledge existing prior to experience and identified through reason. Growing attention to the intentional and purposeful nature of human action within economic life prepared the grounds for contemporary rational choice theory.⁶³ Mises claimed that the value of things could only be identified with the subjective preference of individuals, in this case, the individuals, who were engaged in the money-based economic calculation within the conditions of market exchange. He also reformulated the relationship between explanation and prediction asserting that scientific theories could not represent the real processes in situations of complexity, contradicting with the empiricist assumption that explanations and predictions are the same. He argued that specific outcomes in social science were not predictable with any degree of accuracy so that we could merely predict patterns. The rational choice approach uses imaginary constructions to understand those patterns.⁶⁴ Put differently, the assumptions of rational choice models do not aim at being full descriptions of reality. The main goal here is to support reasoning by comprehensive models having falsifiable, in other words, scientific hypotheses.

In this regard, rational choice theory gives weight to methods used for analyzing and modeling economic and social behavior. The theory has formed one of the main premises of neo-classical economics by providing some basic concepts and assumptions which make the economic or, later, social modeling easier and more systematic. Before going into details of the rational choice assumptions, the major elements of the theory will be briefly mentioned below.

1.3.1.1. The Elements of Rational Choice Theory

Each study using rational choice theory shares some common elements making it more clear and systematic to be followed by the readers. They also create a rational choice terminology distinguishing it from other approaches. Those elements are

⁶³ Mark J. Smith, *Social Science in Question*, London: SAGE Publications, 1998, p. 155

⁶⁴Ibid.

preferences, concept of rationality, utility function, constrained optimization, and equilibrium.

1.3.1.1.1. Notions of Preferences and Rationality

Preferences are the first essential elements on which the rational choice theory builds its utility function. In the context of rational choice theory every human being, as part of his/her internal world, has naturally or socially acquired wants, needs, desires, which are altogether considered as preferences. Those preferences are given a priori so that they do not change in the short run and they affect the behavior of individuals.⁶⁵ To put it another way, individuals act rationally. The notion of *rationality* in rational choice theory simply refers to the idea that individuals act in accord with their preferences.

1.3.1.1.2. Utility Function

Rational choice theory presupposes that, by acting rationally, individuals make a cost-benefit analysis in order to maximize their benefits and minimize their costs. The theory attempts to explain the relation between preferences and behavior of an individual by making use of a mathematical function, namely *utility function*.

A utility function attributes a numerical value to possible choices of an individual who has to make a decision about a certain issue. However, a utility function can be formulated when the number of alternative choices is limited. If there are infinite possible alternative choices, a utility function can fail to represent the preference relation.⁶⁶ Green describes the utility function with a simple example below:

Suppose a consumer purchases two goods. Let x denote the number of units of good 1 consumed and y denote the number of units of good 2 consumed. The consumer's utility function is given by $U = U(x, y)$, where the function $U(\cdot, \cdot)$ assigns a number ("utility") to any given set of values for x and y . The properties of a large number of specific function forms for $U(\cdot, \cdot)$ have been considered. The analysis is by no

⁶⁵ Josip Dasovic, Seminar on "Rational Choice Theory in Comparative Politics", Department of Political Science, University of Richmond, 14 June 2008, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwh5Fz7u7dI> accessed on 08.01.2012

⁶⁶ Andreu Mas-Colell; Michael Whinston and Jerry R. Green, **Microeconomic Theory**, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 9

means restricted to two goods, though in many cases the analyst finds it convenient to assume that x is the good of interest and y is a “composite good” representing consumption of everything *but* good x .⁶⁷

In a utility function $U(x, y)$ an increase in the value of X and/or y which, in turn, increases the value of U would be enjoyed until the marginal utility is positive. *Marginal utility* refers to the change in utility associated with a small increase in the quantity of a good consumed. Marginal utility of each good rises until the consumption of that good does not give any additional satisfaction and starts to fall which is called the *diminishing marginal utility*.

1.3.1.1.3. Constrained Optimization

Although rational choice theory assumes that individuals choose the alternatives which maximize their utility, it is not always possible to apply it in the presence of constraints. Green indicates budget constraint as a typical constraint in a simple one-period consumer choice problem which says that the consumer cannot spend more than her income. He argues that even if multi-period models allow for borrowing, then the consumer must be able to repay the loan in the future which presents a constraint again. Therefore, there must be a decision rule showing how utility-maximizing choices vary with changes in circumstances such as changes in income or in the prices of goods.⁶⁸

It is important to know the constraints, which an individual encounters, in order to understand his choice decisions and to form reliable utility functions. He might choose to act in a certain way even though he would act differently in the absence of a constraint. In this regard, it is also significant to know the environment in which choices are made. Economic models often take markets as the environment with emphasis on how much of each good or service consumers want to purchase (or firms want to

⁶⁷ Steven L. Green, “Rational Choice Theory: An Overview”, prepared for the Baylor University Faculty Development Seminar on Rational Choice Theory, May 2002, p. 6, http://www.google.de/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=steven%20l.%20green%2C%20%E2%80%9Crational%20choice%20theory%3A%20%20an%20overview&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CC8QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fbusiness.baylor.edu%2Fsteve_green%2Fgreen1.doc&ei=8dJKT7rHGKSi4gT0y9H1CQ&usg=AFQjCNE7Io2MULRFuNqHF2Ibumw9QW9Y8A&cad=rja, accessed on 08.01.2012

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 7-8

produce and sell) under any given set of circumstances.⁶⁹ Yet, individual decision-making cannot be considered independent from the conditions of the environment within which he acts.

1.3.1.1.4. Equilibrium

Another element of rational choice analysis is the consistency of the choices of individuals with each other. This consistency is explained with the concept of *equilibrium*. Green defines it as follows:

A situation with consistent choices, in which each agent is optimizing subject to constraints is called *equilibrium*. In the fresh tomato market, for example, the choices of buyers and sellers are consistent if the quantity of tomatoes consumers want to purchase at the prevailing price is equal to the quantity that firms want to produce and sell at that price. In this as in other simple market models, price plays a key role in the establishment of equilibrium. If consumers want to purchase more than firms are producing, the price will be bid upward, which will induce more production by firms and reduce desired purchases by consumers. If consumers want to purchase less than firms are producing, the resulting glut will force prices down, which will reduce production by firms and increase purchases by consumers.⁷⁰

In a marketplace the behavior of each actor has an effect on the other one. As described above, there is an interdependent relation between consumers and firms. Equilibrium is the steady state reached when none of the individual actors is willing to change his behavior unilaterally, that is, all the actors are satisfied with the outcomes of their action. Equilibrium ends when one or more actors involved wants to change the status quo and it is not achieved until no actor wants to take an incentive to change his behavior. Interestingly, there are some economic models having no equilibrium or multiple equilibria, too.

1.3.1.2. Basic Assumptions of Rational Choice Theory

All assumptions of rational choice theory are derived from the very idea that individuals act with a purpose. Each assumption takes this idea one step further in order

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 8

⁷⁰ Ibid.

to explain the behavior of an individual in a certain economic or social case. It is, of course, important to note that individual behavior is developed in accordance with the specific conditions of the environment in which a case emerges.

Green exemplifies rational choice through an analysis of the market for fresh tomatoes. He assumes that such an analysis would, first of all, involve a description of the desired purchases of tomatoes by buyers, the desired production and sales of tomatoes by sellers, and how these desired purchases and desired sales interact to determine the price and quantity sold of tomatoes in the market. The buyer is interested in the amount of income or food budget to be spent on tomatoes comparing to another good or service; whereas the seller is interested in the quantity of tomatoes to be produced and the price to be charged for them.⁷¹ Green states that “the basic idea behind the rational choice theory is that people do their best under prevailing circumstances” so that in the case of tomatoes “the choices made by buyers and sellers are the choices that best help them achieve their objectives, given all relevant factors that are beyond their control.”⁷² Thus, rational choice theory, in a way, envisions a marketplace where all the actors attempt to maximize their profits from the outcomes of actions they take individually or from the outcomes of the interaction among each other. Rational choice models usually refer to a certain process to be followed by the individual (consumer in this context) while he decides on the choice that could best maximize his benefits.

The rational choice theory of consumer behavior is based on the following axioms regarding preferences of consumers:

1-The consumer faces a known set of alternative choices.

2- For any pair of alternatives (A and B, say), the consumer either prefers A to B, prefers B to A, or is indifferent between A and B. This is the axiom of *completeness*.

3- These preferences are *transitive*. That is, if a consumer prefers A to B and B to C, then she necessarily prefers A to C. If she is indifferent between A and B, and indifferent between B and C, then she is necessarily indifferent between A and C.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 4

⁷² Ibid., pp. 4-5

4- The consumer will choose the most preferred alternative. If the consumer is indifferent between two or more alternatives that are preferred to all others, he or she will choose one of those alternatives- with the specific choice from among them remaining indeterminate.⁷³

According to Green, rational choice analysis can be characterized as working through the following steps:

1-Identify the relevant agents and make assumptions about their objectives.

2- Identify the constraints faced by each agent.

3- Determine the “decision rules” of each agent, which characterize how an agent’s choices respond to changes of one kind or another – for example, how the quantity of tomatoes purchased, might change with price or income. This task is usually accomplished mathematically by the solution of a constrained optimization problem.

4- Determine how the decision rules of various agents may be made consistent with one another and thereby characterize the equilibrium of the model. Effective analysis of complex interactions between agents normally involves the use of mathematical methods, which can sometimes be quite sophisticated.

5- Explore how the equilibrium of the model changes in response to various external events. That is, determine the *predictions* or *implications* of the model. Again, this step can involve substantial use of mathematics.

6- Examine whether the predictions determined in step (5) are consistent with actual experience. This step often involves the statistical analysis of data and can involve sophisticated techniques (to control sample selection bias, for example).

7- Draw conclusions and any implications (for government policy, for example) implied by (6).⁷⁴

Lovett describes rational choice theory as “causal modeling” for being based on three core methodological assumptions. First, he assumes that “human beings are discrete entities capable of considering several different possible courses of action, and deliberately selecting and carrying out (or attempting to carry out) one or more of them”

⁷³ Ibid., p. 5

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 13

(The assumption of discrete purposeful actor). However, he notes that this does not mean that the only possible discrete purposeful actors are individual human beings. In other words collective agents, too, might qualify under certain circumstances. He also points out that human beings do not always act in a purposeful way; however they are capable of doing so and finally, he states that purposeful action does not necessarily have to be uninfluenced or unconstrained by external factors unless such influences and constraints leave the actor without choice. Second core assumption is that we can expect which choices or decisions of discrete purposeful actors will make with the help of a mathematical function (utility theory assumption). Correspondingly, the third assumption refers to the fact that discrete purposeful actors always try to optimize their utility functions (rationality assumption).⁷⁵ Each study applying rational choice is based on one or all of these three assumptions.

No matter which interpretation of rational choice theory assumptions is taken, there is one common point that those assumptions make the theory clear, systematic, applicable and easy to handle, that is, it provides solid and consistent methodological grounds for the researcher to investigate complex cases.

1.3.2. Implications of Rational Choice Theory in International Relations and Political Science

Over the last decades the method of rational choice theory has gone beyond the realm of economics spreading to a wide range of disciplines such as sociology, psychology, political science, international relations, anthropology, criminology etc.

Due to the constraints of time and scope, only its implications in international relations and political science are scrutinized in this dissertation. By the end of World War II the new theory of economics relying on the rational choice theory began to make some inroads in international relations as well as political science. It is also remarkable for its timing because the emergence of rational choice models in those disciplines is parallel to the onset of the Cold War Era when realist theories and concepts of strategy have become increasingly popular. Therefore, it is no surprise that one of the common

⁷⁵ Frank Lovett, "Rational Choice Theory and Explanation", **Rationality and Society**, SAGE Publications, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2006, pp. 240-241

applications of rational choice has been the deterrence theory, which is often studied by the scholars of Cold War era. In the next sections, some of the most common implications of rational choice theory in international relations and political science are evaluated respectively. Furthermore, the implications on political parties are examined in detail while leaving the implications of elections and voting behavior to examine later in Chapter 3.

1.3.2.1. Rational Choice in International Relations

International relations became one of the first disciplines outside of economics, where many implications of rational choice assumptions emerged. After the 1930s, international relations theorists began to embed the study of world politics in a broader political analysis that stretched from individuals to national governments and the interaction among those governments.⁷⁶ From the 1950s onwards, consistent with traditional politics and neo-realism, rational choice has become visible in the discipline especially in security studies. The increasing interest in security studies during the Cold War has allowed it to dominate this sub-discipline. Nevertheless, the inability of security studies and international relations scholars to predict the end of the Cold War has also given rise to the criticisms of rational choice theory in terms of its methods to analyze conflict in the global system.⁷⁷ At the very least, rational choice theory has seriously contributed to the evolution of the discipline by stimulating theoretical debates among scholars regardless of being embraced or confronted. Many scholars have borrowed the assumptions and methodology of the rational choice theory of economics to generate new perspectives in international relations. Hence, it has reserved its place in most of the international relations textbooks.

One of the common international relations theories, which adopt rational choice approach, is the hegemonic stability theory. The theory suggests that in an anarchic international system each state seeks to exploit the wealth of others to enhance its own power and uses trade as an instrument to this end so that it would maximize its

⁷⁶ Miles Kahler, "Rationality in International Relations", **International Organization**, Vol. 52, No. 4, Autumn 1998, p. 920

⁷⁷ Tom Lansford; Robert J. Pauly and Jack Covarrubias, **To Protect and Defend: U.S. Homeland Security Policy**, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2006, pp. 14-15

absolute gains from trade, which enables it to adjust its defense strategies to compensate for any changes in the balance of power that occur as trade barriers fall.⁷⁸ In this respect, a strong causal relationship is assumed between free trade and hegemony.

The hegemonic stability theory is constructed on the idea that a stable international system, where free trade was defined as a public good, necessitates the presence of a rational hegemonic power which could decide system-wide for the sake of others. Yet, it accepts all actors (usually states in this context) of international system as rational. It assumes that the lack of a hegemon causes international disorder leading undesirable outcomes for individual states because it brings anarchy and, eventually, an insecure international environment. In this sense, the theory views states as interest-oriented entities which could make cost-benefit analysis with respect to their power potentials and which could renounce some of its independence by devolving it to the hegemon in favor of maximizing its security.

Another point to be mentioned about the rational choice in hegemonic stability theory is its formulation of collective action problem. Since rational choice uses methodological individualism, the reason for individuals to act collectively is the presence of public goods. Individual rational states tend to foist the costs onto others while enjoying the benefits wherever there are public goods such as national security, propitious laws, and informed citizenry.⁷⁹ In hegemonic stability theory, free trade is taken as the public good of the international system. Then, the theory employs the rational choice approach by assuming that rational states are inclined to charge the strongest state, that is, the hegemon, with the duty of preserving systemic order to relieve from the burden of security costs. In this sense, the costs of conforming with the hegemon instead of being a free rider is less than the costs of living in anarchy with a constant security threat.

⁷⁸ Joanne Gowa, "Rational Hegemons, Excludable Goods, and Small Groups: An Epitaph for Hegemonic Stability Theory?", *World Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 3, April 1989, p. 323

⁷⁹ Oxford Companion to World Politics: Rational Choice Theory, <http://www.answers.com/topic/rational-choice-theory>, accessed on 01.03.2012

Hegemonic stability theory is criticized by some scholars who argue that hegemony is not necessary for a stable world economy based on market exchange. Their criticisms are centered on three points. First, they assert that rational hegemons adopt an optimum tariff rather than free trade in accordance with standard international trade theory. Second, they suggest small groups as close substitutes for privileged groups as public-good theory itself claims. Finally, the provision of open international markets implies the supply of excludable rather than public goods.⁸⁰

Gowa, as a proponent of rational choice theory, simply responds above mentioned criticisms. She claims that a non-myopic rational hegemon may reject an optimum tariff; exclusion from a free-trade accord is itself a public good; and hegemons enjoy a clear advantage relative to small groups with respect to the supply of international public goods. However, she notes that there are three weaknesses of hegemonic stability theory: Strategic interdependence, incomplete information and barriers to “k” group formation. She underlines that it has to include security dimension to the utility functions of the states which open their borders to trade.⁸¹ Her article concludes with the idea that neglecting the political consequences of agreements to trade freely makes the hegemonic stability theory problematic and it suggests that a more powerful theory of the political economy of international trade must emphasize on the role played by security concerns in the determination of national trade policies.⁸²

Another field of international relations, in which assumptions of rational choice theory are apparent, is war studies. Fearon has been a prominent advocate of applying rational choice theory to the phenomenon of war. In his article *Rationalist Explanations of War* he refers to two reasons why scholars choose rational choice approach to explain war:

1-War can be a rational alternative for leaders who are acting in their states' interest- they find that the expected benefits of war sometimes outweigh the expected costs.

⁸⁰ Joanne Gowa, “Rational Hegemons, Excludable Goods, and Small Groups: An Epitaph for Hegemonic Stability Theory?”, *World Politics*, Vol. 41, No. 3, April 1989, p. 307

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 308

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 324

2-The dominant paradigm in international relations theory, neo-realism, is thought to advance or even depend on rationalist arguments of war.⁸³

Fearon argues that a coherent rationalist explanation for war has to reveal the reason of states' incapability to locate an alternative outcome that both would prefer to a fight rather than trying to find out what makes a rational leader go for an armed conflict under some circumstances. In this context, he mentions five tenable rationalist arguments widely accepted in the literature on the causes of war, which are anarchy, expected benefits greater than expected costs, rational preventive war, rational miscalculation due to lack of information, rational miscalculation or disagreement about relative power.⁸⁴ Fearon develops two claims: First, he suggests that fighting is costly and risky so that there should exist negotiated agreements that rationally led states in dispute would prefer to war. Second, the rationally led states' incapability locating or agreeing on such a bargain can be explained by two causal logics: First one is the combination of private information about intention or capability of the sides and incentives to misrepresent these. Second one is that states are unable to commit to uphold a deal in specific circumstances.⁸⁵

To sum up, Fearon's criticisms has two premises. First, he acknowledges the empirical relevance of arguments based on irrationality or "pathological" domestic problems to explain war. In other words, he accepts the criticisms of rational choice approach to war. Notwithstanding, he argues that to explain which criteria entail war is only possible with the disclosure of the causal mechanisms precipitate war in the "ideal" case of rational unitary states. Second, the task of specifying those causal mechanisms can only be achieved if the factors resulting in the production of one outcome rather than another in particular settings can be identified.⁸⁶ Consequently, the theory takes states as rational actors to understand why they go to war although they might take the decision of going to war irrationally because it is not possible to infer the cause of war from irrational actors. There is no consistent explanation of irrational behavior.

⁸³ James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War", *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 3, Summer 1995, pp. 379-380

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 380-381

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 409

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 410

Moreover, one must know which outcome occurs as a result of a certain action in order to find out what causes war.

Rational choice assumptions are also used for explaining how wars occur besides why they occur. According to Copeland, it is the dominant but declining power which is most likely to wage a major war in any system assuming states are rational security-seeking actors which remain uncertain about the others' future intention. Put differently, major wars are too costly and they risk the survival of the state so that it is usually the dominant military power that initiates war. Additionally, it is irrational for any great power to enter war while it is still rising because it attacks with a higher probability of victory at less cost when it waits. Departing from this logic, he argues that all major wars must be preventive wars if the actors are rational.⁸⁷ As it is observed in his assumptions, Copeland makes use of rational choice method to elaborate on the behavior of states concerning major wars. He builds his theory on a deductive basis by looking at the impact of systemic level pressures on individual state behavior, although he recognizes that leaders can sometimes be influenced by domestic and individual-level factors. However, the theory is not interested in predicting the deviations or less likely but possible outcomes.⁸⁸ Those deviations are the disturbing causes of the actor behavior which could remain underestimated for the sake of explaining the most likely or stronger causes.

Lake benefits from rational choice assumptions to compare anarchical style of the US with the hierarchical character of the Soviet Union in terms of their relations with their allies during the Cold War. He points out that realism fails at explaining the difference in relations of these superpowers with their allies although two countries occupying similar positions within the international system are expected to adopt similar strategies for building power and security. Yet, Lake relies on theories of relational contracting, which were recently transferred from economics to political science, to examine the choice relations by states.⁸⁹ He makes use of grand strategy theory, which is defined by Posen as “a state’s theory about how it can best “cause”

⁸⁷ Dale C. Copeland, **The Origins of Major War**, New York: Cornell University Press, 2000, pp. 15-16

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 29

⁸⁹ David Lake, “Anarchy, Hierarchy, and the Variety of International Relations”, **International Organization**, Vol. 50, No. 1, Winter 1996, pp. 1-2

security for itself.”⁹⁰ He takes state as a firm producing security and he claims that “whenever a state chooses to manufacture security in association with another, it must choose a relationship-ranging from an anarchic alliance to a hierarchic empire-to govern interactions with its partner.”⁹¹ In his model, an alliance resembles to contract between separate firms and an empire resembles to integration within a single firm. Choice between these alternatives determines the utility function comprising of two variables: the expected costs of opportunism declining with relational hierarchy, and governance costs rising with relational hierarchy.⁹² In short, Lake’s interpretation of state’s relations with other states concerning the supply of security counts on rational choice methodology by making analogies between utility function of a firm seeking maximization of its profit and a utility function of a state in search of security maximization.

Lake suggests that grand strategy must be understood as a choice across alternative relations varying along a continuum from anarchy to hierarchy, or alliance to empire instead of the choice of single policy. Since he models the choice across alternative relations as a (utility) function of the expected costs of opportunism and governance, he defines international relations as “a network of transactions embodied in implicit and explicit contracts”. Once emphasizing the contractual nature of international relations, his theory focuses on the ways in which states shape their environments, choose whether or not to invest in greater safeguards and decide how much “cheating” they are willing to accept. He argues that states must invest on governance structures designed to hedge against the expected costs of opportunism by their partners when they are willing to cooperate.⁹³

Deterrence theory represents another popular study area in international relations where rational choice assumptions and game-theoretic models of decision

⁹⁰ Barry R. Posen, **The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain and Germany Between the World Wars**, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1984, p. 13 in David Lake, “Anarchy, Hierarchy, and the Variety of International Relations”, **International Organization**, Vol. 50, No. 1, Winter 1996, p. 2

⁹¹ David Lake, “Anarchy, Hierarchy, and the Variety of International Relations”, **International Organization**, Vol. 50, No. 1, Winter 1996, p. 2

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 29

making are used. It is one of the most striking demonstrations of reason in the service of particular national and international goals with its applications to nuclear policy and arms control.⁹⁴ The issue of credibility is significant for rationalist deterrence theorists, that is, the defending state's deterrent threat has to be credible to an attacking state in order to reach a positive outcome.

According to Huth, if the defending state possesses both the military capabilities to inflict substantial costs on an attacking state in an armed conflict, and if the attacking state believes that the defending state is resolved to use its available military forces, then a threat is considered credible. Huth highlights four major determinants for consideration under rational deterrence theory: the balance of military forces, costly signaling and bargaining behavior, reputations, and interests at stake. He argues that an unfavorable assessment of the domestic and international status quo by state leaders can undermine or severely test the success of deterrence. In the context of rational choice approach, if the expected utility of not using force is reduced by a declining status quo position, then deterrence failure is more likely, since the alternative option of using force becomes relatively more attractive.⁹⁵ Likewise other implications of rational choice theory in international relations, rational deterrence approach has been debated and criticized a lot by scholars.⁹⁶

Many other applications of rational choice assumptions in international relations can be referred and added to above mentioned ones. On the other hand, rational choice theory has also been confronted by many scholars particularly after 1945 as a response to its rapid engagement in the domain of international relations. The critics have either attempted to explain the behavior of agents in international relations with alternative non-rational approaches or questioned the scope and accuracy of a

⁹⁴ Miles Kahler, "Rationality in International Relations", **International Organization**, Vol. 52, No. 4, Autumn 1998, p. 941

⁹⁵ Paul K. Huth, "Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Debate", **Annual Review of Political Science**, Vol. 2, 1999, pp. 25-48

⁹⁶ There is a considerable literature about rational deterrence theory and its critiques. Some of the most prominent ones are: H. A. Christopher and D. Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies", **World Politics**, Vol. 6, January 1989, pp. 143-169; R. Jervis, "Rational Deterrence Theory: Theory and evidence", **World Politics**, Vol. 61, January 1989, pp. 183-207; R. N. Lebow and J. G. Stein, "Rational Deterrence Theory: I Think, Therefore I Deter", **World Politics**, Vol. 61, January 1989, pp. 208-24.

rationalist account for the behavior. Kahler highlights four main aspects of the criticisms of rational choice in international relations:

1-Realism has often been paired with the assumption of a rational and unitary state actor, but its relationship with rationalist theorizing has been uneasy, in both its classical, power maximizing form and its neorealist and structuralist variants.

2-Psychological assaults on rational choice can be traced to Freud; contemporary criticisms share the individualist premises of rational choice models but dispute its claims regarding the information-processing powers of agents.

3-Both rationalist and psychological models share a third hurdle in explaining international outcomes: constructing a plausible model of action for entities beyond the individual level, whether bureaucratic organizations, interest groups or states.

4-The rationality and the individualism of beliefs is questioned by theories that stress culture, identity, and norms as independent sources of action.⁹⁷

Theories based on culture, identity and norms, which have employed detailed descriptive or interpretive approaches to their subjects, have pressed for a constructivist theory of preference and belief as well as the identity formation of actors. They challenge the deductive and parsimonious bent of rationalist models and oppose to the methodological individualism of rationality in them. They claim that it is problematic to apply the rationalist assumptions of individual decision-making to the behavior of collectivities as plausible assumptions since question of aggregation is not clearly answered by rational choice theorists. Even though both psychological and rationalist approaches accept individualist premises, there are also criticisms coming from the sub-disciplines of psychology such as depth psychology, cognitive psychology and prospect theory, which point out “important deviations from austere models of subjective expected utility.”⁹⁸ In addition, from the perspective of the social constructivist critics of rational choice, the role of social norms, culture and identity cannot be underestimated in a state’s decision-making process, that is, even if the state acts rationally, policy decisions or preferences are influenced by identity politics.

⁹⁷ Miles Kahler, “Rationality in International Relations”, **International Organization**, Vol. 52, No. 4, Autumn 1998, pp. 923-924

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 933

Over the last decades both rational choice theorists and its critics have moved from the individual to the organizational and governmental levels of analysis, accompanied by their rational and non-rational assumptions. The issue of appropriate aggregation or modification in order to preserve assumptions drawn from the individual level has rarely been proposed explicitly. As Kahler argues, “rational choice has provided a means to explore the most efficient means to pursue national ends, to attain collectively desirable international outcomes, and to avoid disastrous ones”.⁹⁹ For instance, military strategy has been designed to impose reason on conflicts that had the risk to get out of control and to transform fights into games. In that sense, rational choice and game theoretic approaches have been pragmatic to accept since the image of rational and unitary state actors has been pervasive in the field and strategic interaction is a given.¹⁰⁰ Even though the application of rational choice approach is continuously attacked by other approaches, it seems to preserve its place at the core of explanatory models in international relations.

1.3.2.2. Rational Choice in Political Science

In the second half of the 20th century the impact of economics has been felt in political science, too, which, until then, had carried on “the tradition of verbal arguments, inductive observation, and normative content”.¹⁰¹ First scholars, who applied rational choice theory to political subjects, were economists. They took “voters as rational maximizers, politicians as entrepreneurs, and bureaucrats as suppliers in a market-like process of consumption, production, and exchange”.¹⁰² However, this attempt, at first, has not been warmly welcomed by political scientists, since they took it as interference from another field of science. They were reluctant to accept an economic interpretation for voting or coalition formation; thus they have felt the pressure to come up with an equally rigorous model that fits the facts better.¹⁰³ In any case, rational choice theory has gained significance because both the political scientists, who adopted

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 939

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 939-941

¹⁰¹ Gary J. Miller, “The Impact of Economics on Contemporary Political Science”, **Journal of Economic Literature**, Vol. 49, September 1997, p. 1173

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

it, and the ones, who confronted it, have kept it alive by either trying to find out its deficiencies or improving it.

Within a couple of decades rational choice theory has become a well-established school of thought in political science used for understanding and modeling political phenomena. The theory has been embraced first in the study of American politics and in the field of international relations. In the early 1990s it has also attracted attention within comparative politics. It has been applied to a number of problems such as voting behavior, party competition, democratization, institutional design, economic reform, ethnic mobilization, and nationalism. It has been promoted as “the approach best suited for scholars concerned with theory-building, the integration of research on different substantive issues, and the cumulation of knowledge.”¹⁰⁴ It differentiated itself from the traditional political theory by using analytical techniques, in other words, it provided an alternative way in the study of politics to shift from description and judgment to explanation and analysis by asking “why” and “how” questions instead of “what” question. It represented an alternative to the approaches which explained political facts from a cultural or historical perspective or theories based on constructivism.

The underlying assumptions of rational choice theory in political science are similar to the assumptions of its original version in neo-classical economics. Moreover, rational choice theorists of political science use the same rational choice terminology while applying those assumptions to their political models.

They define preferences as part of an individual’s internal world, whereas beliefs as belonging to their external world. A belief is associated with the effectiveness of a specific action or instrument for various outcomes. Beliefs affect the way people express their preferences either through certainty or uncertainty, that is, they determine how certain we are about measuring a particular behavior with an outcome. Here, *certainty* means that each behavior leads directly to distinct outcome. In other words, individual is highly confident that a specific action or instrument will lead to desired

¹⁰⁴ Gerardo L. Munck, “Rational Choice Theory in Comparative Politics” in Howard J. Wiarda (Ed.), **New Directions in Comparative Politics**, Colorado: Westview Press, 2002, p. 165

result. On the other hand, *uncertainty* refers to the fact that there is no direct mapping behavior to outcomes. Put differently, individual has very little precision about the probabilities linking actions with outcomes. When an individual is not certain of outcome but has clear idea of the probabilities associated with the action, it forms a situation of risk.¹⁰⁵

The simple logic of preference and choice has two significant components: Completeness and transitivity. *Completeness* refers to the assumption that alternatives are comparable, if for any pair of them, the chooser either prefers the first to the second, the second to the first, or is indifferent between them. *Transitivity* refers to the internal consistency of preferences. If any three possible alternatives, say x, y and z are transitive and if chooser prefers x to y and y to z, then he prefers x to z. Instrumental rationality is based on the idea that one combines his/her beliefs about the external environment and preferences about things in that environment in a consistent manner. A rational individual chooses the instrument that will lead to the best outcome for him, that is to say, he acts to maximize his profit depending on the given conditions. Maximization under conditions of risk and uncertainty, decision maker needs to assign a utility number to each outcome with respect to their relative values placed on those outcomes. He chooses the action that would maximize the expected utility mostly.¹⁰⁶ In an environment where there are multiple rational individuals, interactions of those individuals produce an equilibrium because each individual maximizes his utility while responding the others' decisions, and eventually, they stop at a position from which they can't gain utility any more. This position is defined as their equilibrium. Equilibrium does not necessarily have to be a socially optimal one.

In summary, rational choice is an approach that helps explain political events and phenomena by employing individual as the basic explanatory building block, that is, *methodological individualism* because it deals with explaining and predicting the behavior of individual. It accepts individuals as instrumentally rational; therefore, it

¹⁰⁵ Josip Dasovic, Seminar on "Rational Choice Theory in Comparative Politics", Department of Political Science, University of Richmond, 14 June 2008, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwh5Fz7u7dI> accessed on 08.01.2012

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

assumes that they act in accord with their preferences for final outcomes and their beliefs about effectiveness of various actions available to them. Finally, acting rationally requires the followings respectively: ranking final outcomes, assigning utility numbers to them if necessary, determining expected utility of actions by weighing probability of action, selecting action that has the highest expected utility.¹⁰⁷ Thus, it is possible to mention assumption of rationality, rules of game, strategic interaction, and equilibrium as four components of rational choice theory in politics.

Although the rational choice theory in political science has been derived from its counterpart in neo-classical economics; it cannot be simply confined to its economic version. Levi underlines that political rational choice theory is differentiated from the straightforward application of an economic theory to politics because it understands how different contextual and institutional factors influence individuals' behaviors and choice, that is, rational individuals make decisions always under the contextual and institutional constraints.¹⁰⁸ After all, each political model based on rational choice has developed and modified the theory helping it fit better into the field of politics.

1.3.3. Applications of Rational Choice Theory in Political Science

Individual voting and participation; aggregation of preferences; aggregation of information, and institutional analysis can be counted as the four most common fields of rational choice applications. Yet, rational choice approach cuts across the four inclusive sub-categories of the discipline, namely, the traditional definitions of American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and political theory.¹⁰⁹

In the next section, instead of explaining all of the four rational choice applications mentioned above, solely rational choice institutionalism is scrutinized due to the strong relevance of the other applications to Chapter 3 of this thesis which focuses on the impact of electoral behavior on Turkish political parties.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Margaret Levi, "A Model, A Method, and A Map: Rational Choice in Comparative and Historical Analysis" in Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman (Eds.), **Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure**, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 22

¹⁰⁹ Gary J. Miller, "The Impact of Economics on Contemporary Political Science", **Journal of Economic Literature**, Vol. 49, September 1997, pp. 1174-1175

1.3.3.1. Rational Choice and Political Institutions

The early rational choice theorists in political science such as Arrow, Downs, and Olson have investigated the individual level dimension of rational choice by taking individual rational political actor such as voter, politician, party leader or bureaucrat into consideration. While doing so, they have also revealed several problematic issues concerning the rational behavior of the individual. This prompted the next generation of political scientists, who adopted rational choice approach, to concentrate their studies on the structured institutional constraints on individual maximizing behavior. The focus shift from the determinants of self-interested choice to restraints on self-interested choice has accelerated the production of scholarly works on the issue of commitment, that is, “the settings in which long-term gains could be achieved by limiting, rather than expanding, the scope of individual choice.”¹¹⁰ Weingast highlights three aspects of institutions which are covered by the rational choice approaches to the study of institutions in order to provide a systematic treatment: The effects of institutions, the necessity of institutions and the endogenous choice of particular institutions, including their long-term durability and survival.¹¹¹ Below the necessity of institutions and the credible commitment are combined in one section and, in addition, institutional change is explained as another aspect of institutions dealt by rational choice.

Weingast refers to two separate modes of institutional analysis of rational choice approach as the first precedes the second. Taking institutions as exogenous, the effects of institutions are studied in the first mode; whereas the second mode deals with why particular institutions exist, evolve, and survive by taking institutions as endogenous this time. Thus, in contrast with the approaches which take institutions as given and endogenous, the second mode yields a distinctive theory about their stability, form and survival by examining how actors attempt to affect the institutions as conditions change.¹¹² Although the first mode has been studied more than the second

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 1193-1194

¹¹¹ Barry Weingast, “Rational-choice Institutionalism” in Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (Eds.), **Political Science: The State of the Discipline**, New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2002, p. 660

¹¹² Ibid., p.661

mode in the literature, studies on endogenous institutions draw an increasing interest from rational choice scholars.

1.3.3.1.1. Exogenous Approach to Institutions

The effects of institutions on choices have been the first realm of institutions investigated by rational choice analysts, who took them exogenous entities. Institutions can have a considerable impact on individual choices by affecting their *opportunity sets*, that is, the sets of possibilities from which individuals choose. This can happen both directly and indirectly. Institutions may directly determine an individual's opportunity set such as the rules of sporting events, or they may indirectly determine an individual's opportunity set by creating a game in which opportunities may be created or eliminated. The latter might be said of the civil law with respect to market transactions, or national political constitutions with respect to the decisions of politicians and interest groups.¹¹³ In short, institutions limit the interaction, information, beliefs and payoffs of individuals.

Despite the presence of other constraints such as nature, knowledge, and imagination determining the range of choice available to individuals and organized groups, institutions are still significant determinants of choice in most societies since long-standing organizations such as civil law, market, courts, and constitutions define opportunity sets of individuals.¹¹⁴ In his article on rational-choice institutionalism Weingast shows how microlevel details imply macropolitical differences in the context of rational choice by providing a comparative framework dealing with the effects of institutions on the legislative-executive balance of power and policy choice. Mentioning many Latin American countries, which have sufficiently powerful presidents relative to their legislatures, and the US Congress, in contrast, which is one of the most powerful legislatures in the world; he states that the relative powers of the executive and the legislature vary considerably across nations. He argues that these differences are

¹¹³ Introduction to Rational Choice Politics, Background Material for Constitutional and Political Economy Courses,
<http://rdc1.net/class/BayreuthU/CONSINTR.pdf>
accessed on 21.02.2012

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

directly related to the institutional details about legislative-executive relations such as veto powers, ideal policies or status quo etc.¹¹⁵

Within a rational choice model, institutions affect individual behavior in areas of choice where they affect a typical individual's opportunity set. For example, an individual that works for a public agency tends to have a stronger interest in the budget and authority of his agency than ordinary citizens since his agency's budget and authority determine his opportunities for interesting work, travel, and career advancement.¹¹⁶ The stronger the relation between the institution and the individual, the more impact the institution has on the opportunity set of the individual.

Tsebelis' theory of "veto players" represents a well-structured implication of rational choice method for the analysis of the effects of political institutions. By veto players, he refers to individuals or collective decision makers whose agreement is required for the change of the status quo. He declares that the veto players theory accounts for a series of important political phenomena such as the difference between majoritarian and supermajoritarian institutions; the importance of agenda control and referenda; the reasons for government stability (in parliamentary systems); the reasons for independence of bureaucracies, and judicial independence.¹¹⁷ He assumes that whether policy stability or change is essential depends on the position of the status quo. Considering institutions as located on one particular point of the continuum of the stability, he points out that institutions that permit change may also lead to the

¹¹⁵ Barry Weingast, "Rational-choice Institutionalism" in Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (Eds.), **Political Science: The State of the Discipline**, New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2002, p. 662

Weingast defines an ideal policy as the policy which the president and each legislator prefer over all others. They prefer policies closer to their ideal to those further away. On the other side, he distinguishes a particular policy called the status quo, which is defined as the policy that will remain in effect if no action is taken. (p. 662)

¹¹⁶ Introduction to Rational Choice Politics, Background Material for Constitutional and Political Economy Courses,

<http://rdc1.net/class/BayreuthU/CONSINTR.pdf>

accessed on 21.02.2012

¹¹⁷ George Tsebelis, "Veto Players and Institutional Analysis," **Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration**, Vol. 13, No. 3, October 2000, p. 441

replacement of a desirable status quo, and institutions that promote stability will make the change of even an undesirable status quo difficult.¹¹⁸

Tsebelis discusses that there is a three-step procedure which determines the rules of the process of counting veto players: 1) identify and count institutional players 2) replace institutional players by multiple partisan players if there are stable majorities 3) apply the absorption rule and eliminate redundant veto players.¹¹⁹ If decisions of collective veto players are not made by simple majority but by qualified majority or the qualified majority equivalents such as filibuster, absolute majorities, abstentions, unwilling or undesirable allies and simple majorities, then he assumes three political outcomes:

1- As the required qualified majority threshold increases, the winset of the status quo shrinks.

2- Unlike the majority winset of the status quo, which is always never empty, the qualified majority winset of the status quo may be empty.

3- Extremely important for the size of the qualified majority winset of the status quo (if it exists) is the q-cohesion of the collective player.¹²⁰

Tsebelis stresses on the agenda control arguing that the sequence of moves in legislation narrows down the location of the final outcome. If one of the veto players selects among the many possible outcomes (controls the agenda) and the others approve or disapprove the selection, then knowing the preferences of the agenda setter leads us to the identification of the outcome. In addition, the sequence of moves in combination with other characteristics of the system may lead to significant alterations of the number and/or the identity of veto players.¹²¹ The significance of agenda setters is directly proportional to policy stability. Making a comparison between parliamentary and presidential systems, Tsebelis finds out that legislation maintains the characteristics of the corresponding agenda setter in these systems.¹²² When the number of agenda setters

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 443

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 450

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 454

¹²² Ibid., p. 458

rise or when their congruence decreases, the policy change is less expected, in other words, policies are more stable.

He concludes that the veto players theory is capable of analyzing and generating expectations on any particular political system or combination of systems as well as generating significantly different predictions from middle-range theories.¹²³ Particularly, it enables predictions about government instability in parliamentary systems and regime instability in presidential systems.¹²⁴ Empirical evidence has so far proved that the theory can explain the policy stability regardless of which political system is under scrutiny.

1.3.3.1.2. Endogenous Approach to Institutions

Unlike the scholars focusing on the effects of institutions, some rational choice theorists prefer to take institutions as endogenous rather than given. Their main purpose is to explain why institutions exist and why they take the specific form they do. This group of scholars argues that “parties often need institutions to help capture gains from cooperation. In the absence of institutions, individuals usually face a social dilemma, that is, a situation where their behavior makes all worse off.”¹²⁵ The prisoner’s dilemma models are examples of models which explain such social dilemma and the necessity of institutions for interaction of individuals. Thus, institutions accommodate the essential mechanisms for the imposition of cooperation.

From the perspective of rational choice, institutions are stable (equilibrium) procedures and constraints that determine the “rules of social games” and the penalties for violating those rules.¹²⁶ The aim of taking an institution as equilibrium of behavior in an underlying game is to analyze the observed behavior as well as the conditions that

¹²³ Ibid, p. 470

¹²⁴ George Tsebelis, “Decision Making in Political Systems: Veto Players in Presidentialism, Parliamentarism, Multicameralism, and Multipartyism”, **British Journal of Political Science**, Vol. 25, No. 3, July 1995, p. 289

¹²⁵ Barry Weingast, “Rational-choice Institutionalism” in Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (Eds.), **Political Science: The State of the Discipline**, New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2002, p. 670

¹²⁶ Introduction to Rational Choice Politics, Background Material for Constitutional and Political Economy Courses,
<http://rdc1.net/class/BayreuthU/CONSINTR.pdf>
accessed on 21.02.2012

make the institutions effective.¹²⁷ Different institutional rules led to different kinds of equilibria; therefore, the creation of different institutional equilibria committed groups to different outcomes. It is relatively an easier task to assume that a particular institution is equilibrium of an underlying game rather than predicting the reason why that equilibrium is chosen by the players, but not another one. That equilibrium could be reached as a result of spontaneous convergence, bargaining and contracts, or coercion.¹²⁸ However, not every equilibrium behavior has to be an institution because sometimes the behavior of one actor does not really affect the other one's behavior.

Another important concept taking institutions as endogenous, the “credible commitment”, was introduced by Douglass North. He built a framework to examine the role of institutions in the development of capitalist markets. North argues that “a ruler generally has incentives to take confiscatory actions which undermine property rights and contract enforcements, and sharply constrain the incentives for productive economic activity by his own subjects. The constitutional problem is to constrain self-interested activity of the ruler, to commit the ruler to constitutional constraints that are consistent with economic development.”¹²⁹ Miller remarks that in all of these settings, the critical question was no longer, “What would self-interested rational actors do?”, but “How could rational actors be constrained (or constrain themselves) not to pursue their self-interest?”¹³⁰ There have been various studies on credible commitment and self-enforcing incentives after it was launched by North.

One of the early scholarly works, which is worth to mention here, is Terry Moe's *The New Economics of Organization*. Moe investigates the implications of the new economic theory of organization for the study of public bureaucracy. He claims that rationalist theory of organization can analyze bureaucratic behavior by focusing on hierarchical control and by offering a coherent framework for integrating both the

¹²⁷ Randall L. Calvert, “Rational Actors, Equilibrium, and Social Institutions” in Jack Knight and Itai Sened (Eds.), **Explaining Social Institutions**, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001, p. 58

¹²⁸ Gary J. Miller, “The Impact of Economics on Contemporary Political Science”, **Journal of Economic Literature**, Vol. 49, September 1997, p. 1196

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1195

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1196

bureaucratic and the political dimensions of administrative performance.¹³¹ He presupposes a state of nature comprised of autonomous decision-makers. It resembles to the state of nature in economics, which is characterized by a free market populated by economic agents. He claims that the reason d'être of public organizations is their efficiency because citizens have inadequate incentives to reveal their true demand and to contribute accordingly, and potential suppliers have inadequate incentives to produce. Thus, the government acts as the agent of citizens by arranging for the optimal supply of the public good and taxes each individual according to the benefits he receives.¹³² He views institutions as the source of means for cooperation.

Moe advocates the use of principal agent model to examine hierarchical relationships since he considers it as the major means of formal modeling. He assumes that the whole democratic politics is structured by a chain of principal-agent relationships in which citizens are principals, politicians are their agents; politicians are principals, bureaucrats are their agents and bureaucratic superiors are principals, bureaucratic subordinates are their agents. Yet, he underlines that the formal apparatus and deductive power of the principal-agent model are applicable to each of these hierarchical stages of government and might usefully be employed in investigating even the most basic questions of democratic control and performance.¹³³

The new economics of organization theory is also employed by Weingast and Marshall to analyze political organizations and to explain the pattern of institutions within the legislature that facilitates decision making. Accordingly, they attempt to provide a theory of legislative institutions that parallels the theory of the firm and the theory of contractual institutions. They mark two major similarities between market institutions and legislative institutions: The goals or preferences of individuals (Here, representatives seeking reelection) and the relevant transaction costs.¹³⁴ In their case study about the United States Congress, Weingast and Marshall conclude that the

¹³¹ Terry M. Moe, "The New Economics of Organization", *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 28, No. 4, November 1984, pp. 772-773

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 759

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 765-766

¹³⁴ Barry R. Weingast and William J. Marshall, "The Industrial Organization of Congress; or, Why Legislatures, Like Firms, are not Organized as Markets", *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 96, No.1, 1988, p. 132

institutions of the Congress are designed in line with legislators' re-election goals. Their specific form helps them evolve to reduce problems such as measurement, moral hazard, and opportunism that also arise in market exchange.¹³⁵ Particularly, their emphasis on the committee system in the Congress is useful to see how institutions can limit the structure of the issue specific coalitions. The study also shows how legislative institutions enable cooperation by pushing legislators by pushing them into bargaining for their interest maximization.

In the *Analytic Narratives* the foremost rational choice theorists, Bates, Greif, Levi, Rosenthal and Weingast discuss endogenous institutions with different case studies. Furthermore, they explicitly outline an approach that relies on rational choice and mathematical models. The book comprises of five case studies all draw from the same general rational choice approach and attempts to extend it in historical and comparative research. The central problem of the book is how to develop systematic explanations based on case studies.¹³⁶

Each case study in the book represents an implication of rational choice theory to a specific topic of political science. Greif investigates the growth of Genoa in the 12th century, and accounts for the puzzle of how the podesta, that is, a ruler with no military power, resolved harmful clan conflict and promoted economic prosperity. His case has implications generally for issues of factional conflict and political order. Rosenthal models both long-term and divergent institutional change among countries and offers new insights into the relationship between war and governmental regimes by comparing taxation in France and England in the 17th and 18th centuries. Levi accounts for the variation in 19th century conscription laws in France, the US, and Prussia and finds that changing norms of fairness, resulting from democratization, influence the timing and content of institutional change. Weingast focuses on the balance rule and how it deflected civil war in the US. He advances the program of understanding the institutional foundations and effects of federalism. Bates analyzes the rise and fall of the International Coffee Agreement. He discovers and explains why during World War II

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 160

¹³⁶ Robert H. Bates; Avner Greif; Margaret Levi; Jean-Laurent Rosenthal and Barry R. Weingast, "The Analytic Narrative Project", **American Political Science Review**, Vol. 94, No. 3, September 2000, p. 696

and the Cold War the US, a principal coffee consumer, cooperated with the cartel to stabilize prices. His major finding concerns the circumstances under which a political basis for organization will trump economic competition in an international market.¹³⁷

After *Analytic Narratives* was published, it received a lot of criticisms from opponents of rational choice assumptions so that two years later the authors published the article “Analytic Narratives Project” to respond those criticisms and justify their method. They targeted one of the most prominent critics of their book, Jon Elster¹³⁸, who himself was once used to be a rational choice theorist, in order to respond the critics of the use of rational choice theory in political science. They state that they prefer rational choice because it offers a superior approach by generating propositions that are refutable. They claim that the models they employ are not mere just-so theories when compared to standard methods of evaluation-such as the out-of-sample testing of predictions and the systematic pursuit of falsification.¹³⁹ Therefore, the analytic narratives project has been designed for bringing a scientific aspect to the study of various political phenomena instead of using the existing modeling methods which they heavily criticize for not being testable or measurable.

In his article “Institutions in Comparative Policy Research” Scharpf investigates the different perspectives of institutional and policy research. Although he argues that the hypotheses derived from rational-choice institutionalism often turn out false, he admits the fact that they play an important role for the exploration of quantitative relationships by concentrating especially on the residuals, in other words,

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 697

¹³⁸ Elster is a well-known social scientist who has numerous works on rational choice theory. He has never been a strong supporter of rational choice; however he has emphasized on the significance of the problem formulation of rational choice method in social sciences. He has also criticized non-rational approaches to individual behavior. In the 1990s he has turned into a critic more than an advocate of rational choice theory. Particularly the following are among the most important critical works of Elster on rational choice which were addressed by the rational choice theorists in the “Analytic Narratives Project”: Jon Elster, **The Cement of Society**, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989; Jon Elster, **Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences**, New York; Cambridge University Press, 1989; Jon Elster, **Alchemies of the Mind: Rationality and the Emotions**, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998; Jon Elster, “Rational Choice History: A Case of Excessive Ambition”, **American Political Science Review**, Vol. 94, September 2000, pp. 685-695 His recent book provides a summary to understand the evolution of his thoughts about rational choice: Jon Elster, **Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences**, Cambridge University Press, 2007

¹³⁹ Robert H. Bates; Avner Greif; Margaret Levi; Jean-Laurent Rosenthal and Barry R. Weingast, “The Analytic Narrative Project”, **American Political Science Review**, Vol. 94, No. 3, September 2000, p. 700

cases in which the prediction is not confirmed.¹⁴⁰ He highlights that problem-oriented policy analysts predict the choices we should expect if all policy actors had complete information and were exclusively motivated to realize public-interest maximizing outcomes; whereas rational-choice institutionalist analyses do the same but this time motivated to realize self-interest maximizing outcomes. If both predictions agree, then institutional incentives are favoring the adoption of effective policy responses to the problem in question. If they disagree, such responses are made more difficult by institutional obstacles.¹⁴¹ Hence, he suggests that if only both types of policy actors which strive for self-interest and public-interest maximizing outcomes perceive the problem concerned as worth to produce a policy, then an effective policy can be adopted.

Miller draws the attention to the impact of principal-agency theory as he applies it to political institutions. He argues that it has contributed political science by allowing political scientists new insights into the role of information asymmetry and incentives in political relationship with tools borrowed from the economic analysis of insurance and also provided a way to think formally about power as the modification of incentives to induce actions in the interest of the principal. In congressional oversight of the bureaucracy, increasing emphasis has been placed on negotiation of administrative procedures, rather than the imposition of outcome-based incentives, as originally conceived.¹⁴² Miller describes six features in order to define an economic model as a principal-agency model:

1-Agent impact: The agent takes an action that determines (along with a risky variable) a payoff to the principal.

2-Information asymmetry: The principal can readily observe the outcome but not the action of the agent.

3-Asymmetry in preferences: The agent's preferences differ from the principal's.

¹⁴⁰ Fritz W. Scharpf, "Institutions in Comparative Policy Research", **Comparative Political Studies**, Vol. 33, 2000, p. 783

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Gary J. Miller, "The Political Evolution of Principal-Agent Models", **Annual Review of Political Science**, Vol. 8, 2005, p. 203

4-Initiative that lies with a unified principal: The principal acts rationally based on a coherent set of preferences, and is able to move first by offering a contract.

5-Backward induction based on common knowledge: Principal and agent share knowledge about the structure of the game, effort costs, probability distribution of outcomes, and other parameters.

6-Ultimatum bargaining: The principal is presumed to be able to impose the best possible solution from the agent's correctly inferred best response function.¹⁴³

On the one hand, these six assumptions culminate in outcome-based incentives which are used by the principal to partly overcome the problems of moral hazard even though there is a considerable informational disadvantage of principal against the agent. On the other hand, moral hazard restricts the benefits to the principal and the efficiency of the transaction as a whole.¹⁴⁴ Miller states that most of the political science applications of principal-agent theory, except a few canonical model applications, do not involve all six assumptions above mentioned. He shows the work of Downs and Rocke as the most convincing application of canonical principal-agent theory to a political science setting by defining the chief executive as the agent of the public, though potentially having different foreign policy preferences than the public. He claims that the control of public over the chief executive is the probability of his being removed from power. He underlines that the public can monitor the success or failure of his decisions—for example the failure of a war albeit it cannot monitor the chief executive's actions.¹⁴⁵ In brief, it can be said that the chief executive is free to act in accord with his self-interests as long as he gives enough concessions to achieve preserving his position.

Miller applies the assumptions of the principal-agency model explained above to the foreign policy making of a chief executive. Accordingly, first the chief executive takes foreign policy actions that result in salient consequences for the electorate (Assumption 1). There is a lack of information for the public that gets worse by collective action problems among the electorate (Assumption 2). The executive may

¹⁴³ Ibid., pp. 205-206

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

well be either more or less aggressive than is in the public's interest (Assumption 3). The public has relatively homogenous preferences in terms of major issues such as war and peace (Assumption 4). Although there is an information asymmetry, the public evaluates the outcome of the executive's war or peace decisions. The public can use backward induction to determine the best contract offering it as an unquestionable deal (Assumption 5 and 6). It is important to find out the most suitable contract.¹⁴⁶ From principal-agency perspective, it is not so easy to make the best contract for both parties in the presence of large monitoring costs which motivate the constituency to contract for outcomes instead of actions, that is, it judges the executive by the final outcome of his actions regardless of questioning if his actions are acceptable or not.

In rational choice approach, cooperation does not necessarily have to be the reason of the emergence of institutions. Although rational choice theory is inclined to view political institutions as structures of voluntary cooperation that resolve collective action problems and benefit all concerned, political institutions may be structures of power as well as cooperation.¹⁴⁷ Moe argues that cooperation and power go together in democratic politics so that focusing on only one might cause us to misinterpret institutions. The cooperation makes the exercise of power possible, and the exercise of power often motivates the cooperation. However, he does not suggest creating new analytic tools or theories to study power since rational choice theory already has adequate tools and concepts. He considers that there is only need for attention from rational choice theorists to the issue in order to have progress.¹⁴⁸ It also shows that there are still several aspects of rational choice waiting to be uncovered by scholars.

Following the development of endogenous studies of institutions, institutional change has become a popular area of study for rational choice theorists. Changes in institutions affect an individual's behavior insofar as they directly or indirectly change the "opportunity sets" available to him at moments of choice. Rational choice analysis can be benefited for analyzing the effects of institutions and institutional change without developing formal (geometric or mathematical) models, as historians do when they

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 206-207

¹⁴⁷ Terry M. Moe, "Power and Political Institutions", *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 2, June 2005, p. 215

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 229

explain important historical events by analyzing the interests and opportunities of key decision makers in particular times and places. For example, rational choice analysis can be used for explaining William III decision to invade England in 1688, and the English Parliament's decision to make him king in 1689; or, similarly, it can be used for analyzing possibilities for reforming the existing governmental structure of the European Union by considering the interests of the major decision makers, that is, national representatives, and the likely effects of institutional reform on those interests.

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In their article on the evolution of the constitutional arrangements in seventeenth-century England following the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Weingast and North assess the relationship between institutions and the behavior of the government and interpret the institutional changes on the basis of the goals of the winners-secure property rights, protection of their wealth, and the elimination of confiscatory government. They argue that the new institutions allowed the government to commit credibly to upholding property rights since their success was proved in capital market.¹⁵⁰ Weingast and North assert that the fundamental institutions of representative government are closely related to the struggle for control over governmental power. The success of the propertied and commercially minded interests led to institutions that simultaneously mitigated the motive underlying the Crown's drive to find new sources of revenue and also greatly constrained the behavior of the government.¹⁵¹ They indicate that institutions contribute considerably to economic growth and political freedom.

Focusing on transaction-cost approach to institutions and a cognitive-science approach to rational choice North makes five propositions about institutional change:

¹⁴⁹ Introduction to Rational Choice Politics, Background Material for Constitutional and Political Economy Courses,
<http://rdc1.net/class/BayreuthU/CONSINTR.pdf>
accessed on 21.02.2012

¹⁵⁰ Douglass C. North and Barry R. Weingast, "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England", **The Journal of Economic History**, Vol. 49, No. 4, December 1989, p. 803

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 829-830

1-The continuous interaction between institutions and organizations in the economic setting of scarcity, and hence competition, is the key to institutional change.

2-Competition forces organizations to continually invest in skills and knowledge to survive. The kinds of skills and knowledge individuals and their organizations acquire will shape evolving perceptions about opportunities, and hence choices, that will incrementally alter institutions.

3-The institutional framework provides the incentives that dictate the kinds of skills and knowledge perceived to have the maximum payoff.

4-Perceptions are derived from the mental constructs of the players.

5-The economies of scope, complementarities, and network externalities of an institutional matrix make institutional change overwhelmingly incremental and path-dependent.¹⁵²

North suggests formulating a specific agenda for the study of institutions, which would be different than game-theoretic or spatial-political modeling of institutions. He notes that current rational choice models are insufficient to handle the cognitive dimensions of choice. Therefore; he offers a new research agenda for institutional analysis which combines a transaction-costs approach to institutions with a cognitive-science approach to rational choice.¹⁵³ He emphasizes that this new research agenda can improve framework for better understanding history and suggests that it can provide a solid base for policy making in the reconstruction of economies such as in the case of Eastern Europe.¹⁵⁴

1.3.4. Strengths and Weaknesses of Rational Choice Theory

There are numerous works on both strengths and weaknesses of rational choice theory in the literature. Since they are relevant to the subject of this thesis, particularly those which are associated with rational choice analyses of political parties and electorate are briefly summarized below in order to understand which points are

¹⁵² Douglass C. North, "Five Propositions about Institutional Change" in Jack Knight and Itai Sened (Eds.), **Explaining Social Institutions**, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001, p. 15

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 20

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 25-26

attacked by the opponents of the theory and how rational choice theorists respond to those criticisms. Hence, first weaknesses, then strengths of the theory are examined.

Although the impact of rational choice model on political science has been enormous, it has also been criticized for having some limitations. Those criticisms can be categorized in two groups: the critiques originating from the institutional approaches other than rational choice institutionalism which blame the rational choice model for underestimating the transforming power of parties as an institution to influence the electoral choice; and the critiques assessing rational choice theory on its own terms especially by criticizing its hypotheses and methodology.

The arguments of the latter group of scholars can be well-represented by Green and Shapiro's *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: a Critique of Applications in Political Science*. The book is one of the most comprehensive critical evaluations of the rational choice theory in political science. It questions to what extent rational choice theory reflects the political phenomena of the real-world, and criticizes it for its lack of sufficient empirical tests. In this respect, the spatial positioning of political parties in competition approach has been of interest for them to analyze rational choice theory.¹⁵⁵ Further critics of rational choice have frequently referred to Green and Saphiro's arguments; thus it is significant to touch upon the main premises of the *Pathologies* to give an overview of the recent criticisms of rational choice theory.

The guidelines of the *Pathologies* can be summed up t at five points: First pathology is the tendency of rational choice theorists' first looking at empirical evidence, then designing a model that fits it instead of formulating bold predictions that are falsifiable by empirical evidence. Second pathology is that rational choice predictions that are not amended post hoc are spared modification because they depend on unobservable entities such as the equilibrium which make it uneasy to detect whether the initial conditions from which a predicted result should really be expected to follow did. Third pathology is that rational choice theory is plausible wherever it seems to work because it is valid ceteris paribus. Fourth, rational choice predictions often

¹⁵⁵ Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro, **Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science**, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, pp. 6-8

ambiguously specify the magnitude of the effects being predicted. Finally, rational choice theorists usually search for confirming rather than falsifying evidence.¹⁵⁶ Perhaps, the strongest emphasis is made on the last argument in *Pathologies* which challenges the theory with its one of the main premises, its scientificity.

Green and Shapiro also examine the issue of voting in large electorates which has been paradoxical in rational choice theory. From a rational choice perspective, it would be irrational for anyone to cast a ballot in a large electorate since one single vote cannot notably affect the final outcome. Then, there is the question of what brings voters to ballot boxes in nation-wide elections. Green and Shapiro underline that rational choice theorists usually respond this question by modifying their theory, post hoc, identifying not only material but also, for example, psychic benefits public-spirited citizens feel while fulfilling their duty of voting.¹⁵⁷ Thus, they view rational choice as predicting zero voter turnouts in large electorates, and argue that rational choice theorists can change their predictions when their predictions do not match real life making it unreliable.

Concepts of free riding and collective action are other aspects of rational choice criticized by Green and Shapiro. They ask why someone devotes her time or money to causes she favors despite having little chance of decisively assisting instead of catching a free ride on the efforts of others to help to cause succeed. Furthermore, they claim that rational choice theory can be refuted by people contributing small amounts of money to political campaigns, attending rallies, and engaging in other forms of collective action designed to secure goals which cannot be achieved by any single participant.¹⁵⁸

In *Pathologies*, Green and Shapiro evaluates the rational choice models of legislative behavior and questions if they are plausible in practice. They assert that according to rational choice theory, there can be a different majority within any parliamentary majority supporting a different policy combination than that one which,

¹⁵⁶ Jeffrey Friedman (Ed.), *The Rational Choice Controversy*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, pp. 5-6

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 7

in turn, entails policy instability. As a result, “an aimless parliamentary cycling between different legislative equilibria” may occur or “it could mean that manipulated or brokered legislative outcomes are masquerading as the unique will of parliamentary majority.”¹⁵⁹ In this case, Friedman marks that rational choice theorists, rational choice theorists tend to attribute parliamentary stability to logrolling, coalition building, and other post-hoc possibilities when they have difficulties in understanding legislative equilibrium and stability, which, in turn, makes it harder to test its validity in reality. On the other hand, if rational choice works, then they compare the degree of instability produced by different legislative rules. Yet, Green and Shapiro criticize rational choice theorists for adjusting it tautologically, in other words, they assume that their prediction suits when the assumptions of their model holds.¹⁶⁰ Then, one could ask what if the prediction is wrong although the assumptions fit. However, it can also be observed in other theories making it really hard for a theory to be a universal one.

Green and Shapiro also question the spatial models of electoral competition and theories that model issue positions of candidates by comparing them to different levels of voter preferences. They criticize them for two reasons. First, they claim that spatial models neglect the factors which are not easily measured; but influence the issue positions of candidates such as the manipulation of candidates’ personal images. Second, they argue that despite trying to cover all possible outcomes including the divergence of candidates’ positions, rational choice theory underestimates the impact of various forces driving candidates away from equilibrium.¹⁶¹ Thus, they conclude that spatial models are not trustworthy since they exclude several factors that might have an effect on the policy positions of candidates.

Munck divides rational choice analyses into two categories: purists and pragmatists. Purists favor universal approach to rational choice, that is, they claim that rational choice theory is universally scientific model regardless of cultures and nations. Scholars specialized on regional and cultural studies have firmly criticized rational choice theory for its underestimating the role which culture plays in political actions of

¹⁵⁹ Ibid

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 8

individuals. Nevertheless, purists have been contented with stressing on the strengths of game theory instead of explaining contrary evidence about the individual decision making.¹⁶² On the other side, pragmatists attempt to limit the principle of universality as a response to cultural arguments.¹⁶³ Recent rational choice theorists are mostly pragmatists trying to compromise with cultural arguments rather than rejecting them like universalists.

An alternative institutional approach to the party-ideology relation has been mainly developed by political scientist Klaus von Beyme that views parties as having some capacity for adaptation and as showing some sort of institutional loyalty to their ideology.¹⁶⁴ That is to say, party history affects their ideological adaption and whether any modifications would be done. The power of parties as institutions has also been mentioned by Dunleavy. He claims that both parties in government and those with the potential to take place in the next government can shape the voter preferences by three preference-shaping strategies: partisan social engineering, adjusting social relativities and context management. Partisan social engineering occurs when attachment of voters to the party is associated with their position in the social structure. Then policies having the effect of changing the social structure would affect the electoral fortunes of different parties. Adjusting social relativities is another preference-shaping strategy for the party in government. The party in government can consolidate support among particular groups by changing the relative position of those groups in the social and economic order. Finally, a party in government can manipulate the objective situation of the policy in a way which provides partisan advantages.¹⁶⁵ In this argument, it is possible to see the party-voter relation as a two-way process which could also start from the side of parties instead of viewing voters as active and parties as reactive parts of the equation.

Ware states that it is a mistake to imagine party policies just as reflections of the voter preferences for three reasons. First, parties shape voter preferences rather than simply reflecting them. Second, a party's history and the relations between its various

¹⁶² Gerardo L. Munck, "Rational Choice Theory in Comparative Politics" in Howard J. Wiarda (Ed.), **New Directions in Comparative Politics**, Colorado: Westview Press, 2002, pp. 170-172

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 172

¹⁶⁴ Alan Ware, **Political Parties and Party Systems**, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 18

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 326-327

elements are also factors affecting party decision-making. Third, formal party programs or manifestos are only documents to describe the goals to be achieved in government so that they are not sufficient to identify the party ideology. Apart from these, he also emphasizes on the major objection to the competition approach and its view of party competition as being driven by the need of parties to find the appropriate location for them on the political spectrum because a party's ability to respond the supposed requirements of the political market problem depends on its history and intra-party relations.¹⁶⁶ This approach is notable for its contribution to the analysis of party-voter relation by adding an intra-party dimension with its reference to political groups from which the party is nourished. In this sense, this thesis also looks at intraparty dimension and the party identity beside voter preferences while dealing with the EU policies of Turkish political parties.

Another critique of rational choice theory, especially of Anthony Downs and Mancur Olson's works, is made by Hauptmann for their attempt to redefine the meaning of democracy. Hauptmann finds it problematic how rational choice theorists conceptualize the "choice" and he indicates this as the reason of their failure in redefining democracy. He claims that rational choice theorists compare consumer choice to political choice while idealizing the former and neglecting important features of the other. He argues that consumers' choices are not always untroubled expressions of authentic preferences and people's choices in politics are not alike their choices of market goods in terms of their structure or objects.¹⁶⁷ Yet, he opposes the very idea of rational choice theory which attempts to look at the political parties from an economic standpoint of competition finding it incomparable. This kind of criticism is not uncommon for the rational choice approach. His critique is more related to opposing the transfer of an economic theory into political science by arguing that consumer and voter behaviors are not comparable as it is mentioned while explaining the use of rational choice in political science.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 328-330

¹⁶⁷ Emily Hauptmann, **Putting Choice before Democracy: A Critique of Rational Choice Theory**, SUNY Press, 1996, pp. 4-8

Like Green and Shapiro's work, Hampsher-Monk and Hindmoor have debated on the "neglect" of interpretive evidence in rational choice theory. They claim that the absence of interpretive evidence undermines the explanatory credentials of rational choice theory. In their survey, they have found out only 139 articles using interpretive evidence out of 570 articles employing rational choice theory that were published in the American Political Science Association and the American Journal of Science between 1984 and 2005.¹⁶⁸ In another article which tracks 758 policy innovations drawing on an analysis of 1984 policy commitments within the election manifestos of Conservative, Labor and Liberal parties in Britain, Hindmoor adapts Schumpeter's critique of general equilibrium theory to prove that rational choice theory ignores the policy innovation analysis by the use of equilibrium method. He states that "policy innovation generates an ongoing process of divergence and convergence between the political parties very different to that predicated within rational choice equilibrium analysis."¹⁶⁹

Despite all those points indicated by the opponents of the theory, there is an incontrovertible fact that rational choice models, Downsian analysis in the context of this thesis, has marked a new epoch in political party studies which suffer considerably from the lack of general theories. As Fiorina says, if the standards of those who criticize Downs were adopted, it would be too hard to let anyone in political science make an empirical contribution, or let political science be a scientific enterprise.¹⁷⁰ Hence, rational choice theory seems to keep reliability until a critical theory which would be stronger in structure replaces it.

Nevertheless, there are several strengths of rational choice theory. When looked at the theory within its most common frames across all the disciplines employing it, the major strength of it is its methodology since it helps modeling individual decision making, including ones that cannot be easily observed and even ones that have never existed, in a wide range of settings and with simple mathematical tools. Mathematical

¹⁶⁸ Iain Hampsher-Monk and Andrew Hindmoor, "Rational Choice and Interpretive Evidence: Caught between a Rock and a Hard Place?", **Political Studies**, Vol. 58, 2010, pp. 47-65

¹⁶⁹ Andrew Hindmoor, "Policy Innovation and the Dynamics of Party Competition: A Schumpeterian Account of British Electoral Politics, 1950-2005", **BJPIR**, Vol. 10, 2008, p. 492

¹⁷⁰ Morris P. Fiorina, "Rational Choice, Empirical Contributions, and the Scientific Enterprise", **Critical Review: A Journal of Politics and Society**, Vol. 9, No. 1& 2, 1995, p. 85

models used in rational choice theory allow social scientists to analyze how individual decisions and social outcomes are affected by institutions and by changes in individual circumstances.¹⁷¹

If the use of rational choice theory in political science and international relations is considered specifically, it is observed that although those disciplines often leave aside the mathematical part of the theory which makes it stronger, it still helps them explain various phenomena in a more systematic and analytic way. To give a simple example, when cost-benefit calculations of an individual are placed at the center of an analysis, it offers us a possibility to understand the way he behaves in a certain situation as well as to predict how he could behave in different cases.

When the *Pathologies* of Green and Shapiro were published, many rational choice theorists felt the necessity of responding to their critiques. As a response to voter turnout critique in *Pathologies*, Lohmann indicates that Green and Shapiro actually criticize the prediction of some early, and rather primitive rational choice models of voting which took being decisive exogenously; whereas later rational choice models took it endogenously depending on the number of voters participating. She claims that the consistency of rational choice theory with the observation of high turnout even in large electorate can be explained by considering high turnout equilibrium as one of multiple equilibria in the complete information case.¹⁷² Chong also states that the rational choice account of voting is not an anomaly just because it refers to the policy benefits one can expect from voting that are insufficient to repay the cost of gathering information or going to the polls, which, in turn, necessitate other inducements to vote such as civic duty, social pressure, the value of exercising voice etc. for rational choice theory. He remarks that no rival theory has managed to explain it either and argues that there is an anomaly only if a theory cannot solve a problem which can be solved by

¹⁷¹ Introduction to Rational Choice Politics, Background Material for Constitutional and Political Economy Courses,
<http://rdc1.net/class/BayreuthU/CONSINTR.pdf>
accessed on 21.02.2012

¹⁷² Susanne Lohmann, "The Poverty of Green and Shapiro" in Jeffrey Friedman (Ed.), **The Rational Choice Controversy**, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, pp. 143-144

another theory.¹⁷³ Thus, he finds it necessary to appreciate rational choice theory, at least, for its contributions to develop a conceptual framework and to search for the means to analyze such political phenomena.

Lohmann firmly criticizes Green and Shapiro for their misclassifying a variety of collective dilemmas as prisoner's dilemma which causes the misinterpretation of the rational choice concepts of free riding and collective action.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, regarding the "in-principle versus in-practice" critiques of rational choice theory, Lohmann assumes that the theory has the potential to identify and correct logical inconsistencies and slippages so that it is valuable even if the resulting theories are not tested empirically.¹⁷⁵

In reply to institutional criticisms of rational choice theory, Weingast's outline of the strengths of the theory can be mentioned. He juxtaposes three strengths of rational choice approach in studies of institutions. First, it helps integrate the study of American politics into the larger study of comparative politics. Second, it provides various mechanisms for predicting discontinuous change which is the focal point of many political phenomena involving sudden change such as the emergence of ethnic conflict, wars, the transition to or the failure of democracy, revolutions, major policy swings within particular countries. Moreover, several events, which were once in the domain of historical institutionalism, have also been transferred to the realm of rational choice studies. Third, endogenous emergence, choice, and survival of institutions are likely to be the major topics of next decade so that many choice theorists have started to concentrate on the limits of rationality in combination with the means of extending the theory to cover these more general circumstances. Weingast remarks that rational-choice theorists have already worked on uncertainty and incomplete information in their analysis so it is time to see the full implications and power of these tools. In this sense, rational choice institutionalism can cooperate with other forms of institutional analysis,

¹⁷³ Dennis Chong, "Rational Choice Theory's Mysterious Rivals" in Jeffrey Friedman (Ed.), **The Rational Choice Controversy**, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 41

¹⁷⁴ Susanne Lohmann, "The Poverty of Green and Shapiro" in Jeffrey Friedman (Ed.), **The Rational Choice Controversy**, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 127

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 129

especially historical institutionalism.¹⁷⁶ Hence, rational choice theory can substantially contribute the study of institutions even if it might not cover all dimensions of that research area.

Concerning Munck's criticisms on universalist and pragmatist rational choice theorists, it can also be argued the defensive pragmatist approach of rational choice theory is still valuable in cross-national studies accepting the fact that the principle of universality has been challenged remarkably. As Xia stresses, its commitment to scientific progress by means of hypothesis-generating, fact-finding, testability, and partial universalism is critical for comparative studies. Moreover, many rational choice theorists such as North have already incorporated the role of culture, norms, mental models, and other ideational and cognitive factors into their works, which can be counted as a sign of more cooperation between rationalist and cultural approaches in the next decades. The "analytical narrative" approach which is mentioned above can be shown as an example for this sort of initiatives.¹⁷⁷ Ferejohn and Satz also emphasize this in their article in which they respond to *Pathologies* by addressing the feasibility of unification and universalism in social science regarding the role of intentionality in social life; yet, oppose Green and Shapiro for their underestimating the significance of unification and the necessity of universalism in science. Nevertheless, they admit that universalism can be partially valid in certain classes of choice domains when the causal mechanism governing action is context independent.¹⁷⁸ They consider universalism essential for two reasons. First, contextual dependence is compatible with universalism, that is, individuals could have different cost-benefit calculations in different context when still conforming to general laws. Second, it is not possible to abandon universalist aspirations because universalism is needed if one seeks explanations rather than mere

¹⁷⁶ Barry Weingast, "Rational-choice Institutionalism" in Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (Eds.), **Political Science: The State of the Discipline**, New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2002, p. 692

¹⁷⁷ Min Xia, Rational Choice Theory in Comparative Politics, <http://www.odu.edu/al/jchen/Comparative%20Politics%20%28Graduate%29/Review%20Essays/Week%205/Min%20Xia.pdf>

accessed on 18.01.2012

¹⁷⁸ John Ferejohn and Debra Satz, "Unification, Universalism, and Rational Choice Theory" in Jeffrey Friedman (Ed.), **The Rational Choice Controversy**, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 71

descriptions.¹⁷⁹ In this sense, rational choice approach attempts to provide a non-descriptive and more analytical perspective for the study of political phenomena.

Chong states that rational choice provides a powerful explanatory mechanism for social phenomena including strategic interaction among individuals and it stimulates interesting empirical inquiries. He opposes Green and Shapiro's arguments that are based on culture, institutions, and social norms finding them insufficient for either articulating these factors to a stronger theory or explaining why they are inconsistent with rational choice theory. He claims that any eventual theory of the origin and maintenance of social institutions, norms and values has to involve rational action.¹⁸⁰

Shepsle also criticizes Green and Shapiro for "locking itself into a statistical form of assessment" and "comparing rational choice against an ideal rather than some concrete alternative."¹⁸¹ He claims that rational choice theory is constructive in terms of functioning as an engine of theoretical development and a source of non-obvious empirical insights about politics.¹⁸² The academic debates on rational choice are likely to continue in the next decade as the number of studies employing rational choice increase.

Either it is favored or opposed; rational choice theory gains respect for its efforts to bring a scientific understanding to political science, a discipline which accommodates numerous works with a descriptive nature rather than analytical assessment of the phenomena concerned.

1.4. JUSTIFICATION OF RATIONAL CHOICE AS THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THIS DISSERTATION

Throughout this chapter, various theories on political parties and rational choice are elaborated in order to agree on the most plausible theoretical and conceptual framework for the subject of the thesis. This section answers why and how rational

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 77

¹⁸⁰ Dennis Chong, "Rational Choice Theory's Mysterious Rivals" in Jeffrey Friedman (Ed.), **The Rational Choice Controversy**, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 37

¹⁸¹ Kenneth A. Shepsle, "Statistical Political Philosophy and Positive Political Theory" in Jeffrey Friedman (Ed.), **The Rational Choice Controversy**, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996, p. 213

¹⁸² Ibid.

choice is applied to analyze the attitudes of Turkish political parties towards the EU in this thesis.

Hence, the section divides into three subsections: First, some prominent studies which handle the EU and political parties together are referred to figure out where to place this study in the literature. Second, the application of rational choice theory specifically on political parties is explored. Finally, the reasons of applying rational choice to understand the EU approaches of Turkish political parties and what kind of procedure is followed in order to apply it are summarized.

1.4.1. How are the Researches on the EU and Political Parties Combined in the Literature?

Despite its little amount comparing to other research areas of the EU and political parties, there are already notable efforts in the literature to merge two of them in one study. Majority of those studies, however, look into the impact of Europeanization on political parties. As Hix underlines, national parties remain the major aggregate actors in EU politics comparing to pan-European parties; and party organizations and partisan policy preferences play a major role in the EU legislative process.¹⁸³ Thus, the EU policy approaches of national parties carry on influencing the decision-making process of the EU unless there are autonomous pan-European parties. This, in turn, makes the political parties an attractive area of research for scholars working on Europeanization.

Accordingly, one of the most well-known studies is Robert Ladrech's article which investigates the direct and indirect effects of the EU influence on parties. Ladrech indicates five areas where the EU has been influential on parties: 1) programmatic change; 2) organizational change; 3) patterns of party competition; 4) party-government relations; 5) relations beyond the national party system.¹⁸⁴ He simply argues that party

¹⁸³ Simon Hix, "Towards a Partisan Theory of EU Politics", *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 8, December 2008, pp. 1263

¹⁸⁴ Robert Ladrech, "Europeanization and Political Parties", *Living Reviews in European Governance*, Vol. 4, No. 1, January 2009, p. 10
http://www.astrid-online.it/Riforma-de/Studi-e-ri/Archivio-25/LADRECH_Living-Rev_UE-Governance_01_2009.pdf

analysis could benefit from the insights produced by the comparative politics branch of European integration studies; and, in turn, it could trigger the development of a more rigorous analytic Europeanization framework sensitive to causal links could emerge from attention by scholars studying party change in a more classical sense.¹⁸⁵ His work is significant since it made the first attempt to systematize the research on Europeanization of political parties.

In his article on Europeanization of political parties in post-socialist candidate countries, Maršić adopts “a top-down view of the hypothetical relation which conceptualizes the supranational level as independent and the national level of the candidate state as dependent variable.”¹⁸⁶ He claims that the EU can change the rules of the domestic game by changing the beliefs and expectations of domestic actors, that is, it changes the opportunity structures which are decisive for the behaviour of political parties and he argues that the short accession period, EU conditionality, and the effects of special post-socialist environment on the positioning of state institutions and parties in society should be taken into consideration to enhance the existing approaches to analysis.¹⁸⁷

There has been an increase in the number of academic works on the Europeanization of political parties after Ladrech’s initiation.¹⁸⁸ *The Europeanization of*

accessed on 28.01.2012

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 15

¹⁸⁶ Tomislav Maršić, “Europeanization of Political Parties in EU Candidate Countries: The Effects on Post-Socialist Consolidation?”, **EU-Consent**, (no date available), p. 4
<http://www.eu-consent.net/library/PhD/Marsic.pdf>

accessed on 22.03.2012

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ There are several articles about Europeanization of political parties which are published after Ladrech’s work. They usually concentrate on the parties in one country or region. Here are some examples:

Marcin Walecki, “The Europeanization of Political Parties: Influencing the Regulations on Political Finance”, **EUI Working Papers**, No. 29, 2007
<http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/7363>

accessed on 12.04.2012

Stephen Whitefield and Robert Rohrschneider, “The Europeanization of Political Parties in Central and Eastern Europe? The Impact of EU Entry on Issue Stances, Saliency and Programmatic Coherence”, **Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics**, Vol. 25, No. 4, 2009, pp. 564-584,
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13523270903310936>

accessed on 12.04.2012

Olivera Komar and Zlatko Vujovic, “Europeanization of National Political Parties and Party System”, **Politics in Central Europe**, Vol. 3, 2007, pp. 51-70,

National Political Parties edited by Poguntke, Aylott, Carter, Ladrech and Luther made a valuable contribution to the field as being the first empirical study on the effects of the European Union on the internal organizational dynamics of national political parties by its research findings gathered from the thirty political parties in six EU members.¹⁸⁹ Those examples can be increased since many scholars work on the same subject focusing on a specific region. As mentioned in the introduction part of the thesis, there are also works of Terzi and Avci on the Europeanization of Turkish political parties.¹⁹⁰ However, none of these studies deals with the EU approaches of the national parties from a rational choice perspective at least for the Turkish case.

One important study which deserves a special attention for its similarity to the analysis made in this thesis is Schimmelfennig's *Strategic Calculation and International Socialization: Membership Incentives, Party Constellations, and Sustained Compliance in Central and Eastern Europe* for its being an example of the use of rational choice in a study which covers the EU and political parties together.¹⁹¹ In this article, Schimmelfennig makes two core arguments. First, he argues that merely intergovernmental reinforcement helps norm-violating countries of Central and Eastern Europe produce norm-conforming domestic change by offering the carrot of NATO and EU memberships. Second, he argues that the EU and NATO membership incentives are effective on sustained compliance only if the domestic costs of adaptation for the target

http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/files/2009/1873/2007_page_51_70.pdf

accessed on 12.04.2012

Steven van Hecke, "Europeanization and Political Parties: the Partido Popular and its Transnational Relations with the European People's Party", **International Journal of Iberian Studies**, Vol. 22, No. 2, December 2009, pp. 109-124,

<http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/50171050/europeanization-political-parties-partido-popular-transnational-relations-european-peoples-party>

accessed on 12.04.2012

¹⁸⁹ Thomas Poguntke; Nicholas Aylott; Elisabeth Carter; Robert Ladrech and Kurt Richard Luther, **Europeanization of National Political Parties**, New York: Routledge, 2007

¹⁹⁰ Özlem Terzi, **The Influence of the European Union on Turkish Foreign Policy**, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010; Gamze Avci, "Turkish Political Parties and the EU Discourse in the Post-Helsinki Period: a Case of Europeanization" in M. Uğur and N. Canefe (Eds.), **Turkey and European Integration: Accession Prospects and Issues**, London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 194-214

¹⁹¹ Frank Schimmelfennig, "Strategic Calculation and International Socialization: Membership Incentives, Party Constellations, and Sustained Compliance in Central and Eastern Europe", **International Organizations**, Vol. 59, No. 4, Autumn 2005, pp. 827-860,

http://www.mzes.uni-annheim.de/projekte/typo3/site/fileadmin/research%20groups/1/teamB-reader/Schimmelfennig_Strategic%20calculation%20and%20international%20soc%26.pdf

accessed on 27.03.2012

governments are low especially in the countries where all major parties are liberal democratic and oriented towards the western integration.¹⁹² Thus, he assumes that those parties make a cost-benefit calculation to comply with the required norms and take the less costly decisions. In this sense, Schimmelfennig benefits from the rational choice approach to find out the reasons why compliance with the EU does not always sustain; in other words, he explains the level of Europeanization in political parties with rational choice. Thus, the main difference between his article and this thesis in terms of the logic of analysis is that Schimmelfennig's article examines what sort of party constellations result in what level of commitment to the EU cause while this thesis explains what sort of factors result in what sort of EU approaches among the Turkish parties.

Over the last decade the scholarly work on the EU perspectives of political parties in various member and candidate states has been expanded. Most of those studies have aimed to find out and examine the factors which determine the positioning of political parties with regard to European integration. In order to reach this goal, various empirical methods have been employed such as expert surveys, manifesto/program coding, and some software programs which have the capacity of automated text analysis or alternative internet-based techniques like the recently developed EU profile method.¹⁹³ All these methods have followed the trend of studying parties empirically which Anthony Downs started once with his spatial model.

Those studies are significant in the sense that each of them has revealed a piece of data on political parties within the candidacy and membership processes to the EU. For instance, Vachudova claims that there is a predictable evolution of party systems of the candidate states to the EU membership before and after the accession. Before the accession negotiations, most of the political parties take a pro-EU approach and adopt their agendas that are compatible with the EU conditionality. However once they become member states, the parameters for party competition broaden again. When the accession-related constraints are lifted, parties move toward more nationalist and

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Alexander H. Trechsel and Peter Mair, "When Parties (Also) Position Themselves: An Introduction to the EU Profiler", *Journal of Information Technology and Politics*, No. 8, 2011, pp. 1-2 and 17-18

culturally conservative positions.¹⁹⁴ When this argument is considered in the case of Turkey, some parallels can be drawn for the period before the accession negotiations.

Vachudova explains the decrease in the commitment level of parties to the EU with the fact that the prospect of opening the EU membership negotiations creates incentives for political parties to make EU-compatible agendas which satisfy the EU's extensive domestic requirements. In this context major political parties tend to take more right positions such as decreasing the role of state in economic matters and protecting ethnic minority rights. Furthermore, it is claimed that especially the Eastern European states, which were used to have illiberal regimes, the EU's impact on party positions has notably been decisive in the development of liberal democracy.¹⁹⁵ There are also similarities to this argument in Turkish case when the developments in the liberalization of economy and minority issues over the last decade are taken into account.

In accordance with Hellström's article in which he examines how the national political parties position themselves towards the issue of EU integration in sixteen West European states between 1970 and 2003, the party ideology determines its EU stance to a large extent. Yet, the study finds out that the contestation over the issue of European integration is strongly related to the left-right dimension and it is too early to disregard the connection between left-right and pro-anti integration because there are still many marginal parties which take oppositional stances due to their ideological commitments. On the other hand, Hellström confirms that there is no simple linear relationship between broad party ideology and party position in Europe. In addition, the influence of ideology has diminished, as the majority of parties have adopted more favorable positions toward the European project over time.¹⁹⁶ In this regard, although it is not possible to compare the aftermath of membership in Turkish case as a candidate country, this thesis also discusses the role of ideology in determining the EU stances of

¹⁹⁴ Milada A. Vachudova, "Tempered by the EU? Political Parties and Party Systems Before and After Accession", *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 6, September 2008, p. 861

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 875

¹⁹⁶ Johan Hellström, "Partisan Responses to Europe: the Role of Ideology for National Political Parties' Positions on European Integration", *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 15, No. 2, March 2008, pp. 203-204

Turkish political parties in Chapter 4, however, takes the party ideology along with other components which form the party identity as a whole.

In another study, stating that “parties need to offer consistent choices in order to communicate with voters in ways that provide clear alternatives to voters, and that establish incentives for parties to follow through on election promises”, Rohrschneider and Whitefield claim that parties’ policy stances establish several preconditions for political representation in new democracies of Central East Europe between 2003 and 2007.¹⁹⁷ In the context of Turkish political parties it is also not very possible to talk about a direct relation between the EU stances of political parties and political representation because there is no such situation of transferring from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one in Turkey as the Central East Europe experienced during their EU accession process. Nevertheless, it would not be untrue to say that the EU accession process accelerated the democratization and liberalization of Turkey through the reforms made to comply with the EU *acquis communautaire*.

On the other hand, there are also studies questioning whether the EU conditionality during the accession process maintains its effectiveness after the accession to the EU. A country specific survey on Czech Republic suggests that there has only been a limited impact of Europeanization on party programs and organizations as well as on the content of party politics and policies. The survey concludes with six outcomes of the direct impact of Europeanization on Czech political parties. First, the role of European specialists has increased within party decision-making processes in comparison with the 1990s. The governing bodies of all Czech political parties except one include an EU specialist. Second, no clear connection between Europeanization and power structure in the context of party organization was found, most probably because the internal structure of Czech political parties is mostly shaped by state resources, as the state being the main political and financial supporter of the party organization. Third, the EU related issues are more likely to be used as a tool by Czech political parties for mobilization of their electoral base and inter-party competition. The survey

¹⁹⁷ Robert Rohrschneider and Stephen Whitefield, “Consistent Choice Sets? The Stances of Political Parties towards European Integration in Ten Central East European Democracies, 2003-2007”, **Journal of European Public Policy**, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2010, p. 55

indicates that the importance of the EU issues in party politics has considerably declined when the 2002 and 2006 national elections are compared. Fourth, there has been an increase in the number of references to the EU related issues in Czech party programs. However, there is no evidence of influence of the EU issues more than being a referential framework for domestic politics. Fifth, party federations and groupings play no significant role as carriers of Europeanization. Finally, Europeanization, that is, the pro-EU stances of Czech parties helped them bridge the ideological gaps among each other after the 2002 parliamentary elections. The survey reaches the conclusion that no EU-related issue constitutes an area of real interest for the Czech electorate; therefore political parties do not feel a strong need to voice these issues.¹⁹⁸ Yet, the study confirms that both Czech electorate and political parties approach the EU in a pragmatic way by stressing the fact that once they achieved the membership goal, they lost their interest in EU matters to a large extent.

Another country specific survey has recently been launched focusing on the EU policy stances of Irish political parties through an assessment of the 1992, 1997, 2002 and 2007 national elections. Four conclusions have been drawn from the survey. Accordingly, first, a rise in the mentions of Europe as a topic in party manifestos from 1989 onward has been visible. Second, all Irish political parties have shifted from relatively pro-European to more moderate positions on European integration during the 1997-2002 period. Third, on the one hand, a two-dimensional breakdown of attitudes toward the expansion or restriction of the scope of the EU authority and on the other hand, the EU accountability to national governments versus directly to the EU citizens have divided Irish parties into three groups: pro-Europeans on both scales, centrists on both scales and the ones in favor of more accountability; yet more Euro-skeptic in terms of the EU authority. When the surveys of 2002 and 2007 are compared, parties have mostly remained constant in their EU positions relative to other issues.¹⁹⁹ Thus, the survey reveals the changing attitude of the Irish political parties' EU stances over time from being enthusiastically pro-EU to a more skeptical one.

¹⁹⁸ Vit Hlousek and Pavel Pseja, "Europeanization of Political Parties and the Party System in the Czech Republic", **Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics**, Vol. 25, No. 4, December 2009, pp. 532-534

¹⁹⁹ Kenneth Benoit, "Irish Political Parties and Policy Stances on European Integration", **Irish Political Studies**, Vol. 24, No. 4, December 2009, pp. 457-458

Nevertheless, none of these studies question which factors cause political parties to take a particular position towards the EU. Instead, they try to explain the level of Europeanization by viewing EU policy stances of parties.

1.4.2. Rational Choice and Political Parties

Regarding the subject of this dissertation the place of political parties in rational choice theory deserves extra attention. From the rational choice perspective, political parties are considered as sort of clubs formed by politically active people sharing similar opinions about ideal public policies.

The initial work on the rational choice analysis of political parties has been conducted by Downs after the late 1950s. Most of the rational choice scholars have derived their arguments from his assumptions. Yet, it is essential to go through Downsian rational choice analysis of political parties in order to understand the rationale of this dissertation. Prior to the evaluation of his model and hypotheses, one should note down the two definitions he uses in building his model:

1-Government is that agency in the division of labor which has the power to coerce all other agents in society; it is the locus of 'ultimate' power in a given area.

2-A democracy is a political system that exhibits the following characteristics:

(a) Two or more parties compete in periodic elections for control of the governing apparatus.

(b)The party (or coalition of parties) winning a majority of votes gains control of the governing apparatus until the next election.

(c) Losing parties never attempt to prevent the winners from taking office to vitiate the ability of losers to compete in the next election.

(d) All sane, law abiding adults who are governed are citizens, and every citizen has one and only one vote in each election.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ Anthony Downs, "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy", **The Journal of Political Economy**, Vol. 65, No. 2, April 1957, pp. 136-137

Taking those definitions into consideration he employs a deductive rational choice method and develops the following axioms:

- (1) Each political party is a team of men who seek office solely in order to enjoy the income, prestige, and power that go with running the governing apparatus.
- (2) The winning party (or coalition) has complete control over the government's actions until the next election. There are no votes of confidence between elections either by a legislature or by the electorate, so the governing party cannot be ousted before the next election. Nor are any of its orders resisted or sabotaged by an intransigent bureaucracy.
- (3) Government's economic powers are unlimited. It can nationalize everything, hand everything over to private interests, or strike any balance between these extremes.
- (4) The only limit on government's powers is that the incumbent party cannot in any way restrict the political freedom of opposition parties or of individual citizens, unless they seek to overthrow it by force.
- (5) Every agent in the model-whether an individual, a party or a private coalition-proceeds toward its goals with a minimal use of scarce resources and undertakes only those actions for which marginal return exceeds marginal cost.²⁰¹

Once he sets up his definitions and axioms, Downs bases all his hypotheses on the idea that both parties and voters are rational actors in an electoral democracy. That is, they make a cost-benefit analysis before deciding on their political behavior. Departing from this idea, in his path-breaking article he suggests that "political parties in a democracy use policies as a means of gaining votes in order to assume office. Their social function-which is to formulate and carry out policies when in power as the government-is accomplished as a by-product of their private motive-which is to attain the income, power and prestige of being in office."²⁰² His theory relies on the assumption that political parties are rational actors whose priority is to pursue their own interests and act so as to maximize their power by increasing the number of votes.

Downs resembles a political party to an entrepreneur who sells policies for votes instead of products for money. The party must compete for votes with other

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 137

²⁰² Ibid.

parties, just as two or more oligopolists compete for sales in a market. Maximization of social welfare by such a government depends upon how the competitive struggle for power influences its behavior. Thus, it is not possible to assume beforehand that this behavior is socially optimal just as it is not possible to assume beforehand that a given firm produces the socially optimal output.²⁰³ This means a party determines its policy decisions in response to its perception of the voter preferences to the extent that those decisions are compatible to its past and that it protects its differential in front of electorate. The party knows that it would lose its credibility unless its actions are plausible to the voters so that its policies may not entirely match up with voters' preferences.

Downsian rational choice theory covers two main criteria affecting the decision-making of government: knowledge and information. In a world in which there is perfect knowledge and information is costless, the governments formulate their policies differently than in a world in which knowledge is imperfect and information is costly. Here, imperfect knowledge implies that neither parties nor citizens are completely aware of each others' actions as well as expectations. Besides, the necessary information to overcome both types of ignorance is costly.²⁰⁴ Downs employs the analysis of government decision-making to explain the relationship between a democratic government and the electorate. As he accepts the fact that our world is the one with imperfect knowledge and costly information, he proposes the following five assumptions:

1-The actions of the government are a function of the way it expects the voters to vote and of strategies of its opposition.

2-The government expects voters to vote according to (a) changes in their utility incomes from government activity and (b) the strategies of opposition parties.

3-Voters actually vote according to (a) changes in their utility incomes from government activity and (b) the alternatives offered by the opposition.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 137-139

4-Voters' utility incomes from government activity depend on the actions taken by government during the election period.

5-The strategies of opposition parties depend on their views of the voters' utility incomes from government activity and on the actions taken by the government in power.²⁰⁵

These assumptions bring about the need for the analysis of data such as expected and actual vote, opposition strategies, government actions and individual utility incomes from government activity too.²⁰⁶ When those data are processed in the light of the proposed assumptions, it can enable an overall analysis of the political structure of a democracy.

The "collective good" of a party is information.²⁰⁷ Parties create short cuts for voters in several ways helping them reduce information costs. First way of reducing information costs is the selection of party members and exclusion of them, if found necessary, which is done by the party itself. On the one side, it enables voters to judge the political views of candidates easier by looking at their party labels. On the other side, however, this shortcut information supplied by the party restricts the full accountability and transparency of a party in front of its electoral base. Second, political parties benefit from various tools to create those information short cuts. All members of a party have to support the chosen party platform or manifesto if they are willing to be and remain as a member. At the same time, party platforms or manifestos offer less costly information for voters about the policies favored by the party members.²⁰⁸ Voter usually does not need to make an in depth research on which candidate he is planning to vote for because he knows that the maneuvering capability of a candidate is confined to the borders drawn by his party discourse.

According to Downs, although it appears as if the universal prevalence of ideologies in democratic politics contradicts the idea of parties having no interest per se

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 138

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Introduction to Rational Choice Politics, Background Material for Constitutional and Political Economy Courses,
<http://rdc1.net/class/BayreuthU/CONSINTR.pdf>
accessed on 21.02.2012

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

in creating any particular type of society, it seems to be unlikely. He states that party ideologies are useful for many voters because they help voters focus on the differences between parties and discover a correlation between each party's ideology and policies so that they can rationally vote by comparing ideologies rather than policies.²⁰⁹ From the Downsian approach lack of information creates a demand for ideologies in the electorate because ideologies cut information costs. Meanwhile, political parties are eager to apply any method which would help them gain votes so that they respond to this demand by creating a supply, that is, they produce ideologies.²¹⁰

Downs estimates that party ideologies might originate from the interests of the party founders but he adds that "once a political party is created, it takes on an existence of its own and eventually becomes relatively independent of any particular interest group."²¹¹ It is undeniable that ideology plays a role in party politics to some extent. In that respect, political scientists have done research on the factors affecting a party's adopting a particular ideology and the persistence or modification of that ideology due to changing preferences of the actors involved.

As club like institutions, political parties facilitate their members with an electoral advantage over independent candidates through some services such as helping organize, fund, and coordinate candidate campaigns for elective office. Politicians sacrifice some of their independence by joining a party so that they can receive those services which increase the chances of getting elected.²¹² In this respect, the price of getting elected is dependent on supporting the interest of some political groups which supply the party and the candidates with various tools. Put differently, the party acts in accordance with some political groups to get support within the system, which, in turn, will help it win elections.

²⁰⁹ Anthony Downs, "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy", **The Journal of Political Economy**, Vol. 65, No. 2, April 1957, p. 141

²¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 141-142

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 142

²¹² Introduction to Rational Choice Politics, Background Material for Constitutional and Political Economy Courses,
<http://rdc1.net/class/BayreuthU/CONSINTR.pdf>
accessed on 21.02.2012

Another significant determinant for the survival of political parties which is marked by rational choice approach is the voting rule. Under plurality rule, parties adopt platforms that prevent additional parties entering and winning an election in equilibrium; thus, there is a tendency towards supporting only two major parties, that is, one party taking a center right and the other taking a center left position.²¹³

Under proportional rule, however, multiple parties tend to be viable in equilibrium. In this case, the number of parties is determined by the election threshold and coalition governments are often encountered because it is seldom that a single party takes the majority of seats in parliament. Party leaders can control who serves in government by controlling the order of candidates on party lists since it determines what people actually hold office.²¹⁴ Thus, in proportional systems election threshold is critical for parties to maintain their existence; whereas party leaders are critical for the candidates to remain in their positions. Both election threshold and party leaders are, then, factors affecting the survival of political parties.

1.4.3. How is Rational Choice Applied to This Thesis?

As discussed in the previous section, a number of reasons can be listed for the application of rational choice theory to political parties, therefore, to the subject of this dissertation. However, the main reason of applying rational choice in this thesis is that both rational choice theory and the thesis make an interest-based explanation for the policy-making of political parties. In other words, they both assume that political parties are rational actors which are capable of making cost-benefit calculations. Since the thesis deals with a certain policy approach of the major political parties in Turkey that requires an analysis of the factors affecting the policy-making of those parties, rational choice theory provides a solid ground to interpret acquired data by accepting them rational decision makers.

Once the research question of this study “Do the major political parties in Turkey have a consistent EU policy? If not, why do they change their EU policy stances?” is revisited, rational choice theory explicitly gives some guidance by its very

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

basic assumption about parties which claims that political parties act according to what is more beneficial for them like all other rational actors. Departing from this assumption, when the hypothesis of the dissertation is reconsidered, it is noted that rational choice theory can be of assistance for providing a theoretical premise to assert that the EU policy decisions of Turkish political parties can change due to the changes in interest perceptions of the parties and this fact prevents them from forming solid and stable EU policies. Put another way, cost-benefit calculations determine the EU stances of Turkish political parties, that is, a change in one of the factors which is involved in those calculations might cause a change in the overall approaches of the parties towards the EU. It is important to reveal those factors to make an analysis of the party behavior regarding a policy area like the EU.

The thesis examines three factors which affect the cost-benefit perceptions of the parties in order to find out how they affect the attitudes of the Turkish parties towards the EU. It should be reminded that one might find several other factors addressed in the literature beside the ones chosen in this thesis. In their article dealing with party responses to European integration in Finland and Sweden, Johansson and Raunio argue that there are seven explanatory factors shaping those responses: basic ideology, public opinion, factionalism, leadership influence, party competition, transnational links, and the development of integration.²¹⁵ However, electoral behavior, intraparty dynamics and party identity are selected as the three main factors which are considered to be the most plausible ones playing a role on the changes in Turkish parties' EU stances either in a positive or negative way. Those factors themselves also have different levels of significance in affecting EU policy-making.

As a methodological strategy, first the EU approaches of the parties will be examined comprehensively in Chapter 2 in order to be able to understand which factors affect the EU approaches of the Turkish parties at what level. The chapter is significant for the analysis of the factors because it will provide necessary information to determine the cases when there is a change in the parties' EU policies. Those cases are essential

²¹⁵ Karl Magnus Johansson and Tapio Raunio, "Partisan Responses to Europe: Comparing Finnish and Swedish Political Parties", *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 39, No. 2, March 2001, p. 225

for observing which factors were more effective on the change in EU approaches of the parties for that specific case.

Once the cases are determined in Chapter 2, electoral behavior, being the first important factor, is investigated profoundly in Chapter 3. As rational choice theory emphasizes, the frame of all policies adopted by a party in a democratic system is drawn by the “macro” concern of getting votes because a party neither exist nor maintain its existence without receiving votes. Even the minority parties that have no aim to be government or to enter the parliament, to a certain extent; have to receive votes to survive within the political system. Otherwise, they either converge with another party or dissolve.

Hence, parties adjust their policies to the policy preferences of the electorate at least partially, in other words, it is argued that the EU approaches of the parties cannot be considered independent from their concerns about electoral support. Accordingly, Chapter 3 aims at making a comparative analysis of Turkish electoral behavior with the EU approaches of political parties to understand how those approaches were affected during 2002-2011.

As well as vote concerns, there are also other significant factors which affected the attitudes of the parties towards the EU during the time period concerned. Sometimes the interests of parties were more likely to be shaped by those factors rather than the goal of pulling votes. For example, it can be argued that in the case of the DTP/BDP, vote concern has not been the driving force of the party’s pro-EU stance because as an ethnically oriented party the priority of the DTP/BDP voters is mainly the solution of Kurdish problem in Turkey, and the party constituencies wouldn’t be substantially affected by a change in the EU policy of the party. Therefore, two other factors which are considered to be influential in the EU approaches of Turkish political parties, namely the intraparty dynamics and party ideology and their effects on the EU approaches of political parties will be examined in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

It should be noted that in an ideally institutionalized political party system the competition among parties is on a regular basis, the party identities have continuity and

the party organizations can maintain their existence without depending on the party leaders so that these two factors might have an equal, or even stronger effect on parties comparing to the impact of electoral behavior. Contrarily, in Turkey, the infancy of a stable and democratic political party system has delayed, if not impeded the institutionalization of parties due to their historical evolution which prevented them to have the necessary conditions and time to consolidate their institutional and organizational value systems, which, in turn, made them mostly leader-dependent parties.

Intraparty dynamics mainly refer to the preferences of political groups that support the party in several ways such as funding or promoting some of the party activities overtly or covertly. Each party has its own circles which have certain interests, therefore, some expectations from those parties. When the party they support pursues an unwanted policy conflicting their interests, they can react by voicing their expectations through lobbying and using the means of mass media; or they can simply turn to another party. Parties do not dare to lose the support of those political groups because they are aware of the fact they play significant role in shaping the policies of the country and when they lose them, those groups will help another party gain more power within the system. As seen in Chapter 4, for instance, the AKP feeds on the support of Anatolian bourgeois mainly gathered around the MÜSİAD and part of the Nationalist Outlook community; whereas the CHP has good relations with the circles of military, Kemalist-secularist elites or alevi community. On the other hand, the DTP/BDP gets support from the municipalities of southeast Anatolian cities and the MHP is more attached to the nationalist circles.

Chapter 4 of this thesis also deals with party identities as the third factor, which is crucial in terms of parties' determining their EU policy approaches. Here, the term "party identity" simply implies the sum of all factors related to the values and norms which a party identifies itself with. In this regard, party ideology is a major component of a party's identity. No party can act completely against its ideological boundaries because that would cause indifference among parties. Party history can also be considered in this category because each party develops sort of tradition based on its

experiences throughout its history. For example, one of the outcomes of the AKP's enthusiastic pro-EU stance during 2002-2004 can be viewed as the ideological clash between the party and military especially regarding secularism. The democratic reforms helped the party legitimize itself and deny the allegations of secret anti-secularist agenda so that it increased the party's credibility in opposition to military.

To sum up, rational choice is applied to this thesis by establishing a cause and effect relation between the interests of each party to adopt or change a certain position regarding the EU issue. Departing from this idea, first the the EU policies of the parties will be reviewed and the cases of policy change will be discovered in Chapter 2. Then, three major factors which are associated with those changes will be explained in the following chapters. Eventually, all the findings will be gathered in conclusion part making an overall analysis of the research.

CHAPTER 2

THE EU PERSPECTIVES OF TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES

Turkey's EU cause has a long past when it is considered that it applied for the associate membership of the European Economic Community more than half century ago in 1959. Nonetheless, at that time there was no prospect for such strong bonds between the Community and Turkey as we see today. It was more likely to be a fiction to talk about an economic and political union in Europe which has a common supranational law structure, common currency and many other common features which would be counted as signs of being a state a few decades ago. Therefore, being part of this entity holds more significance, that is, it makes the entry requirements harder to be achieved especially for countries like Turkey which is not perceived as one of the traditionally European countries according to many Europe-wide surveys, if not completely the "other" of Europe.

On the one hand, there is a Turkey which has aligned itself with the West since the proclamation of the republic and waiting for an official recognition and appreciation of its long alliance with Europe by means of the EU membership. On the other hand there is a league of developed European countries at the center of the decision-making of the EU which are in favor of conditionality slowing down a possible membership.

What is remarkable here is that the EU issue has been covering a large portion in Turkish political agenda as it is confirmed in Yenigün's study as the most discussed foreign policy issue in the TGNA during 1991-2003.²¹⁶ Especially after Turkey was given the candidacy status at the Helsinki Summit of 1999, it gained even more significant place in the parliament speeches because it initiated a process of no return in terms of the legal, political and socio-economic changes already adopted, still being adopted or will be adopted in order to fulfill the required conditions of the Union.

²¹⁶ M. Cüneyt Yenigün, *Soğuk Savaş Sonrasında TBMM ve Dış Politika. Belgeler-Yorumlar (The TGNA after Cold War and Foreign Policy. Documents-Comments)*, Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım, April 2004, pp. 565-566

Therefore, Turkey's integration to the EU is an inevitable issue to be touched upon by political parties in Turkey. Below, the EU perspectives of major Turkish political parties are investigated profoundly.

Hence, this chapter goes through the same procedure for each of the four major political parties in Turkey. First, it makes an overview of the party's EU perspective by using only the scholarly work obtained from the literature. Then, the self-positioning of the parties regarding their EU perspectives is analyzed through the assessment of their party programs; diverse party publications and party group speeches in the parliament; and an in depth interview with a party member. As the last step, results from a survey with party deputies conducted in the TGNA are discussed. Following such procedure, it is aimed to make a two-way analysis of the parties which shows their EU perspectives from their own discourses as well as from the eyes of others, mainly scholars to strengthen the objectivity of the research.

The party publications, speeches of party members and other primary sources used in this chapter are handled as follows:

With regard to party programs and publications, first, references to the EU in each party's party program are examined because they are long-standing documents defining the fundamental policy lines of a party without going into details. They frame the ideologies and main policy aspects of parties. Parties try not to exceed the limits of their main policy framework which are laid out in their party programs since it would cause inconsistencies with their party identities.

Second, the EU-related parts of the documents issued by the parties are scanned and examined thoroughly in order to determine the main EU approaches of the parties in their discourses. This sort of documents include the specific publications on the party's EU policy, group speeches of the party in the TGNA, press statements, election bulletins, public meetings during the election campaigns as well as other party publications which have a reference to the EU in it.

Third, the findings of a survey in the Parliament and in depth interviews with a CHP, MHP, BDP and two AKP deputies who serve in the EU-related positions in their

parties are summarized. Furthermore, the results of the survey held in the TGNA with deputies are revealed and evaluated.

In the light of the findings acquired from all sources of data, the chapter intends to explain two significant points:

1- The EU stances of each political party in question;

2- The turning points of the EU-Turkey relations which result in a change in the attitudes of those parties towards the EU issue.

2.1. THE EU STANCE OF THE AKP

2.1.1. EU Perspective of the AKP in the Literature

The signals of transformation in the EU approach of political Islamists in Turkey were given earlier than the establishment of the AKP once they had to form coalition governments with pro-EU parties. In order to balance the EU attitudes which caused incompatibility between the coalition partners, the Islamists were compelled to make concessions about their strict anti-EU stance.

During the 1970s, the pro-EEC political stance of its coalition partners, the CHP and later the AP forced the pro-Islamist MSP to compromise in order to remain in government. Likewise, the program of the coalition government of the RP and the DYP which was headed by the architect of the Customs Union, Tansu Çiller, was a balanced document regarding the EU issue.²¹⁷ However all the concessions they made in their EU policy served for their political interest rather than changing their EU perspective. They maintained their anti-EU discourse and did not hesitate to announce their disbelief in European values. Thus, their compromises had nothing to do with an ideological change.

In this context, February 28 process which paved the way to the Welfare Party's closure is a turning point not only for planting the seeds of disagreement

²¹⁷ Erhan Doğan, "The Historical and Discursive Roots of the Justice and Development Party's EU Stance", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3, September 2005, p. 426

between the traditionalist and reformist Islamists in Turkey but also for its encouraging the Islamists to seek for the ways of reconciliation with merits of Western civilization. The Process showed that the Islamists also needed some of those values with which the EU identifies itself such as democracy in order to survive within the sensitively secular Turkish political system. Eventually a considerable amount of supporters of the FP, which was founded after the February 28, were the growing middle-sized Anatolian businessmen organized under the umbrella of the MÜSİAD who were content with the Customs Union.²¹⁸ This newly emerged class of businessmen in the pro-Islamist movement heralded the birth of a new party which would transform the traditional political Islamist ideology into a moderate, pragmatic political structure that was capable of merging the useful values of the west for gaining support of the masses. The AKP could meet the demands of that conservative capital-owner class favoring the market economy. It was an outcome of the reformist wave flourished within the FP and it had learned from the experiences of political Islam in Turkey.

The AKP, as a party emerged within the political Islamist circles, symbolizes a revolutionary change in the EU stance of the political Islam in Turkey. Despite some compromises, the anti-EU discourse of the pro-Islamist movement never changed over the last decades. However, the AKP, a conservative liberal party which has also pro-Islamist roots, embraced Turkey's EU cause both in rhetoric and practice as its priority issue. Furthermore, it pledged that it shared the same values of democracy, human rights, rule of law, liberal economy with the EU from the outset.

The AKP's determined EU stance represented a challenging performance for the left and right wing parties in Turkish political arena as well. As Keyman and Öniş put forward, the political parties in Turkey during the 2000-2002 period displayed a vague commitment to EU membership but their agendas continued to be characterized by a heavily nationalistic outlook.²¹⁹ They did not conduct policies which were challenging the status quo concerning the fundamental issues of Turkish politics.

²¹⁸ Ibid., p. 427

²¹⁹ Fuat Keyman and Ziya Öniş. 2004, "Helsinki, Copenhagen and Beyond: Challenges to the New Europe and the Turkish State", Mehmet Uğur and Nergis Canefe (Eds.) **Turkey and European Integration: Accession Prospects and Issues**, London: Routledge, p. 180

Compared to those parties, the AKP came up with an unprecedentedly dynamic and enthusiastic EU approach.

Nevertheless, it should be also underlined that the same party, together with the MHP, voted against the first reform package about the abolishment of death penalty and the permission of broadcasting in other languages including Kurdish which passed in the TGNA on 3 August 2002. The DSP, ANAP, SP and YTP voted in favor of the package. The package offered one of the most critical reforms ever done during the accession process in terms of its content since it was about the most problematic issues in Turkey, the Kurdish issue.²²⁰ When the initiatives taken by the AKP regarding the human rights and minority issues and democratization projects such as “Democratic Opening”, the party’s rejection of the first reform package contradicts with the liberal image it displayed in its governmental term. In that sense, it can be argued that the party’s policy interests changed after it came to government.

According to Doğan, there were two main reasons behind the determination of the AKP to promote Turkey’s EU membership after forming the government. First, Erdoğan and his colleagues, admitting their opposition to EU membership in the past, wanted to prove that they changed and that they believed in democratic, economic, legal and institutional standards of the EU. Second, the “utopian”, Just Order program of the National Outlook Movement had become insufficient to meet the needs of their changing electorate in favor of culturally and socially conservative whereas economically liberal political movement.²²¹ Thus, the interest groups which support the party and need for being legitimized by the liberal wing of society which are committed to the EU values and norms encouraged the AKP for taking an enthusiastic EU stance.

Denying being the party of a certain ideology, the AKP was able to fulfill the expectations of its electorate with a practical approach to politics. Having formed the government, it focused on solving the “ever-lasting” problems of Turkish political agenda with a rationalist and pragmatic manner. Its policies could be interpreted as

²²⁰ Nejat Doğan and Mahir Nakip (Eds.), **Uluslararası İlişkiler ve Türk Siyasal Partileri (International Relations and Turkish Political Parties)**, Ankara: Seçkin Yayınları, February 2006, p. 354

²²¹ Erhan Doğan, “The Historical and Discursive Roots of the Justice and Development Party’s EU Stance”, **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 6, No. 3, September 2005, pp. 429-430

active rather than reactive; or in other words “reformist”. In this regard, the efforts made by the AKP government for the peaceful settlement of Cyprus dispute could be of example. It supported the initiatives of the UN under the Secretary General Kofi Annan and actively played role to resolve the conflict by mediating among the conflicting parties. Nevertheless, the Annan Plan failed because of the rejection of Greek Cypriots in the referendum held on the Island.

The AKP tackled the EU issue in a similar pragmatic way and took action promptly for this forty years old problem. Erdoğan, even not being a deputy at the time, made visits to the EU member states and started a shuttle diplomacy which was aiming at boosting Turkey’s demand, in the approach to the forthcoming Copenhagen Summit of the EU Council of Ministers that a date was to be fixed for the beginning of accession negotiations. The fact that the summit was taking place in the Danish capital had a special meaning for Turkey, for it was here in 1993 that the political criteria for EU membership, the “Copenhagen criteria” which Turkey had hitherto repeatedly been deemed unable to fulfill, had been adopted.²²² Although Turkey could not receive a date for opening the membership negotiations in that summit, the AKP continued to proceed in the accession process. It launched reform packages one after another and kept the EU-Turkey relations as a priority issue on the agenda. During 2002-2004 five EU harmonization packages passed in the TGNA with the support of the CHP.

Apart from the questions about sincerity in its commitment, the overall performance of the AKP regarding Turkey’s EU cause during its first term in government between 2002 and 2007 could be evaluated as entirely positive and progressive. In this period, looking at the discourse and practice of the AKP, it might be said that the party displayed an impressive record of political reforms. However, it is also important to mention that during this period the targeted goals were mostly related to the material gains of full membership so that it was not very possible to interpret the commitment of the AKP as internalization of the EU norms and values. In this respect, Kula argues that during the 2002-2004 reforms, the AKP did not discuss European values with a systematic and analytic approach although it viewed Turkey as an integral

²²² Philip Robins, “Confusion at Home, Confusion Abroad: Turkey between Copenhagen and Iraq”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 3, May 2003, p. 553

part of European value system and had initiated many reform packages in the Parliament. According to Kula, the most prominent dilemma of the AKP was that on the one side, it viewed Turkey as part of European value system, whereas on the other side, it tended to focus on the religious sensitivities.²²³ That is also the reason for the skepticism of opposition groups regarding the AKP's democratic face.

As Keyman and Öniş marked, the AKP was motivated by the extension of religious freedoms for challenging the authoritarian secularism in Turkey. In this sense, the EU shelter could have provided a degree of protection for Islamists within well defined limits.²²⁴ The AKP was in search of legitimacy from the secularist elite and masses that were inclined to view it as an Islamist party covered itself with a liberal-democratic shell. In this regard, the AKP showed some signs which gave rise to secret agenda criticisms of the secularist elite as well. For example, the draft law concerning the Imam Hatip schools in Turkey was aimed to lift the barrier in front of choosing other study fields than the fields associated with religion for the graduates of those schools. This was interpreted as the party was not able to keep its distance with religionism, particularly in issues concerning education, society and law and was criticized for not agreeing with the attitude taken towards the EU.²²⁵ Thus, a decisive and committed EU discourse was to provide the AKP with an image which was in peace with secularist approach. It could be argued that the pro-EU stance ensured the legitimacy which was necessary to make the reforms it had planned.

It is realized that the AKP's two governmental periods do not have the same level of commitment in their EU policies. The party has lost its enthusiasm especially in terms of the reforms made for harmonization with the EU acquis during 2007-2011. Although there has been no remarkable discourse change in the speeches of the party members and the party publications, a visible slowdown in pace of reforms has occurred. Thanks to the continuity in the rapid economic growth comparing to the

²²³ Onur Bilge Kula, **Türkiye'deki Siyasal Partilerin Avrupa Politikaları (European Policies of Turkish Political Parties)**, İstanbul: SODEV Yayınları, 2004, p. 9

²²⁴ Fuat Keyman and Ziya Öniş. 2004, "Helsinki, Copenhagen and Beyond: Challenges to the New Europe and the Turkish State", Mehmet Uğur and Nergis Canefe (Eds.), **Turkey and European Integration: Accession Prospects and Issues**, London: Routledge, p. 184

²²⁵ Onur Bilge Kula, **Türkiye'deki Siyasal Partilerin Avrupa Politikaları (European Policies of Turkish Political Parties)**, İstanbul: SODEV Yayınları, 2004, p. 18

previous decades when it was highly inadequate, the AKP could maintain the achievements of its first term without a serious rupture in Turkey-EU relations despite the rise in nationalist and euro-skeptic tendencies and the decline in public support toward the EU membership.²²⁶ Hence, the party carried on its pro-EU discourse in principle; whereas its level of commitment to the EU dropped considerably.

It is also significant to analyze the relation between the party and Turkish electorate in order to understand its motivation during 2002-2004. Kula argues that the majority of Turkish society supported the EU membership at the time so that the society both encouraged the AKP in terms of the EU issue and checked it for the adoption and implementation of the harmonization laws.²²⁷ In this sense, the goal of increasing its vote share played role in the AKP's enthusiasm to speed up the reforms in this period while after 2004 the party's enthusiasm shifted to a moderate level as the level of public support for the EU membership was on decline.

The decrease in motivation of the AKP government concerning the negotiation talks with the EU after the 2007 elections has also been realized by the European respondents. The 2008, 2009, and 2010 EU Progress Reports and the 2008 and 2009 EP reports have criticized the government for the limited and slow progress in reforms.²²⁸

²²⁶ Ziya Öniş, "Conservative Globalists versus Defensive Nationalists: Political Parties and Paradoxes of Europeanization in Turkey", **Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans**, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2007 (reprinted in S. Verney ed. *Turkey's Road to EU Membership*, 2008)

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14613190701689902#preview>

accessed on 12.12.2010

²²⁷ Onur Bilge Kula, **Türkiye'deki Siyasal Partilerin Avrupa Politikaları (European Policies of Turkish Political Parties)**, İstanbul: SODEV Yayınları, 2004, p. 38

²²⁸ European Commission, **Turkey 2008 Progress Report**, Brussels, 5 November 2008

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/keydocuments/reports_nov_2008/turkey_progress_report_en.pdf

accessed on 21.01.2009.

European Commission, **Turkey 2009 Progress Report**, Brussels, 14 October 2009

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/tr_rapport_2009_en.pdf

accessed on 17.10.2009

European Commission, **Turkey 2010 Progress Report**, Brussels, 9 November 2010

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/tr_rapport_2010_en.pdf

accessed on 12.10.2010

European Parliament, **Resolution of Turkey's 2007 Progress Report**, P6_TA-PROV(2008)0224, 21 May 2008

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance_pleniere/textes_adoptes/provisoire/2008/05-21/P6_TA-PROV%282008%2905-21_EN.pdf

accessed on 18.09.2010

In this respect, the domestic problems of political polarization play an important role in diverting attention away. The EU has been rarely mentioned in daily agenda of the government.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the decrease in the motivation of the AKP after the December 2004 decision of the EU Summit to start accession negotiations coincided with the accession of Greek Cypriots into the EU and “their success in uploading to the EU level their policy of forcing Turkey to a settlement on their terms on the island.”²²⁹ In addition, the shift in France and Germany to center-right governments headed by leaders who are known as the opponents of the EU accession of Turkey offered optimum conditions for Turkish politicians to draw a pessimistic picture for the possibility of EU membership and bureaucrats to excuse keeping low-profile in their decisions concerning the EU issue.²³⁰

In January 2009, the AKP appointed Egemen Bağış to the position of state minister and the chief negotiator of Turkey. After the 2011 elections, the AKP established the Ministry for EU Affairs and he has been promoted to the position of Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator. However, those developments did not go beyond causing a short-term stimulation of the EU issue on the daily agenda.

In his article, the former joint chairman of the Turkey-EU Parliamentarians Delegation Joost Lagendijk states that it is not possible to understand the EU perspective of the AKP because of the contradicting statements of the party members. He claims that while Davutoğlu talks about the government’s full commitment to the EU accession, Erdoğan could complain about the double standards and reluctance of the EU to accept Turkey as a member and say that Turkey should make all its investments on the improvement of relations with its Arab brothers instead of dealing with

European Parliament, **Resolution of Turkey’s 2008 Progress Report**, P6_TA(2009)0134, 12 March 2009

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2009-0134&language=EN>
accessed on 18.09.2010

²²⁹ Özlem Terzi, **The Influence of the European Union on Turkish Foreign Policy**, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010, p. 35

²³⁰ Ibid.

Europeans at a Turkish-Arab platform on the same day.²³¹ Thus, there was an actively pro-EU AKP launching reform packages and defending Turkey's EU cause in many platforms during the 2002-2007 governmental period. However, during 2007-2011, it gave the impression that the EU issue was not a top priority issue since the reforms slowed down and attention was taken towards other domestic and foreign policy issues.

2.1.2. EU Issue in the Party Program

As it was mentioned before, the AKP was often compared to Erbakan's parties basing on the fact that many members of it used to have strong ties with Erbakan's community and his pro-Islamist school of thought. From this perspective, the EU issue is one of the most differentiating policies between Erdoğan's AKP and Erbakan's SP. The SP absolutely rejects Turkey's EU membership in its party program.²³² Gülalp states that the SP views the EU accession tantamount to siding with Israel:

“...if Turkey joined the EU, it would be a province of Israel. Like the MSP, the RP also considered Zionism as the source of evil. The party suggested a common market created with other Muslim countries, and advocated the idea of “Greater Turkey” which meant that Turkey would follow an independent foreign policy from the West and would be economically powerful.”²³³

In contrast with the SP, the AKP includes no distinct title for its EU policy in its party program. It refers to the EU issue solely under the “Foreign Policy” section with a few sentences. Accordingly, the EU-Turkey relations are evaluated within the party's overall foreign policy. In this sense, Turkey's historically and geographically close relations with European countries are considered to be continued.²³⁴ In its program, the party obviously confirms that it is committed to Turkey's EU membership goal:

²³¹ Joost Legendijk, “AB, AKP için Hala Önemli mi?” (Is the EU Still Important for the AKP?), **Radikal Newspaper**, 16 June 2010

²³² **The SP Program**, Ankara, 2001

²³³ See Haldun Gülalp, “Political Islam in Turkey: The Rise and Fall of the Refah Party”, **Muslim World**, Vol. 89, No. 1, 1999, pp. 22-41; Haldun Gülalp, “Globalization and Political Islam: The Social Base of Turkey's Welfare Party”, **International Journal of Middle East Studies**, Vol. 33, 2001, pp. 433-48 and The SP Official Website, Program/V. Foreign Policy, <http://www.saadet.org.tr/kurumsal/v.-dis-politika/687> accessed on 12.01.2010

²³⁴ The AKP Party Program, Ankara, 2001

Turkey shall rapidly fulfill its promises in its relations with the European Union and the conditions, which the Union demands of other candidate nations as well. Thus, it shall prevent the occupation of the agenda with artificial problems.²³⁵

It could also be observed that the program of the AKP is more optimistic than the CHP and MHP's programs which are mentioned in Section 2.2.2 and 2.3.2. Unlike those parties the AKP does not make a special emphasis on Turkey's national interests within the EU context.

2.1.3. An Analysis of the Party Publications

Since its establishment, the EU issue has occupied the AKP agenda. When the 2001 EU Progress Report on Turkey was declared, Erdoğan criticized the ANAP-DSP-MHP government for pretending as if it were a positive report although the report highlighted that Turkey had showed no progress in democratization, economic matters and the resolution of the Cyprus conflict. He alleged that the EU was conscious of the insufficiency of the National Program and that program had been prepared to mislead the public opinion. Erdoğan also referred to the statements of the coalition government which favored "paying the price if necessary" concerning the Cyprus issue. He argued that the government was inconsistent in its Cyprus policy because by the approval of the decisions of the Helsinki Summit; it already accepted the accession of Southern Cyprus to the EU.²³⁶

Even before it came to government, the AKP identified itself as a party committed to Turkey's EU project. In a group speech, Erdoğan marked that the EU accession process had commenced forty years ago and Turkey was not neutral any more in this issue because it had already signed many agreements and taken many initiatives towards the EU membership. He explained the reason of the AKP's pro-EU policy with its desire for higher standards in democracy and law. Meanwhile, Erdoğan criticized the MHP for its unconditional EU membership demand. He pointed out that it would not be realistic to ask for membership without accepting to comply with the EU norms and

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 20 November 2001

standards, and he blamed the MHP for being insincere in its EU policy.²³⁷ The AKP was in favor of any reforms that would help Turkey harmonize its laws with the ones of the EU because those reforms would not challenge Turkey's national interests. On the contrary they would accelerate the development of democracy and liberal rights and freedoms in Turkey.

As a new born party, the AKP constructed its EU policy discourse by pointing out the failures of the DSP-ANAP-MHP coalition government. Cyprus issue was one of the main criticisms of the AKP. Erdoğan stated that the EU's bringing forward the Cyprus issue as a requirement within the accession process didn't represent good will. He remarked that it would be contrary to law when the Southern Cyprus entered into the Union alone representing the whole island.²³⁸ It blamed the coalition for being inefficient in peaceful resolution of the Cyprus dispute. This was also the early signs of the party's Cyprus policy which it would pursue after forming the government.

Another issue harshly criticized by the AKP was the negative impact of the economic situation of Turkey to the EU accession process. Erdoğan analyzed the existing economic situation of Turkey and indicated that the country was far beyond economic standards which were defined in the Maastricht Treaty in order to become a member of the EU. He argued that Turkey had to fulfill the required inflation, interest rate and budget deficit levels of the EU not only for the EU but also for the sake of its own welfare.²³⁹ This could also be taken as an indicator of the future AKP government's economic revitalization policy.

Prior to the 2002 elections, Erdoğan often emphasized that the requirements of the EU membership were parallel to the national objectives of Turkey since both were aiming at improvement in democracy, rule of law, individual rights and freedoms and functioning market economy. As a matter of fact, it was rational to support the reforms and speed up the EU process. If the EU still did not want to accept Turkey as a member after all the reforms, then it would not be the loss of Turkey.²⁴⁰ By those statements, the

²³⁷ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 28 November 2001

²³⁸ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 5 December 2001

²³⁹ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 12 December 2001

²⁴⁰ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 6 March 2002; 27 March 2002; 5 June 2002

AKP was indeed attempting to prove that it internalized the common values of the EU, namely democracy, rule of law, human rights etc. This positive EU approach of the AKP as a party which just emerged by seceding from a pro-Islamist party raised questions in secular minds intensifying the hidden agenda concerns which centered around the idea that the party used its EU policy as means of legitimizing itself in front of the eyes of secular skeptics who often questioned the pro-Islamist background of the party.

While approaching the 2002 elections, the EU issue became one of the most important issue areas of the AKP in which it frequently blamed the government for being ineffective. From the perspective of the AKP, the government was procrastinating in making the necessary reforms by subordinating the EU matters to controversial changes such as the abolishment of death penalty or education in mother tongue. Additionally, the AKP marked the absence of a commission in the TGNA which would specifically deal with the EU accession as a lack of interest and desire in government towards the issue.²⁴¹ The party also underlined its full commitment to Turkey's EU cause in its election bulletin and stated that it wouldn't let the political agenda be occupied with artificial problems and would concentrate on the full membership.²⁴² Hence, the party entered the 2002 elections with a demanding approach in its EU discourse but its sincerity about its commitment was still a question for many groups within the society.

As soon as the AKP was elected by the majority of the votes in 2002 elections, Erdoğan started to tour European capitals meeting statesmen in order to express its determination to put all the effort on achieving Turkey's EU accession goal and he became the first Turkish prime minister who visited all members of the EU. He used shuttle diplomacy as a tool for rapprochement with those states to win their support.

In the first years of its government the AKP reiterated its commitment to the EU membership goal several times. It focused on the fulfillment of the Copenhagen criteria and often stated that it would undertake the full responsibility of the necessary

²⁴¹ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 19 June 2002

²⁴² The AKP Election Bulletin, 2002

reforms to meet those criteria.²⁴³ It proved its commitment in practice as well. The reform packages to harmonize national law with the EU *acquis communautaire* were launched one by one. Until the end of 2004, the government worked efficiently in the TGNA in order to pass the harmonization laws.

On the other hand, the conjuncture kept the EU issue as a popular subject since the EU was preparing to realize its largest integration in its history. According to the decisions taken in the Luxembourg and Helsinki Summits²⁴⁴, ten new countries including Cyprus would become EU members on 1 May 2004. Thus, in 2003 and 2004, most of the EU related group speeches made by Erdoğan in the TGNA concentrated on the resolution of Cyprus conflict.²⁴⁵ The AKP favored the reconciliation between Greek and Turkish Cypriots by the Annan Plan which was named after the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

When the party publications are examined, in the first years of its government, the AKP could be defined extremely motivated about the EU membership. Erdoğan stated explicitly that he believed that Turkey would become an EU member.²⁴⁶ In other words, during 2002-2004, the party not only set the accomplishment of the required reforms but also believed in Turkey's becoming an EU member in a moderate time interval.

Despite not being as strong and frequent as it is seen in the CHP or MHP's discourses which are analyzed in the upcoming sections, the AKP also took Turkey's EU membership goal as a natural extension of the modernization period which began in the 19th century.²⁴⁷ This may be interpreted as the alignment of the AKP with the

²⁴³ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 29 April 2003; 20 May 2003; 24 June 2003; 3 June 2003

²⁴⁴ See the presidency conclusions of Luxembourg and Helsinki summits:
European Parliament, **Luxembourg European Council Presidency Conclusions**, 12-13 December 1997
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lux1_en.htm
accessed on 14.04.2009

European Parliament, **Helsinki European Council Presidency Conclusions**, 10-11 December 1999
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/hell1_en.htm
accessed on 14.04.2009

²⁴⁵ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 16 December 2003; 6 April 2004; 4 May 2004

²⁴⁶ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 16 December 2003

²⁴⁷ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 2 October 2004

historical propensity of Kemalist Turkish political elites in viewing Turkey's EU cause as a natural continuation of the country's westernization process.

Unlike the CHP, the AKP interpreted 17 December 2004 EU Summit as a very positive development in terms of EU accession process of Turkey.²⁴⁸ For the AKP that summit provided a date for opening of the accession negotiations which was the greatest achievement since the beginning of the EU-Turkey relations. In contrary, from the viewpoint of the CHP and MHP, this summit was a sign of EU's imposing more conditionality on Turkey in the future especially in the issues which national interests are at stake such as Cyprus problem. Therefore, the opposition parties tended to see the same summit as a disaster rather than a victory.

In the aftermath of the Summit of 17 December 2004, signs of weakening in the decisive EU discourse of the AKP have appeared. Surely, it was not only a result of the AKP's lethargy after obtaining a date for the accession negotiations but also the new atmosphere emerged in the EU due to the rejection of the EU Constitution by the referenda held in two founding member states of the Union, namely France and the Netherlands. This was an unexpected development which consequently had a negative effect on the course of EU-Turkey relations bringing about a train crash in the deepening process of the European integration which displayed that the EU publics were not ready for a new enlargement wave before solving their structural problems. Yet, the warm ambiance created in the EU member states during the shuttle diplomacy of the AKP which gave green light to Turkey's efforts for the EU cause was to be destroyed by internal problems concerning the future of the Union.

This new political environment was used by the opposition to criticize the EU policy of the AKP so that the party had to reaffirm its consistency. The party members often underlined that integration process went full steam forward and their loyalty towards Turkey's EU membership goal continued. Erdoğan in a speech pointed out that the AKP was still decisively aiming at the EU membership after the accession negotiations were opened on 3 October 2005. He also addressed the opposition parties' EU criticisms by saying that the future of Turkey shouldn't have left to the ones who

²⁴⁸ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 4 October 2005

did politics with failure possibilities.²⁴⁹ Another prominent figure of the AKP, Abdullah Gül argued against the ones claiming that the AKP was exhausted of reforms and the pace of integration slowed down by pointing the fact that the government just launched the 9th reform package.²⁵⁰

Along with the consistent stress on its full commitment to the EU membership goal, the AKP seemed to be more critical in the EU's attitude towards Turkey. After the first negotiation chapter was completed, Erdoğan evaluated the EU accession process. He mentioned that unfortunately some of the EU members not yet understood the significance of Turkish membership for the EU to become a global actor. Furthermore, he criticized the EU for not keeping its promise to lift the isolations applied to Northern Cyprus and punishing the side which worked for the reconciliation of the dispute. He argued that the EU should not have interrupted the negotiations via politics because the negotiation process was a technical process.²⁵¹ It may be said that the AKP started to lose its initial pure optimistic approach towards the EU after the negotiations were interfered by the Cyprus conflict although the AKP had highly supported the Annan Plan which was expected to give an end to the problem.

In a party publication which was issued to answer the frequently asked questions about Turkey-EU relations in 2005, despite the whole positive attitude of the document in terms of its interpreting Turkey's EU process, red lines of Turkey in the process were underlined. According to that document there were three red lines: First, Turkey would never recognize Cyprus unless a comprehensive settlement could be reached. Second, Turkey could never be forced to recognize the "So-called Armenian Genocide" during the approval process of the membership and finally, Turkey could never be compelled to give concessions about the conditions defined in the Lausanne Treaty and its territorial integrity.²⁵² It could be considered that the AKP also started to

²⁴⁹ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 16 March 2005; 19 April 2005; 24 May 2005; 4 October 2005; 6 June 2006

²⁵⁰ Abdullah Gül, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 18 April 2006

²⁵¹ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 20 June 2006

²⁵² **100 Soruda AB (EU in 100 Questions)**, Ankara: AK Parti Dış İlişkiler Genel Merkez Başkanlığı, 2005, p. 74

expose its attachment to national interests by mentioning those red lines after the cost of compliance with the EU conditions became higher.

It can also be observed that after 17 December 2004 EU Summit, the EU rhetoric of the AKP had a reactionary and defensive manner in response to the increasing criticisms coming from the opposition parties for its EU policy. At the time, the Chief Negotiator Ali Babacan got reaction from the CHP for his being insufficient in pursuing Turkey's EU interest in international platform. Erdoğan reciprocated those denouncements of the Chief Negotiator by the CHP. He objected to those who claimed that the pace of integration decelerated and the government was not willing to proceed in the EU accession process as before. He put forward that the parties which signed many crucial documents with the EU when they used to be government became anti-EU and started to criticize the AKP once they switched to opposition.²⁵³ As the reform process slowed down, post-2004 period would frequently witness battle of words between the AKP and opposition parties with regard to the EU issue.

After the Council agreed on freezing eight negotiation chapters as a response to Turkey's rejection of extending the Customs Union to Cyprus, a remarkable change in the AKP's EU discourse can be observed. Erdoğan proclaimed that the decision taken by the EU Council in December 2006 was not fair because it did not comply with the level reached in EU-Turkey relations and it contradicted the targets on which were once agreed together. He argued that the EU could not show Cyprus issue as an excuse for the negative opinion on Turkey's progress since Turkey had tried hard to compromise.²⁵⁴ After 2006, what makes the AKP's EU stance different from 2004-2006 is that not only the frequency of references to the EU in party discourse decreased but also the AKP became less interested in making progress in the accession process.

In 2007, the EU issue was no more the top issue on the AKP agenda. The party focus was shifted towards the upcoming general elections and the selection of the new president of Turkey. In the meantime, the EU-Turkey relations had come to a state of technical process by the commencement of the negotiations, and there had occurred a

²⁵³ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 26 September 2006

²⁵⁴ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 12 December 2006

deadlock in negotiating the chapters which were related to the Customs Union because of the lack of improvement in peaceful settlement of the Cyprus dispute. The AKP began to revolve around the argument that the Turkish membership was a positive sum game and the EU needed Turkey if it were to become a global actor.

In the AKP's 2007 election bulletin, the party made a situation analysis in the relations with the EU and interpreted the developments during its 2002-2007 government as very positive. It also stated that its determination in the accession process could be taken as a proof of their commitment to bring Turkey to the highest standards.²⁵⁵ However, the new AKP government would not be as active as the first one in terms of making reforms. Instead, there was a tendency towards blaming the EU for not appreciating Turkey's efforts.

According to Erdoğan, the AKP was aware of the fact that some EU members were trying to block Turkey's EU path. They intended to politicize Turkey's EU accession in order to gain electoral support in their internal affairs. However, for the AKP the ultimate goal was to bring Turkey to the level of EU standards and the EU integration accelerated this process. He stated that Turkish membership would be mutually beneficial for Turkey and the EU. It was true that Turkey would gain better standards by the membership, but, on the other hand, the EU would have the chance to be a global power by Turkish accession.²⁵⁶ Consequently, the AKP seemed to turn its hard-liner EU discourse, which was at the beginning more like "whatever it costs, we have the motivation to proceed on the way of EU accession", into a softer discourse such as "we are still fully committed to our EU goal, but the EU shouldn't underestimate the role of Turkey for a powerful Europe as well."

In 2008 it was clearly visible from his speech that Erdoğan needed to take a defensive position for his party's EU policy against the ones who criticized the AKP for not being active in the EU process anymore. He stressed that the government was still as committed and determined as it had been before in terms of the EU accession. It was just the issue was not so much in demand in media; otherwise the AKP government was

²⁵⁵ The AKP Election Bulletin, 2007

²⁵⁶ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 27 March 2007

continuing to work on the EU accession process without delay.²⁵⁷ Accordingly, Erdoğan seemed to take an appeasing manner to respond the criticisms for the AKP's EU policy by underlining that they did and were still doing the best of what was possible so that there was nothing to worry about in terms of the EU accession. However, the 2008 Progress Report of the Commission on Turkey apparently disagreed with Erdoğan's confident statement.²⁵⁸

In the 2009 AKP group speeches, Erdoğan constantly underlined the fact that during the AKP government Turkey fulfilled two of the Maastricht criteria concerning the government debt and government deficit although they were not binding for Turkey and called the EU for commitment to its promises. In his speech on 9 June 2009, he stated that the criteria for the accession were pre-determined and this was the essence of the process so that Turkey based its path to the EU on the actions, not on the discourses. He added that loyalty to the promises, acting in line with the pre-determined principles and rules were the foundation of the spirit of unity and he argued that those who acted against this spirit, loyalty and commitment would act first and foremost against the founding values of the EU. Yet, the AKP stated that it defines the EU as "a project of overcoming psychological boundaries" in the minds of European states, and it will work for Turkey's EU accession despite all the discouraging developments, all the blockings and unfair treatments.²⁵⁹ The party also declared that the 2009 EU Progress Report on Turkey confirmed the success of its reforms so that it would continue the reforms and initiatives with utter determination.²⁶⁰ Hence, in terms of its EU discourse, the AKP no sign of slowdown or reluctance to make progress in the EU accession process despite the presence of an obstruction in the EU-Turkey relations. As another development

²⁵⁷ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 12 February 2008

²⁵⁸ For a concise analysis of the 2008 Progress Report, see Barkın Altınok, "İKV 2008 İlerleme Raporunu Değerlendirdi." (IKV Evaluated 2008 Progress Report), AB Vizyonu, 5 November 2008, <http://www.abvizyonu.com/avrupa-birligi/ikv-2008-ilerleme-raporunu-degerlendirdi.html> accessed on 12.04.2012

²⁵⁹ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 5 May 2009 The Maastricht criteria mentioned here were the criteria which were laid out by the Article 121 (1) of the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Those criteria must be fulfilled by the member states which are willing to adopt the euro as their currency.

²⁶⁰ Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 20 October 2009; Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 13 January 2009; Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 2 June 2009; Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 9 June 2009; Tayyip Erdoğan, The AKP Group Speech in the TGNA, 3 November 2009

proving a little revival in the EU policy of the AKP government was the replacement of the controversial Chief Negotiator Ali Babacan with Egemen Bağış who had relatively better impression on opposition.

During the 2011 election campaigns the AKP published a document in which it analyzed the past 8.5 years it spent in government. Accordingly, the party argues that it could manage to realize the EU dream in four years by starting the negotiations with the EU while other parties couldn't make any improvement in 40 years.²⁶¹ In the AKP's 2011 election bulletin, the party defines Turkey's full membership to the EU as a strategic goal. It points out that this has a strategic importance for the future of the EU as well since the party views a Europe rejecting Turkish membership as a Europe lagging behind the 21st century. The party also emphasizes that the Union should not conflict with its own principles and should not behave Turkey differently.²⁶² As it is understood from these documents, despite the fact that no negotiation chapter was opened after 2010 and many chapters were blocked, the AKP tends to present itself quite successful as being the party which initiated the negotiations. Although the party has never abandoned its positive EU approach in its discourse, the course of relations with the EU was characterized by inertia in 2007-2011 and it seems to continue at least in the short run.

2.1.4. Interviews with Yaşar Yakış and Taha Aksoy

Taha Aksoy, a member of the Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee as a representative of the AKP during 23rd parliamentary term of the TGNA was interviewed on 16 December 2010 in order to take his opinion about the AKP's EU policy.²⁶³

In his interview, Aksoy highlights two points to explain why Turkey should proceed on the way to EU membership. First, the EU is an initiative to preserve peace in Europe after the World War II. In this sense, the EU's *raison d'être* overlaps with Turkey's main goal of bringing the country to the level of contemporary civilizations

²⁶¹ AKP Tanıtım ve Medya Başkanlığı, *Alnımızın Akıyla 8.5 Yıl (Honorable 8.5 Years)*, April 2011, p. 81

²⁶² The AKP Election Bulletin, 2011, p. 151-152

²⁶³ To read the whole interview with Taha Aksoy, see the Annex III/1.

and the principle of “peace at home, peace in the world” voiced by Atatürk in the early years of the Republic. Second, the EU is a civilization project. Turkey believes in the values of Europe such as human rights, individual rights, accountability or rule of law, but it cannot reach those standards by its internal dynamics. Therefore, the EU project is extremely important for Turkey. Nevertheless, he adds that it is not possible to support the EU all the time because the conditions can change. The EU can sometimes deviate from its own values; too, so that one cannot claim to support the EU forever. It depends on circumstances of the time.

Aksoy thinks that Turkey’s EU membership process has improved far beyond the expectations after the AKP assumed office. He believes that the EU is willing to delay Turkey’s membership for some reasons and when Turkey performed very well in the negotiation process, thanks to the efforts of the AKP and the CHP but especially the AKP, the Union braked Turkey’s pace of accession by using Cyprus dispute.

For Aksoy, it would be wrong to say that the AKP is a party of ideology but the way the party looks at life corresponds to the EU project since the AKP believes in liberal democracy and have a zero-problem policy. He thinks Turkish foreign policy only differs from the EU in its perspective towards the nuclear program of Iran. However, he thinks that it is not a considerably significant difference because when they get together with their European counterparts to talk about this issue, Europeans admit that they have never considered the issue from that side.

According to Aksoy, the EU accession process has a positive impact on Turkey’s economy. He thinks that the Customs Union with the EU has increased Turkey’s competition power in international market despite some defects. Aksoy marks the issue of free trade agreements with third countries as the biggest defect because of the fact that Turkey opens its market to the goods of third countries coming from the EU although those countries do not open their markets to Turkish goods. He interprets this situation as “very unfair” and states that they regularly bring this issue to the agenda at their EU Committee meeting in the TGNA.

Aksoy says that the reforms made for the EU accession contributed democratization in Turkey and he personally believes that Turkey would already become a member of the EU by the year 2023 if only it wants to become a member. He also thinks that alternatives to membership such as privileged partnership are nonsense because Turkey is a much stronger country than it is thought to be and the EU will need Turkish membership sooner or later.

Another interviewed AKP deputy was Yaşar Yakış. He was perhaps one of the most authorized persons of his party in terms of the EU policy until the 2011 elections. He was the chair of the European Union Harmonization Committee of the TGNA and a member of the Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee during the 22nd and 23rd parliamentary terms of the TGNA.

Apart from these, Yakış is also an experienced diplomat in Foreign Affairs. He used to serve as the ambassador of Turkey to Saudi Arabia and Egypt before his deputyship. Later, he got appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the 58th Turkish government in 2002. He is one of the six founding members of the AKP.

In the interview held on 17 December 2010²⁶⁴, Yakış states that he and his party to a large extent support Turkey's EU membership. He thinks that after 2002, a very critical threshold was exceeded in terms of Turkey-EU relations after the opening of the accession negotiations. He argues that starting the negotiations is important for two reasons. First, no other government could reach this point and second, there is no country which could not become an EU member after it started accession talks. Hence, he argues that the AKP has put Turkey on a way that has no return.

Responding the criticisms about the low performance in reforms during the second AKP government, Yakış stresses that there are many reasons behind the slowdown of reforms in Turkey after 2005 and the AKP should not be blamed for this. He says that the AKP aimed at reaching critical mass until 2005 and explains that his party worked with full performance to realize the necessary reforms between 2002 and 2004 referring to the promise given by the EU at the 2002 Copenhagen Summit about

²⁶⁴ To read the whole interview with Yaşar Yakış, see the Annex III/2.

giving a date to Turkey for opening the accession negotiations if only Turkey fulfills all requirements by the year 2004. He claims that once Turkey obtained a date to start the negotiations, the process got slower by nature because a more detailed and complicated work was needed then. On the other hand, there were some developments inside the Union after 2005 such as the rejection of the EU constitution in France and the Netherlands by referenda which initiated a period of thinking about the further deepening within the EU. This was followed by the domestic incidents in Turkey such as the AKP's closure case and the constitutional referendum. Yakış evaluates it as quite normal for the government that it didn't take enough care of Turkey's EU accession after 2007 since the party was struggling for not being closed down. He adds that the German chancellor Angela Merkel and French premiere Nicolas Sarkozy's assuming office also contributed the existing stagnation in the accession process because those were the leaders of the most politically effective states in the Union and they were against Turkish membership. Yakış also points out that one should not underestimate the decline in support for the EU membership in Turkish public opinion from 70 to 30-40 %.

Despite this negative picture, Yakış is quite optimistic about Turkey's progress. He states that Turkey has published a document which contains Turkey's tasks and when it can accomplish those tasks in the context of EU accession. He emphasizes that the document also presumes a 100 % harmony with the *acquis communautaire* by the end of 2013; which means that Turkey can act as if there is no frozen negotiation chapter and fulfill all the requirements because suspension of chapters is not a problem in technical sense. In other words, he thinks that the process goes on independent from suspension of negotiation chapters or whatever Merkel and Sarkozy say.

When Yakış is asked if he believes that his party's EU policy fits its ideology, he speaks prudently. He states that it fits the AKP ideology which was decided by the time party was founded. Nevertheless, that does not mean that it will always stay constant. He admits that he has doubts about it since one year while extreme right, xenophobia and Islamophobia are increasing in Europe. He thinks that there is a shift on

the EU side, not Turkish side because those are not the European values that Turkey always wanted to adopt.

Yakış believes that the accession process affected Turkish economy positively. He describes the Turkish industry as incapable of competing European industry until Özal period and compares it with today's powerful Turkish industry reminding that 40 % of Turkey's export is with the EU countries. Thus, he thinks Turkey has reached the EU's high standards. However, just like Taha Aksoy, he highlights the disadvantage of free trade agreements with third countries due to EU accession process.

Yakış agrees with his colleague Taha Aksoy on the positive effect of the EU process on Turkey's democratization accepting that there is still a way to go. He tells that he always answers those people who ask why Turkey puts so much effort if it won't enter the EU at the end: The conjuncture can change. Leaders like Merkel and Sarkozy might be replaced with pro-Turkish leaders; the role of Turkey in regions which the EU has interests such as Caucasus, Balkans or Middle East or the Turkish public opinion regarding the EU membership might change. Therefore, Turkey should use this process to tidy up its home. That means Turkey should turn into a country which respects for liberal rights and freedoms. It should transform its economy to a more transparent market economy which would minimize the corruption. The EU already has some mechanisms which were tested and became successful in order to achieve these goals and it lays them down on the negotiation table as accession criteria. We bring those mechanisms through fulfilling the criteria.

When Yakış is asked how he can differentiate the policy-making process of the EU issue in Turkey from the others, he says that there is no other policy-making process which includes all state institutions as well as NGOs and public initiatives, each having their own program to complete the tasks that they are in charge of. He also thinks that all political parties in Turkey, maybe with the exception of the Communist Party, are in favor of EU accession; however he adds that it is important to look at their conditions while supporting it.

Finally, Yakış states that Turkey's pro-active foreign policy strategy affects the relations with the EU in a positive way because Turkey needs to have good relations with the EU to have effective policies in the Caucasus, Balkans, Central Asia and Middle East. He thinks an active Turkey in those regions does not present an alternative to the EU accession process. On the contrary, it would make Turkey stronger and help the EU take Turkey more serious.

2.2. THE EU STANCE OF THE CHP

2.2.1. EU Perspective of the CHP in the Literature

Throughout its history, the CHP's EU perspective has not followed a constant line even though the party always favored the EU accession. Its EU approach can be defined as skeptical in the pre-1990s, enthusiastic between 1990 and 2004, skeptical and sometimes very skeptical between 2004 and 2007 and skeptical after the 2007 elections. Nevertheless, this dissertation is concerned with the consistency of the EU policies of the parties over time rather than how much their being pro or against the EU. Hence, such categorizations and terminology are mostly avoided.

Being the party which took the first step in the EU accession process of Turkey, in principle the CHP was always in favor of the EU membership. The Association Agreement with the EEC had been signed when the CHP was in government led by İnönü. At the time, getting involved to the EEC did not only mean benefiting the advantages of an economic community but also taking part in the US-Europe partnership in the bipolar world order of the Cold War. Therefore, at the very beginning of the EU-Turkey relations, the CHP was enthusiastic about the EU accession as the initiator of the process. However, in the 1960s, European integration was subordinated to economic integration and the EEC was working as an international organization rather than a sui generis supranational body. To what extent the authority of the states would be transferred to a supranational authority was not a question at that time so that many political parties had not developed a skeptical stance towards the European integration because of its weakening the state's power; so did the CHP.

In the 1970s, especially after the signing of the Additional Protocol, the first doubts about the EEC appeared by the deepening of the economic relations. İnönü's successor Bülent Ecevit seemed quite influenced by the popular discourse of those years "They will be the partner, we will be the market". Nevertheless, the CHP was banned from 1980 to 1992 and Ecevit was expelled from politics so that it is not possible to identify the CHP with any EU policy during the 1980s and the early 1990s.

Once the party re-opened, it took a very enthusiastic position towards the EU accession which was in parallel with its support for democratization in Turkey. Being part of the EU was believed that it would help Turkey's democratization and internalization of western values such as social state, rule of law and human rights. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deniz Baykal had played a crucial role in the entrance of Turkey into the Customs Union with the EU in 1995.²⁶⁵ Despite the election defeat in 2002, the CHP continued to support the accession process, thereby the reform packages proposed by the AKP to the TGNA. Thus, the CHP can be considered to have an overall positive attitude towards the EU in 2002-2004.

This positive attitude was replaced with a critical if not negative attitude during the discussions on the Annan Plan which was supposed to resolve the Cyprus conflict when the AKP and CHP became polarized on the issue. The following developments made the CHP gain more skeptical approach towards the EU. Meanwhile, Cyprus became an EU member without being obliged to solve the dispute with the Turkish community of the Island; whereas Turkey would always be exposed to the Cyprus question in the next EU documents concerning its candidacy. The 6 October 2004 Progress Report followed by the EU Summit on 17 December 2004, which conditioned the EU accession of Turkey to the extension of the Customs Union to the new members of the EU including Cyprus, had an effect upon the negative change in the CHP's EU stance.

Kula points out that the CHP adopted an overall anti-EU approach in its Cyprus policy like the thesis developed by Turkish nationalists against the Greek

²⁶⁵ Levent Önen, **The Republican People's Party: Organization and Ideology Between 1992 and 2007**, MA Thesis in Political Science and International Relations, Boğaziçi University, 2009, p. 79

nationalists despite supporting the reform packages and this was perceived as a duality.²⁶⁶ In his analysis of the CHP documents between 2000 and 2004 Kula remarks that some of the CHP members made confused, inconsistent, nationalist and isolationist statements which contradicted the EU membership goal of Turkey. He argues that it was contradictory for a party which was natural watchdog of the principles of Atatürk.²⁶⁷ This manner was especially observed in the CHP after the Cyprus dispute came into question as an issue of Turkey-EU relations with the Annan Plan.

After 2004, “honorable membership” was the motto of the CHP’s EU policy which meant that Turkey should have entered the EU only if its national interests were protected and it was treated on an equal basis with other members. It also strongly opposed to the alternative approaches to full membership such as privileged partnership.

In this context, Kula notes that although the CHP displayed a liberal approach in its EU-related documents and in its manner regarding the reform packages, it gave the impression as if it could not embody this approach decisively. He criticizes the CHP for being incapable of developing long-term, historically well-established and seminal EU policy which could achieve to take Turkey’s historical and current orientations into consideration. He argues that the statements of some CHP members on the EU issue showed that they adopted a nationalist and anti-EU political stance in contrast to liberalizing and broadening approach as they claimed to have.²⁶⁸ Put differently, the party became skeptical after 2004 even though the party discourse changed little in terms of its support for the EU accession.

By the opening of the accession negotiations in the late 2005, the CHP became more critical on the EU and how the AKP government handled the EU membership task. The EU issue was also a card to play against the AKP policies while in almost every document issued by the CHP regarding the EU, there was a reference to the AKP.

²⁶⁶ Onur Bilge Kula, **Türkiye’deki Siyasal Partilerin Avrupa Politikaları (European Policies of Turkish Political Parties)**, İstanbul: SODEV Yayınları, 2004, p. 57

²⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 51

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 8

Although the CHP had been a committed proponent of the EU issue and attached importance to full membership, it had no established roadmap for how to achieve the membership goal particularly during Baykal's chairmanship. Ayata explains it with the fact that the CHP has no clear world view on globalization:

The political environment became slippery once the Soviet Union was demolished, bringing a totally new world into existence. Globalization means outside forces have a highly effective impact on changing the country. In this new context, the CHP could not develop a new Turkey vision. For example, it never discussed the role of Turkey in Europe, within its own region or what kind of integration with the EU was appropriate. The CHP does not have a clear world view on globalization; there is an oscillation of the ideas in the leadership that range from xenophobic perspectives to full integration with the globe, even abolishing the borders of the nation-state.²⁶⁹

As a result of lacking an explicit view of globalization, the CHP's statements about the EU-Turkey relations are mainly far from being constructive criticisms. As it is obviously seen in party publications which are handled in Section 2.2.3 in more detail that the party takes the EU issue seriously and draws a considerable attention to this in its discourse. However, this happens mostly through criticizing the steps taken by the AKP government and it does not contribute much to the solution of the problems encountered in the accession process.

Kula mentions the 2004 Election campaign of the party as an example of this attitude. In the election bulletin of those elections the CHP assumes that Turkey should not realize the structural reforms by imposition; rather they should be as part of its essential requirements and understanding. In this sense, the party blames the AKP government for being open to the guidance of "external foci" which refer to the EU. In fact, it makes the CHP's pro-EU discourse problematic because the course of the EU accession process is imposing. Thus, the CHP's rejection of the EU conditionality contradicts with its pro-EU discourse.²⁷⁰ On the other hand, Kula also underlines that the biggest strength of the CHP comparing to the AKP in terms of their EU policy is

²⁶⁹ Ayşe Güneş Ayata, "Republican People's Party" in Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (Eds.), **Political Parties in Turkey**, London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 2002, p. 119

²⁷⁰ Onur Bilge Kula, **Türkiye'deki Siyasal Partilerin Avrupa Politikaları (European Policies of Turkish Political Parties)**, İstanbul: SODEV Yayınları, 2004, p. 58

that the considerable part of public opinion views the CHP as the party which protects the principle of secularism sincerely.²⁷¹ Consequently, the party never had to make an effort to prove its sincerity in its support for western value system and its pro-EU approach. However, it drew a quite pessimistic picture about Turkey's EU accession process after 2006 in its discourse.

The CHP seemed to take a more determined pro-EU approach at the beginning of Kılıçdaroğlu era when its 2011 election manifesto is examined because it offers a more detailed explanation of the CHP's EU stance for the new governmental term and clearly supports Turkey's EU membership. However, this stimulation in the EU policy of the CHP is quite unreliable in the sense that Kılıçdaroğlu and the party usually mention the EU together with the AKP's failures. As shown in Sigmar's article written on Kılıçdaroğlu's speech in "Turkey and its Realities" conference in Berlin, the leader complains about the ignorant attitude of EU countries for the AKP government's initiatives threatening Turkish democracy.²⁷² It is, of course, too early to say whether the CHP would take a constructive EU stance except criticizing the AKP's policy failures, but the fact that little, if not any attention has been drawn to the EU issue during the elections and its aftermath indicates that the CHP's policy focus is diverted away from the EU for the time being.

2.2.2. EU Issue in the Party Program

The CHP's party program was changed shortly after its reopening in 1994. In this program the EU accession process is mentioned only once with one paragraph. In that paragraph, the CHP states that it targets the EU membership as long as national interests are protected meticulously at each phase.²⁷³ Being prevented from maintaining political activity for twelve years because of the 1980 coup d'état, the party put a considerable emphasis on democratization of Turkey in this program and it considered

²⁷¹ Ibid., p. 55

²⁷² Journal of Turkish Weekly, "Kılıçdaroğlu Criticizes EU Countries for Remaining Silent against Ak Party Government", September 2010, <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/54436872/kilicdaroglu-criticises-eu-countries-remaining-silent-against-ak-party-government> accessed on 12.02.2012

²⁷³ The CHP Party Program, Ankara, 1994, p. 157

the goal of more democratic Turkey as overlapping with the goal of EU accession. Hence, the CHP was more willing to endorse the EU membership than the pre-1980s.

In 2008, the party adopted a new party program. It is significant for the fact that in this program the CHP's EU policy is much more visible than ever. It addresses to the relations with the EU in a separate section under "National Security and Foreign Policy" chapter. In this section the party reiterates that it supports Turkey's EU membership from the beginning. It defines Turkey's goal of full membership as a social change project, which is a natural continuation of Mustafa Kemal's modernization vision.²⁷⁴ Nonetheless, it bases its support to Turkey-EU relations on the grounds that Turkey obtains honorable full membership on equal footing with the other members, which would have respect for the founding values of Turkish Republic.

The CHP acknowledges the adoption of the EU law and the fulfillment of all the conditions which are implemented by the member states as well as Copenhagen and Maastricht criteria as long as the EU does not impose conditions, which are not demanded from other members. It clearly rejects the idea of Turkey's acquiring a privileged status which would be different from other members.²⁷⁵ It objects to the exclusion of Turkey from full membership by some member states due to geographical or cultural differences. In case of this attitude's becoming the official view of the EU on Turkish accession, it is in favor of revising Customs Union and all current commitments.²⁷⁶

On the other hand, the party program supports the acceleration and finalization of reform process in order to comply with the *acquis communautaire*. It also states that the EU should give a target date for Turkey's accession.²⁷⁷ It criticizes the EU for associating Turkey's accession process with Cyprus issue and does not approve the representation of Cyprus by Greek community in the EU.²⁷⁸ It also opposes the EU stipulations which conflict the provisions of the Lausanne Treaty.²⁷⁹ Overall, it could be

²⁷⁴ The CHP Party Program, Ankara, 2008, p. 124

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 124-125

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 129

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 125

said that in the program of 2008, there are more references to the EU-Turkey relations but those are mostly negative criticisms, which could be seen as a proof of the CHP's espousing more skeptic approach concerning the EU.

2.2.3. An Analysis of the Party Publications

There are several CHP publications regarding the EU approach of the party. Among those publications, the one entitled *Tam Üyeliğe Evet, Özel Statüye Hayır (Yes to Full Membership, No to Special Status)* is significant to shed some light on the EU policy of the CHP between 2002 and 2006 since it is comprised of all EU-related speeches of the party members in that time interval.

In those speeches, the CHP evaluates the progress in Turkey's EU accession process through expostulation of the AKP government. In addition, there is usually a situation analysis rather than a suggestion or guidance for how to conduct a better EU policy.

After the Copenhagen Summit on 12-13 December 2002, the CHP leader Deniz Baykal stated that the decisions on Turkey were unfair and he interpreted Turkey's accepting those decisions as a breaking point in the EU-Turkish relations.²⁸⁰ According to Baykal, the results of the Summit were not just for several reasons. First, Turkey was not given a date for initiating the negotiations unlike former candidate states, which started negotiations once being recognized as "candidate" by the EU. Instead of this, Turkey was compelled to a two year of waiting process. Second, this delay engendered more arduous negotiation process in 2005 because Turkey would have to compromise with the twelve new member states including Cyprus. This would automatically lay the Aegean and Cyprus issues on the negotiation table. Third, it was confirmed that Cyprus would be part of the EU without reconciliation between the Greek and Turkish communities of the Island.²⁸¹ Thus, Baykal already had a pessimistic approach to negotiation process which had not started yet.

²⁸⁰ Tam Üyeliğe Evet, Özel Statüye Hayır. CHP'nin Türkiye-AB İlişkileri Hakkındaki Görüş, Öneri ve Uyarıları (Yes to Full Membership, No to Special Status), Ankara: Yorum Yayınları, 2006, p. 7

²⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 10-34

During the preparations of the 6th reform package Baykal implicitly blamed the AKP government for using the EU harmonization process as an excuse to impose laws serving for its party interests. In his speech Baykal stated that the EU membership goal was a national issue, which should be considered as an issue over parties. Therefore, Turkey altogether with its state institutions, government, opposition, NGOs and trade unions, should have worked for fulfilling Copenhagen criteria and should have made the necessary law adjustments. For Baykal, the requirement of many arrangements in this reform package could be questioned because the EU authorities declared no request on some of them. For instance, there were arrangements for opening masjids in apartment blocks in the 6th reform package, which was out of the EU requirements. The EU neither proposed nor rejected this issue. If it had not been dealt during the discussions of the 6th reform package, it wouldn't have been withdrawn. It would have been brought to Turkey as part of the reform process.²⁸² In this context, it should be noted that the CHP eventually approved all the reform packages launched by the AKP government until 2004 despite its criticisms because the party had an enthusiastic EU approach during 2002-2004. However, it can be argued that this criticism is important in terms of reflecting the “hidden agenda” concerns of the CHP and the secularist block.

Another speech of Baykal proves this argument as he put his party apart from the others in terms of the commitment level to the EU membership goal. He covertly pointed the AKP as the party, which became a strong proponent of the EU because of the current political conditions despite formerly being an opponent. Without mentioning names, he criticized some parties for showing all the EU requirements as taken for granted.²⁸³ In this context, it is also possible to make a counter-argument for the difference between the statements given by the party members and the main party discourse of the CHP, which claims that the party is fully committed to Turkey's integration to the EU and it tries its best to reach this end.

As a response to this argument, Baykal claimed that the CHP had a clear and explicit view on the EU issue that favored the EU accession from the very beginning.

²⁸² Deniz Baykal, The CHP Group Meeting Speech in the TGNA, 3 June 2003 in **Tam Üyeliğe Evet, Özel Statüye Hayır. CHP'nin Türkiye-AB İlişkileri Hakkındaki Görüş, Öneri ve Uyarıları (Yes to Full Membership, No to Special Status)**, Ankara: Yorum Yayınları, 2006, pp. 39-44

²⁸³ Ibid., pp. 47-50

He found it no surprise that the Ankara Agreement (1963) was signed by the CHP leader İsmet İnönü, who was the prime minister then. It was the first agreement between Turkey and the EU and it formed the basis of Turkey-EU relations. He stated that the CHP had always followed a consistent EU policy from then on and many steps taken by the CHP governments in the past for modernization and democratization of Turkey were in accordance with the EU goal.²⁸⁴

The CHP's arguments about the EU reform packages adopted by the TGNA could be summed up with a few points. First, they argued that those packages should have been prepared in cooperation with them and other political parties; however the government predominantly prepared them on its own. Second, they criticized the fact that there was not a single, comprehensive package but many numbered packages. They also opposed to name those reform proposals as the EU packages. To them Turkey was going through this reform process for itself, rather than for the EU.²⁸⁵ Nevertheless, all the CHP arguments on those reform packages were addressed to the methodology used by the government while introducing them. The arguments did not give a hint about what kind of changes the CHP was willing to find in those reform packages or what kind of suggestions the party had.

While explaining his opinion about the EU issue, Onur Öymen proclaimed that Turkey, despite all the obstructions, would become a member of the EU in a moderate time. For this reason, this issue should have been seen as a national interest on which everyone should have worked in unity and solidarity.²⁸⁶ In his speech on the National Program, another CHP member, the CHP Istanbul deputy Şükrü Elekdağ justified his party's support for the EU accession by explaining the advantages of membership. Accordingly, both Turkey and the EU would benefit from the possible membership of Turkey to the EU. As being the only sample in the world which contains the values of Islam and the West at the same time in its state system, the membership of Turkey would consolidate the dialogue between the West and Islam so that it would mitigate

²⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 47-48

²⁸⁵ For the details of the CHP's views on the reform packages, see Ibid, pp. 39-114

²⁸⁶ Onur Öymen, The CHP Group Meeting Speech in the TGNA, 29 May 2003 in **Tam Üyeliğe Evet, Özel Statüye Hayır. CHP'nin Türkiye-AB İlişkileri Hakkındaki Görüş, Öneri ve Uyarıları (Yes to Full Membership, No to Special Status)**, Ankara: Yorum Yayınları, 2006, p. 68

the feeling of exclusion in Islamic world and prevent the polarization of Islam and Christianity.²⁸⁷ Elekdağ's speech can be noted for its referring to the advantages of including Turkey for the Union while explaining the reason why Turkey should become a member. The AKP also followed such a strategy for justifying Turkey's EU cause after 2007 when the accession process decelerated and the internal problems of the Union increased.

Nevertheless, a few months after Elekdağ's speech, Baykal expostulated with the AKP for justifying Turkey's EU accession with prevention of the clash of religions. To him, this way of justification would not show Turkey as part of Europe. On the contrary, it would draw the conclusion that the EU should have confirmed Turkey's membership in order to show the world that it accepted its antithesis to strengthen its relations with Islamic world. Baykal stated that this kind of theses would harm Turkey's image in front of the EU.²⁸⁸ Therefore it could be considered that in 2006, the CHP had drifted apart from the idea of using Turkey's mediation between the Christian and Muslim world in its discourse which was on the CHP agenda for a while after September 11 attacks in 2001.

When the 2004 Progress Report on Turkey was launched, Baykal made a detailed analysis of the report in his speech in the TGNA. He mentioned several controversial aspects and although the report finally confirmed that Turkey had fulfilled the Copenhagen criteria to start the accession negotiations, Baykal interpreted it as an overall negative development while it included many unacceptable statements such as open ended negotiation structure or permanent prohibition of freedom of labor. Furthermore, he criticized the Prime Minister Erdoğan for interpreting the report as "positive" and "balanced". He blamed the Prime Minister for coming to a decision very

²⁸⁷ Şükrü Elekdağ, The CHP Group Meeting Speech in the TGNA, 1 July 2003 in **Tam Üyeliğe Evet, Özel Statüye Hayır. CHP'nin Türkiye-AB İlişkileri Hakkındaki Görüş, Öneri ve Uyarıları (Yes to Full Membership, No to Special Status)**, Ankara: Yorum Yayınları, 2006, p. 89

²⁸⁸ Deniz Baykal, The CHP Group Meeting Speech in the TGNA, 19 October 2004 in **Tam Üyeliğe Evet, Özel Statüye Hayır. CHP'nin Türkiye-AB İlişkileri Hakkındaki Görüş, Öneri ve Uyarıları (Yes to Full Membership, No to Special Status)**, Ankara: Yorum Yayınları, 2006, p.138

early without scrutinizing the report while putting the country in a difficult position.²⁸⁹ Baykal also touched upon the “adultery crisis” which broke out in the summer of 2004 as a mistake of the AKP government which harmed EU-Turkey relations. He claimed that the AKP damaged the positive atmosphere in European circles about Turkey’s accession by bringing the draft on adultery to the agenda.²⁹⁰

The CHP often criticized the government for showing the 2004 Progress Report and the subsequent EU Summit on 17 December 2004 as if they were a victory in EU-Turkey relations rather than protesting them. Most of the criticisms of the CHP members on the report revolved around the articles concerning the reconciliation of Cyprus issue, the recognition of Armenian genocide, minority rights, free movement of labor and the structure and framework of the negotiations.²⁹¹ With regard to CHP’s perspective, the government endangered Turkey’s national interests and gave excessive concessions to the EU by accepting the report as it was. In this sense, the CHP had a parallel opinion to the MHP’s.

In the EU Summit on 17 December 2004, Turkey was given the date of 3 October 2005, to start the accession negotiations. Nevertheless, it was also obliged to extend the Additional Protocol to the new EU members until then. Therefore, the main issue on the Turkish political agenda concerning the EU-Turkey relations was how to extend the customs union to South Cyprus even though it was not officially recognized by Turkey. As it is observed from the CHP documents and speeches, the party became critical about the EU accession of Turkey after December 2004 and displayed a nationalist attitude concerning Cyprus issue. It can also be marked that the more the party got critical for the EU accession, the more aggressive it became towards the EU approach of the AKP government.

²⁸⁹ Deniz Baykal, The CHP Group Meeting Speech in the TGNA, 6, 12, 19, 26 October 2004 in **Tam Üyelige Evet, Özel Statüye Hayır. CHP’nin Türkiye-AB İlişkileri Hakkındaki Görüş, Öneri ve Uyarıları (Yes to Full Membership, No to Special Status)**, Ankara: Yorum Yayınları, 2006

²⁹⁰ Deniz Baykal, The CHP Group Meeting Speech in the TGNA, 19 October 2004 in **Tam Üyelige Evet, Özel Statüye Hayır. CHP’nin Türkiye-AB İlişkileri Hakkındaki Görüş, Öneri ve Uyarıları (Yes to Full Membership, No to Special Status)**, Ankara: Yorum Yayınları, 2006, p.139

²⁹¹ **Tam Üyelige Evet, Özel Statüye Hayır. CHP’nin Türkiye-AB İlişkileri Hakkındaki Görüş, Öneri ve Uyarıları (Yes to Full Membership, No to Special Status)**, Ankara: Yorum Yayınları, 2006, pp. 117-235

As a response to the CHP's perceived skeptical image regarding the EU issue, the CHP Istanbul deputies Onur Öymen and Şükrü Elekdağ expressed their discontent about the fact that the CHP was shown as if it were against the EU membership. They claimed that the mass media deliberately reflected their attitude towards the EU completely wrong although the CHP had a very consistent pro-EU policy from the beginning. They stated that they published the book *Tam Üyeliğe Evet, Özel Statüye Hayır* (Yes to Full Membership, No to Special Status) as a response to those allegations of media and if one could still think that they were against the EU, then there should have been a malevolence.²⁹² However, the book was more likely to be an attempt for justifying the reasons of their skepticism than proving their enthusiasm.

According to the CHP, the documents issued by the EU Council on 17 December 2004 and the Negotiation Framework on 3 October 2005 include many controversial articles, which the party defines as red lines of Turkey. Those red lines are summarized as follows:

- Negotiations are open-ended, which means that their outcome is not guaranteed beforehand. (Article 23)
- The EU laid down the condition of absorption capacity for the new candidate states. (Article 5)
- The extension of Additional Protocol to the new members (which would have meant to recognize Greek Cypriot Government) (Article 19)
- The border conflicts with neighboring states can be brought under the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. (Article 20)
- There could be taken permanent protective measures limiting free movement of people, regional development funds and agricultural subventions. (Article 23)
- Turkey would be evaluated specially for the Schengen process which allows entrance into and exit from the EU countries without visa. (Article 15)

²⁹² **Tam Üyeliğe Evet, Özel Statüye Hayır. CHP'nin Türkiye-AB İlişkileri Hakkındaki Görüş, Öneri ve Uyarıları** (Yes to Full Membership, No to Special Status), Ankara: Yorum Yayınları, 2006, p. 531

- The Commission might, on its own initiative or on the request of the one third of the member states, propose the suspension of negotiations and the negotiations can be suspended by a qualified majority. (Article 23)

-The financial aspects of the accession of Turkey will be handled after 2014 once the new EU budget comes into effect. (Article 23)

- The negotiations can only be concluded after 2014 when the financial framework is formed and the financial reforms are done. (Article 23)

- “If Turkey is not in a position to assume in full all the obligations of membership it must be ensured that Turkey is fully anchored in the European structures through the strongest possible bond.” This means instead of full membership, special status is possible. (Article 23)²⁹³

The party has also started to lose its optimism about Turkey’s EU membership prospect after 2005. Şükrü Elekdağ claimed that there was no possibility of being a full member for Turkey in the near future. He argued that the West European leaders of the EU did not want to tell it explicitly at this phase for two reasons: First they didn’t want to discourage Turkey’s membership prospect so as to accustom and convince Turkey to the idea of privileged partnership. Second, the EU was trying to get as much as it could about the issues related to Armenia, Cyprus, and the Aegean Sea in the direction of changing the Lausanne Treaty.²⁹⁴ Elekdağ suggested resettling the EU-Turkey relations because in his opinion, Turkey would never achieve to be a member of the EU if the membership target remained vague and the current negotiation method was applied. According to Elekdağ, Turkey should have asked for an official reply about whether it would get the membership status when it met the Copenhagen criteria completely and perfectly. As a condition, Turkey should have demanded for adapting the negotiation method to the EU standards and should have categorized the EU issues in two groups:

²⁹³ To read the original documents which the CHP refers to, see Council of the European Union, **Presidency Conclusions**, Brussels, 16-17 December 2004
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/83201.pdf
accessed on 03.05.2009

and Council of the European Union, **Negotiating Framework**, Luxembourg, 3 October 2005
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/st20002_05_tr_framedoc_en.pdf
accessed on 03.05.2009

²⁹⁴ Şükrü Elekdağ, The CHP Group Meeting Speech in the TGNA, **Tam Üyelğe Evet, Özel Statüye Hayır. CHP’nin Türkiye-AB İlişkileri Hakkındaki Görüş, Öneri ve Uyarıları (Yes to Full Membership, No to Special Status)**, Ankara: Yorum Yayınları, 2006, p. 617

First group would include the issues related to the *acquis* such as democracy, human rights, rule of law as well as social, economic and environmental issues. Second group would include the issues which were out of the *acquis* and those imposed to Turkey such as Cyprus or the Aegean disputes.²⁹⁵

When the elections bulletins of the CHP are examined, it is observed that the party supports Turkey's accession to the EU; however it believes that the membership goal could only be achieved under the leadership of the CHP. In 1995 election bulletin, the CHP pledges to lead Turkey to full membership if it comes into power. It defines integrating the EU as sharing the western democratic values, technology and information society accumulation as well as a social democracy project. It views the adoption of Customs Union as a significant step on the way to full membership and guarantees to work thoroughly to this end.²⁹⁶ In 1999 election bulletin, the party assumes that it would achieve the goal of EU membership while pursuing national interests since it could take the advantage of having social democrat governments in Europe at the time.²⁹⁷

When 2002 election bulletin is skimmed through, the impact of September 11 attacks can be easily noticed. In this bulletin, the CHP reiterates its full commitment to the EU membership goal and comes up with the idea that Turkey represents a role model for many countries from Atlantic to China by reconciling Islam with a secular state, pluralist democracy, universal human rights and the market economy. In this respect, it argues that a Turkey which complies with Copenhagen criteria can play a crucial role as a bridge of cultures and compromise between the Islamic world and the EU.

In the 2002 Bulletin, the CHP declares its roadmap for the EU accession. According to this:

- Turkey's EU membership is a social change project.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 629-630

²⁹⁶ The CHP Election Bulletin, 1995

²⁹⁷ The CHP Election Bulletin, 1999

- The CHP, basing on equal footing, aims to meet the economic and political criteria in order to bring Turkey to the level of contemporary civilization.
- The right to the EU membership is based on agreements. We are part of Europe with our history and geography. An EU with Turkey would consolidate and deepen its social peace and political stability. The CHP approaches the EU issue with this consciousness.
- The CHP is determined to maintain the EU accession process by protecting Turkish identity, values and honor.
- Within the framework of this susceptibility, the CHP would carry Turkey into the EU.
- Turkey is at the phase of starting the accession negotiations. The CHP would work determinedly to this end.
- The CHP would ensure the implementation of the adjustment laws. In this regard, it would give the priority to carry out the National Program.
- The CHP would monitor the EU in order to check whether it meets its obligations towards Turkey and would pursue Turkey's interests concerning the efforts for an EU army.
- The CHP would aim the fulfillment of the obligations undertaken by the EU regarding the Customs Union.
- The CHP would insist on making similar agreements with the countries which had signed preferential trade agreements with the EU.²⁹⁸

As understood along these lines, the CHP was fully committed to Turkey's EU membership goal and seemed to internalize the EU norms and values by perceiving the EU accession as a social change project while entering the 2002 general elections. It would prove its determination by cooperating with the AKP government for the reforms in 2002-2004 despite its election defeat.

During the preparations of the 2004 local elections, the CHP published a comprehensive document about its policies. This document gives an idea about the CHP's approach to main policy issues and states that Turkey's accession process cannot

²⁹⁸ The CHP Election Bulletin, 2002

be related to the CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy) and Cyprus issue. Furthermore, it refers to the “failures” of the AKP government as the following:

- The AKP did not react to the reconciliation of Cyprus dispute’s being laid down as a condition for Turkey to start the EU accession negotiations.
- The AKP’s goal of EU accession is a fake attempt.
- The AKP is hypocritical. Being a member of the EU, being European really means to defend your rights, laws, status and equality in global context.
- The government failed to protect our national interests and defend the rights of Turkey.
- Turkey cannot develop its relations with the EU by a submissive party and its cadres which had ideologically not digested the EU membership.
- The AKP used to be against the EU in the past, it had declared the EU as an infidel organization and accepted as a challenge to Turkey. Then, when it came to power, they agreed on giving in whatever the EU wished and they expected the public to perceive it as a modern, democratic and western attitude. However, the public is not hungry for this bluff anymore and it cannot be cheated again.
- The government failed to start the negotiations in 2003 and it is ambiguous whether it would be discussed again by the end of 2004.
- The AKP had no effect on the conservative parties in Europe which were against Turkey’s membership.
- In contrary, the CHP contacted the socialist parties intimately and played substantial role in their support for Turkey’s EU membership.²⁹⁹

When the CHP’s election bulletins of 2002 and 2004 are compared, it is realized that there is a shift in its optimistic EU perception to a more pessimistic one. This heralds the beginning of a new era in the party’s EU policy as well since it increased the dose of its criticism against the AKP government after 2004 and became considerably critical after the late 2006.

²⁹⁹ Türkiye’nin Aydınlık Yüzü: CHP. 2004 Yerel Yönetim Seçimleri (Light Face of Turkey: CHP 2004 Local Elections), Ankara: CHP Head Office Publishing, 2004, p. 107

The developments in 2004-2006 regarding the EU-Turkey relations caused the party to take a prominently critical EU approach. In the 2007 Election Bulletin, the CHP does not mention Turkey's role as a bridge between Islamic world and the EU. It might also be the result of the changing conjuncture and the impact of September 11 incidents had cooled down at the time. As it is also stated in the report presented to the CHP Party Assembly, in this bulletin the AKP gets a lot of flak from the CHP for its EU policy especially the concessions given in Cyprus issue and the submissive approval of 2004 progress report in December 2004 EU summit despite its containing several negative points for Turkey, mostly the derogations in free movement of people, CAP and regional funds. One of the major criticisms of the party is the AKP's signing the document related to the extension of Additional Protocol, which could mean the recognition of Cyprus in the next years.³⁰⁰ The CHP emphasizes that it aims a full membership to the EU, which has respect for unitary, secular, nation-state character of Turkey. It states that it would not accept the conditions, which are not natural part of the integration process or offers such a special status instead of full membership and it would do everything to make the necessary reforms for the accession.³⁰¹ Thus, the party gave the impression that it was against the AKP style of EU integration rather than Turkey's EU integration. After the 2007 elections, the EU issue was mostly referred together with the criticisms of the AKP in the CHP publications.

The method followed by the AKP government during the negotiation process under the leadership of the Chief Negotiator Ali Babacan was fiercely criticized by the party for excluding the main opposition party along with the other parties from the process. He was also blamed for his absence as the Minister of Foreign Affairs since 11 months in the important platforms where national interests were put on the table. The CHP continuously demanded his being dismissed until the position of Chief Negotiator was transferred to Egemen Bağış in 2009.³⁰² In its statement in the report, which was

³⁰⁰ The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, 12 June 2009 Ankara, p. 200, 203-204

³⁰¹ The CHP Election Bulletin, 2007 and The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, 5 December 2007 Ankara, p. 14

³⁰² The CHP stressed on their reluctance to Ali Babacan's position as the Foreign Minister and Chief Negotiator of Turkey in several reports. They found him ineffective and incapable of defending Turkey's national interests in international platforms. See The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, 25 December 2008, Ankara, p. 17

presented to the party assembly in 2008, the CHP accuses of the AKP for hiding the national position documents submitted to the EU unlike any other member or candidate state. The CHP argues that AKP's justifying itself by showing it as the desire of the EU is unreasonable since Croatia, Slovenia or current member states have all shared those documents with the parties in opposition and opened their negotiation strategy to the contribution of all parties. The party states that if the EU desires to keep the negotiation process confidential between the government and itself, then the AKP should resist such an inconvenient request.³⁰³ It claims that it is not only perceived inconvenient by them but also by some high level state institutions. For example, the Presidents Commission of the Supreme Court (Yargıtay Başkanlar Kurulu) published a report, which condemns the AKP government for presenting the Draft Justice Reform Strategy directly to the EU officials without consulting or informing them.³⁰⁴

In 2008 when the closure case of the AKP was on the agenda, the foremost EU officials emphasized that it would harm the democratization in Turkey; thereby affecting the EU process. The CHP interpreted it as the EU was confused because Turkey had become a country having serious fundamental existence problems in the eyes of the world with secularism debates and the AKP was responsible for this confusion.³⁰⁵ Thus, the party blamed the AKP for displaying a wrong image of Turkey for the EU countries rather than opposing the closure case.

The judicial independence is another issue which is often emphasized by the CHP. It claims that the EU and the AKP have different positions towards the issue although the AKP refers to the EU for the modifications it wishes to make. The EU requires altering the structure of the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors, excluding The Justice Minister and his Undersecretary from the Council and selecting the new judges by the Council instead of Ministry of Justice. The CHP asserts that if the AKP government had really taken the relations with the EU serious, then it would have met those demands. Instead, the AKP shows the things that are never mentioned by the EU

³⁰³ The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, Ankara, 3 July 2008, pp. 31-32 and 36-37

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 47

³⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 33-34

and confuses the public through misinformation.³⁰⁶ In a way, the CHP claimed that the government created artificial agenda to implement its own policies by using EU conditionality as a tool.

The CHP has frequently called the AKP for collaboration if it were really committed to the EU process in certain issues. Those issues are: the abolishment of legislative immunities except the deputies' freedom of speech³⁰⁷, the constitutional amendments in order to prevent the politicization of the judiciary, the removal of justice minister and his undersecretary from the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors, the formation of autonomous tax institutions.³⁰⁸

On the other hand, the CHP's criticisms about the AKP carried on revolving around the idea that the AKP is not sincere in its commitment to the EU because most of the AKP members were against the EU membership in the past. The CHP usually referred to the past speeches of the AKP members as a proof. Abdullah Gül was often at the focus of those criticisms. During the 2007 presidential elections, the CHP indicated that Abdullah Gül was confused about the fundamental principles of the Republic so that he was not a suitable candidate for presidency. The party illustrated it with the interview which was given by Abdullah Gül to the German newspaper, *Die Welt*, where he pledges the Turkish State accepted to the EU as full member would be a transparent, democratic, Islamic state. Again after the signing of the 17 December 2004 document with the EU, Gül denied the claims of derogations and stated that the CHP interpreted the document wrong. However afterwards, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered a note in order not to accept the derogations.³⁰⁹ As it is felt in this statement, the party often tended to view the government deprived of necessary talent, capability and determination to achieve Turkey's EU goal.

³⁰⁶ The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, Ankara, 6 August 2009, p. 25

³⁰⁷ The CHP has been emphasizing on the political immunity issue since some years. When looked at The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly on 3 October 2007, p. 23, it could also be seen.

³⁰⁸ The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, Ankara, 6 August 2009, p. 29

³⁰⁹ The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, Ankara, 3 October 2007, pp. 13-15

The CHP highlighted the arrangements concerning trial of soldiers in civil courts instead of military courts as a proof of the AKP government's misusing the EU process to realize its own political demands. It assumed that the EU had no demand on this issue and exemplified his assumption by going through the relevant articles of the 2003 Accession Partnership Document, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 Progress Reports.³¹⁰ In that sense, the party once more blamed the government for using the EU accession to realize its own plans and legitimize them in public's eye.

In 2009 after evaluating the results of the European Parliament elections, the CHP drew some conclusions about what Turkey's EU policy should have been. The party stated that hostility of Turkey was used as a political method to pull votes during the election campaigns by the European political parties. Therefore Turkey should have carried out all the necessary reforms and fulfilled its responsibilities as if it would have become an EU member soon. On the other hand, Turkey should have carried out the negotiations by keeping it in mind that such a membership would have not become true

³¹⁰ The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, Ankara, 6 August 2009, pp. 18-19

The CHP examines the articles related to the issue in those EU documents in its report:

"- 2003 yılı Katılım Ortaklığı Belgesinde "Milli Güvenlik Kuruluyla" ilgili olarak değerlendirme yapılmıştır ve konumuzla hiçbir ilgisi yoktur. Milli Güvenlik Kuruluyla ilgili değişikliğin, Milli Güvenlik Kuruluna bir sivil Genel Sekreter seçilmesinin uygun olacağını Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi olarak ilk biz söyledik. O konudaki atılımlara ilk biz öncülük yaptık. Bunlar oralarda konuşuldu. Bunlar haklı, makul, doğal değerlendirilmesi gereken konulardı. Bunlar halledildi.

- 2004 yılı İlerleme Raporu "yargı bağımsızlığının sağlanmasını" istiyor. Genel yargı bağımsızlığının. Sivillerin askeri yargıda yargılanmasından vazgeçilmesi yönündeki bazı yasal değişikliklerden söz ediyor ki, bu zaten hepimizin desteklediği ve bu son yasada da gerçekleştirilmiş olan husustur. Sivillerin askeri mahkemede değil, sivil mahkemelerde yargılanması bizimde ta başından beri üstünde durduğumuz bir noktadır. O doğrultudaki girişimleri destekledik. Bu yasanın içinde bunu düzenlenen maddeyi de destekledik. Zaten onu yapıyoruz diyerek bunu getirdiler. Ama arkasından öbürünü de oraya yerleştirmeye çalıştılar. Mahkemelerin özellikle adli yargı ve savunma hakkı alanlarında Avrupa standartlarına uydurulmasını tavsiye ediyor. Ama askerler sivil mahkemelerde yargılansın diye hiçbir talep yapmıyor.

- 2005 yılı İlerleme Raporunda daha çok "askeri harcamaların meclis tarafından denetlenmesinden" söz ediliyor. "Milli güvenlik kurulunda" yapılan değişikliklerden söz açılıyor.

- 2006 yılı İlerleme Raporunda "askerlerle birlikte bir suçta ortak olmadıkça sivillerin sivil mahkemelerde yargılanacağına" dair hüküm memnuniyetle karşılanıyor. "Askeri mahkemelerde mahkum edilenlerin yeniden yargılanma hakkına kavuşturulması" da olumlu değerlendiriliyor. 2006'daki tablo budur.

- 2007 ve 2008 yılı İlerleme Raporlarında "askerlerin bazı konularda görüş bildirmelerinden rahatsızlık duyulduğu" ifade ediliyor. Askeri mahkemelerden hiçbir şekilde söz açılmıyor."

in the foreseeable future.³¹¹ This statement is important in the sense that it reflects the cautious and skeptical character of the CHP in its EU policy.

After the approval of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU appointed the Prime Minister of Belgium, Herman van Rompuy as its first president, who is known as being against Turkey's membership. The CHP interpreted this new development as the European Parliament had no membership perspective of Turkey and even some politicians who seemed to favor Turkish accession were not reliable. Hence, the CHP called Turkey to identify its real companions in the EU.³¹²

In October 2009, in its report the CHP concludes its party opinion on the EU-Turkey relations in a paragraph:

“We are in a paradoxical situation. There is no country in the world which desires the EU membership despite the government's submissiveness and using the process for its own political interests. There is no country like us which is this much unwanted by the EU as well. That's a really degrading situation...”³¹³

When the Reports in February and April 2010 are examined, it could be seen that those reports mostly inform about the developments within the EU concerning Turkey's accession. They both emphasize on the increasing reluctance in the Member States for Turkey's joining the EU and the AKP's being incapable of managing the negotiation process.³¹⁴ In the Report of May 2010, the CHP makes a comprehensive analysis of the course of relations between the EU and Turkey in the last years of the AKP government. It argues that the accession negotiations are de facto suspended. According to the party, a possible EU membership would be advantageous for Turkey, but even more advantageous for the EU. The CHP views four risky points for the EU countries to hesitate accepting Turkey to the Union: geography, population, regional

³¹¹ The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, Ankara, 12 June 2009, p. 201

³¹² The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, Ankara, 5 December 2009

³¹³ The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, Ankara, 7 October 2009, p. 5

³¹⁴ The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, Ankara, 5 February 2010 and The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, Ankara, 1 April 2010

disparities in the country in terms of economic development, religious and cultural differences. It claims that the EU would indeed gain a lot from the accession of Turkey, particularly from its geopolitical position. The report criticizes the AKP for applying small country model in the accession talks with the Union. The party states that this model was applied by the ex-Soviet countries during their accession process; however Turkey is not comparable with these countries because they were not surrounded by external demands like Turkey in their integration process. The party also blames the AKP for continuing the negotiations without consulting other parties and without taking the national interests into account.³¹⁵ Consequently, the report emphasizes the full support and will of the party for Turkey's EU membership on an equal footing with member states and it assumes that Turkey cannot become an EU member with the policies of incumbent AKP government.

In the TGNA group meeting of the CHP on 19 October 2010, Kılıçdaroğlu criticized the AKP for realizing only the reforms which suit their interests. Addressing the EU documents and progress reports, he claimed that the AKP did no progress on liberalizing the judiciary in Turkey although it identifies itself as committed pro-EU party.³¹⁶ On 23 November 2010, Kılıçdaroğlu stressed on his same argument in his speech about the university students, who were sentenced to fifteen months of imprisonment after they protested against the Prime Minister Erdoğan.³¹⁷ In the TGNA group meetings of the CHP in 2011, mostly the government was criticized for pursuing its own political interests especially by violating the freedom of speech and the EU's ignoring the efforts of the AKP to eliminate its dissidents.

In the CHP's 2011 Election Bulletin, a strong emphasis is made on the desire of the party to bring the EU standards to different sectors in Turkey. The party states that Turkish EU accession process has almost stopped because of the mistakes of the AKP government and the behavior of the conservative parties within the Union. In this regard, the CHP views the EU membership as a social transformation project which would help democratization and economic development in Turkey and it argues that

³¹⁵ The Report of Central Administrative Board presented to the CHP Party Assembly, Ankara, 22-23 May 2010, pp. 70-73 and p. 78

³¹⁶ Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, The CHP Group Meeting in the TGNA, 19 October 2010

³¹⁷ Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, The CHP Group Meeting in the TGNA, 23 November 2010

only the cooperation of the CHP with other European social democrat parties, which have universalism in their essence, can bring Turkey to happy end in this process. The party promises to fasten the reforms; work for lifting the restrictions applied by the Union in areas of free movement, agriculture and regional development; prevent the association of Turkish membership with Cyprus issue and target a membership basing on equal conditions with other members in case it comes to government.³¹⁸ Hence, the party emphasized that it was committed to Turkey's EU cause if it were to have the chance to form the government.

If the election bulletins of 2007 and 2011 are compared, the one in 2011 suggests more constructive steps to take in Turkey's EU cause. When taken a glance at the CHP publications, decreasing popularity of the EU issue, particularly towards the last years of the 23rd term, seems to be shifted to a more active EU policy at the beginning of the 24th term of the TGNA. Nevertheless, no significant attempt so far made by the party in terms of the EU issue although the negotiation process seems to be deadlocked. Instead, the party continued to criticize the AKP government for its EU policy.

2.2.4. Interview with Onur Öymen

Onur Öymen was a member of the Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee as the representative of the CHP during the 22nd and 23rd terms of the TGNA. He is a Ph.D in political science and the author of four books. He started his political career in the CHP after he served in several diplomatic missions including being an ambassador to Denmark and Germany. He became the vice-chairman of the CHP in 2003. During his parliamentary mandate, he has been one of the foremost figures of the party, particularly in issues concerning the EU and Cyprus.

In his interview held in the TGNA on 16 December 2010, he mentions that both he and his party give full support for the EU membership as long as Turkey enters the Union on an equal footing with other members.

³¹⁸ The CHP Election Bulletin, 2011, pp. 123-125

Öymen argues that Turkey has made a big progress in terms of harmonization of the *acquis*; however it has retrogressed in practice. He clarifies what he means by practice: “For instance in terms of the EU values, Copenhagen criteria, gender equality, freedom of the press, judicial independence and democracy, we lagged behind.”

Öymen states that his party is a social democratic party based on Atatürk’s principles and its value system fits European value system. Departing from this point, he finds his party’s ideology consistent with its EU policy and he reminds that Ankara Agreement was signed by İsmet İnönü, who was the chairman of the CHP at that time.

He believes that the EU accession process, particularly the Customs Union has contributed Turkish industry; increased the competition power; expanded the export of industrial products. On the other hand, it has not been beneficial for the service sector and created disadvantages for Turkey in free trade agreements. It could not ease Turkey’s EU accession as well. In this sense Öymen thinks that the EU process has had an overall negative impact despite some positive sides since it has not helped Turkey reach its ultimate goal of accession.

For the issue of democratization, Öymen has a rather pessimistic view. He claims that the EU accession process has not contributed democratization at all because Turkey has taken many steps which do not comply with the EU norms even though it has fulfilled the reform process on the legal basis. Öymen says that it is not possible to become European with altering the legislation unless the European value system is internalized.

Öymen explains that Turkey cannot enter the Union by 2023 or even 2033 when the EU does not change its policy. At the moment there is no easing atmosphere in Europe for Turkey’s membership. European countries led by France have made the membership legislation more difficult and brought the referendum requirement. Thus, his future prospect regarding Turkey’s EU accession is quite pessimistic.

2.3. THE EU STANCE OF THE MHP

2.3.1. EU Perspective of the MHP in the Literature

Retrospectively, Türkeş' MHP took a cautious attitude towards the relations with Europe by considering the historical relations with the members of the Union and the party ideology. The fact that Türkeş and the MHP ideologically view Turkey outside the western civilization played role in the opposition of the party to the EEC, and later, the EU membership of Turkey.

However, during the 1990s the party began to support the EU membership, if not unconditionally, since the EU accession had already become a state policy. Türkeş maintained his skeptical approach parallel to security and threat perceptions of his ideology. In particular, the support given by European states to the terrorist groups such as the PKK as well as the protection and organization of Turkish population living in Europe were the main concerns of Türkeş.³¹⁹ After 1999 the MHP has never objected the EU membership in principle because it justified it as a national goal. The party traced the origins of the EU accession goal back to the early Republican era of 1920-30s when Mustafa Kemal initiated modernization period in Turkey. Westernization was identified with modernization rather than imitating the Western values at the expense of national values. Reaching to the western civilization level was considered as a state policy. In this respect, Turkey's possible EU membership would be a natural continuation of the state policy of orienting towards the West or the modern societal level so that the MHP as a strong supporter of the traditional state policies had no opposition to the EU accession.

When the party program and publications are scrutinized, at least till the beginning of the 2000s the MHP takes an overall positive stance for Turkey's full membership to EU. However, it sets bounds to its positive approach by adding that it supports the EU accession of Turkey to the extent that the membership doesn't mean challenging absolute sovereignty of Turkish nation-state.

³¹⁹ Gül Arıkan Akdağ, "Alparslan Türkeş" in Ali Faik Demir, **Türk Dış Politikasında Liderler (Leaders in Turkish Foreign Policy)**, İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, May 2007, p. 495

Once Turkey took the first step by signing Ankara Agreement in 1963, Republican Peasants Nation Party (currently called the MHP) fully supported the project because it would have consolidated the position of Turkey on the western side during the Cold War. In the meantime, the party started to be critical on the EU once the EU conditionality became visible in EU-Turkey relations in the 1970s by the launch of the Additional Protocol.

The 1980s started with a military coup which brought Turkish political life to a standstill. The political parties were closed down till 1983 which caused a serious interruption to democracy. In such an environment, the EU-Turkey relations were sort of excluded from the political agenda and the relations were suspended for a while. However, in 1986, the normalization process in relations between the EU and Turkey took place which, in turn, caused the MHP to support the decision of government to resume the frozen relations between Turkey and the EU and to continue the reform process for the harmonization of the *acquis*.³²⁰

As mentioned in Chapter 4 while the history of the MHP was evaluated, the MHP went through serious turbulences in itself during the 1990s. Accompanied with the national and international conjuncture in politics, this would lead up to a change in the party's EU perspective and eventually caused a shift towards a more euro-skeptic approach. One of the indicators of the MHP's becoming more euro-skeptic could be observed in its attitude toward Turkey's joining Customs Union. The MHP opposed the Customs Union Agreement and interpreted it as a tool which was supposed to be used in internal politics by the government in the approaching elections.³²¹ Also through the end of the 1990s, the MHP claimed that the EU had gained economic privileges by this agreement and it accused the Customs Union Agreement of giving rise to the economic crisis and huge foreign trade debts.³²² It should also be reminded that especially after in

³²⁰ Esra Çayhan, **Dünden Bugüne Türkiye Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri ve Siyasal Partilerin Konuya Bakışı (Turkey-EU Relations and the Positions of Political Parties on the Subject)**, İstanbul: Boyut Yayınları, 1997

³²¹ Devlet Bahçeli, **Gündemi Oluşturan Sorunlar ve MHP (Problems on the Agenda and the MHP)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 1999, p. 149

³²² Esra Çayhan, **Dünden Bugüne Türkiye Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri ve Siyasal Partilerin Konuya Bakışı (Turkey-EU Relations and the Positions of Political Parties on the Subject)**, İstanbul: Boyut Yayınları, 1997

the mid-1990s there was a rise in nationalist sentiments of the public directly proportional to the increase in the number of terrorist incidents in Southeast Anatolia which gave the MHP a chance for increasing its vote share by using its nationalist discourse.

It worked indeed because the party became part of the coalition government by the 1999 elections. However, the party began to support the accession process after forming the government as the cost of changing the state policy was more than the cost of complying with it. The MHP was a government partner when the EU recognized Turkey as a candidate state on equal footing with other potential candidates at Helsinki Summit. This late decision also meant the acceleration of the reform process. Being coalition member during 1999-2002, the MHP sometimes contradicted with its coalition partners, namely the ANAP and the DSP which were in favor of the EU accession and the adjustment of reforms. The MHP's opposition was derived from some of the planned reforms' involving unacceptable changes for the party such as allowing education in mother tongue or abolishing capital punishment. The party was against any enforcement to Turkish politics coming from the EU and tended to visualize it as an external interference to country's domestic affairs. For instance, an MHP deputy Müjdat Kayayerli defended the EU membership for sending 87 members to the European Parliament and protecting the Turkish minority in Western Trace more effectively; whereas he criticized the EU for implementing double standards on Turkey in terms of human rights issue in a speech he made in the TGNA in the aftermath of the Helsinki Summit.³²³ At this point, the MHP had a parallel EU perspective to the chief army officers and Turkish military institutions.³²⁴ Thus, the party was in favor of the EU membership to the extent that it does not harm Turkey's national interests. On the other hand, despite its opposition in its discourse, the party did not obstruct any reform bill regarding the EU accession during the time it remained in government.

³²³ M. Cüneyt Yenigün, **Soğuk Savaş Sonrasında TBMM ve Dış Politika. Belgeler-Yorumlar (The TGNA after Cold War and Foreign Policy. Documents-Comments)**, Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım, April 2004, p. 515

³²⁴ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, **Devlet ve Kuzgun. 1990'lardan 2000'lere MHP (State and Raven. The MHP from the 1990s till 2000s)**, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007, p. 498

Kula notes that during 2002-2004, the MHP evaluated the EU membership as a result of Turkey's historical orientation and common values; and supported it. Nevertheless, the party displayed the perspective of the EU on Turkey in a firm manner which gave the feeling that it was against the EU in principle. He explains the main objection to the EU in the MHP's EU policy with its discourse which was based on Turkish nationalism and the inalienability of national sovereignty.³²⁵ In fact, during 2002-2004 the MHP's EU policy can still be considered as moderate comparing to post-2004 period because at the time there was no big threat against national interests of Turkey was perceived.

The more the EU pushed Turkey to reform its national law to meet the political criteria of Copenhagen Summit 1993, the more euro-skeptic the MHP became. Those criteria were indeed the basic conditions for membership. Nevertheless they included critical changes in the minority and human rights which were perceived as a threat to Turkey's territorial integrity by the party. For example, the MHP deputy Sazak blamed the EU for looking at secessionists as "freedom fighters" in a speech he made in the parliament.³²⁶ In addition, the EU started to address some foreign policy issues such as Cyprus and Aegean disputes in its progress reports.³²⁷ The MHP did not block the

³²⁵ Onur Bilge Kula, **Türkiye'deki Siyasal Partilerin Avrupa Politikaları (European Policies of Turkish Political Parties)**, İstanbul: SODEV Yayınları, 2004, p. 8

³²⁶ M. Cüneyt Yenigün, **Soğuk Savaş Sonrasında TBMM ve Dış Politika. Belgeler-Yorumlar (The TGNA after Cold War and Foreign Policy. Documents-Comments)**, Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım, April 2004, p. 560

³²⁷ Articles related to Aegean and Cyprus Dispute can be found in European Commission's Country Progress Reports on Turkey after 1999. For further information see

1999 Progress Report: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/1999/turkey_en.pdf
accessed on 08.10.2008

2000 Progress Report: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2000/tu_en.pdf
accessed on 08.10.2008

2001 Progress Report:
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2001/tu_en.pdf
accessed on 09.10.2008

2002 Progress Report:
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2002/tu_en.pdf
accessed on 09.10.2008

2003 Progress Report:
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2003/rr_tk_final_en.pdf
accessed on 09.10.2008

2004 Progress Report:
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2004/rr_tr_2004_en.pdf
accessed on 09.10.2008

2005 Enlargement Strategy Paper:

reform process but during the adoption of thirty four constitutional amendments, it alienated itself from the EU and criticized the Union for underestimating the internal dynamics of Turkey and intervening into sovereignty of the country.³²⁸ Given that the MHP ideologically favors the absolute power of nation-state, it was reluctant to support any change which might have weakened the state supremacy.

During 2002-2007, the MHP was not represented in the Parliament due to the fact that it couldn't exceed the election threshold. This gave the opportunity to oppose the EU enforcements more strictly especially after the December 2004 EU Council. When the AKP interpreted the EU's decision on opening accession negotiations with Turkey on October 3, 2005 as a political success, the MHP criticized the AKP for fulfilling the EU's demands blindly.³²⁹ Furthermore, it tended to review the EU-Turkey relations as a zero-sum game where Turkey was subjected to never-ending demands and enforcements by the EU in return for nothing. In this regard, the EU's good intention

http://eurex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexplus!prod!CELEXnumdoc&lg=en&numdoc=505DC0561

accessed on 09.10.2008

2005 Progress Report:

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2005/package/sec_1426_final_progress_report_tr_en.pdf

accessed on 09.10.2008

2006 Progress Report:

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2006/nov/tr_sec_1390_en.pdf

accessed on 10.10.2008

2007 Progress Report:

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2007/nov/turkey_progress_reports_en.pdf

accessed on 10.10.2008

2008 Progress Report:

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/keydocuments/reports_nov_2008/turkey_progress_report_en.pdf

accessed on 21.01.2009

2009 Progress Report:

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2009/tr_rapport_2009_en.pdf

accessed on 17.10.2009

2010 Progress Report:

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/tr_rapport_2010_en.pdf

accessed on 12.10.2010

2011 Progress Report:

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2011/package/tr_rapport_2011_en.pdf

accessed on 15.10.2011

³²⁸ Ayşe Güneş-Ayata, "From Euro-skepticism to Turkey-skepticism: Changing Political Attitudes on the European Union in Turkey", **Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans**, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2003, p. 212 in Eda Bektaş, "Turkish Political Parties: EU integration Process", **Jean Monnet Workshop**, Koç University, 15-16 May 2009

³²⁹ Devlet Bahçeli, **Başkent Ankara Mitingi (Capital Ankara Meeting)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2 October 2005

and fairness was questioned as well. The suspension of negotiations in eight chapters in 2006 set the stage for more withering criticisms by the party. It identified the whole EU project as Turkey's destruction project under the guise of democratization so that Turkey should have stopped giving concessions.³³⁰ Hence, it is noted that the party started to adopt a negative EU approach after 2006 although it frequently stated that it was not against the membership as long as Turkey's national interests are protected. In this context, it is also questionable where the boundaries of the protection of national interests start and end because supporting the EU membership requires accepting to give up some powers of the sovereign state to the Union and this makes taking a pro-EU stance quite irreconcilable with a pure nationalist discourse.

After the 2007 elections, the MHP has taken an overall negative approach to the EU integration as it has equated full membership to losing national sovereignty for Turkey under the current circumstances. As Aktar mentions, although the MHP identifies itself with a pro-EU approach, the position it took towards some key reform issues such as Article 301 has displayed a euro-reject approach.³³¹ During 2007-2011, the EU has not been one of the popular issues on the MHP's agenda. The MHP has made very limited reference to the EU issues since the pace of accession process has obviously decelerated and there were other internal and external developments which distracted the policy concerns of parties.

Although the MHP has reiterated its desire to continue accession talks and be a member of the EU in its 2011 election manifesto, it still draws a complete negative picture on the course of EU-Turkey relations. It is also noticed that the party does not see Turkey as obliged to enter the EU at any rate.

³³⁰ MHP Araştırma ve Geliştirme Merkezi (MHP Research and Development Center), **2006 Yılı İlerleme Raporu ve Strateji Belgesi (2006 Progress Report and Strategy Document)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, November 2006, p. 1

³³¹ AB Haber, "Cengiz Aktar: CHP ve MHP Artık AB Taraftarı Değil" (Cengiz Aktar: The CHP and MHP are not EU Supporters Anymore), 10 September 2008, <http://www.abhaber.com/haber.php?id=23135> accessed on 22.05.2009

2.3.2. EU Issue in the Party Program

The program of the MHP has been recently changed on 8 November 2009. The updated party program contains a subsection of “EU Relations” within the “Foreign Policy” section. According to this current program, the MHP favors redefining the EU-Turkey relations in terms of structure, framework and grounds. It doesn’t perceive the EU accession as an identity and destiny problem since Turkey is not forced to be dragged into the EU orbit.

The program supports the maintenance of the accession negotiations if only the EU does not harm Turkey’s national interests with regard to terrorism, secessionism, and Cyprus, Greek and Armenian conflicts. Additionally, it accepts no other alternative to full membership.³³² In this sense, the MHP program does not suggest giving up accession talks with the EU; however it advocates the protection of national interests and subject the progress of accession to the condition of full membership and respect for national interests.

2.3.3. An Analysis of the Party Publications

From the date on which the 1999 elections were held (18 April 1999) to the formation of the coalition, Devlet Bahçeli gave several press statements. Those speeches were aiming at reflecting the MHP perspective on specific issues to the government forming party, the DSP. None of those speeches directly addressed to the EU issue. Nevertheless, he mentioned that the new government should have conducted an effective and esteemed foreign policy which would have protected the national interests in every platform. It should also have enriched the traditional bilateral relations and formed new areas of cooperation.³³³ This statement indicates that at that time the party was in favor of multi-faceted and active foreign policy in general as long as there was no threat to national interests so that it looked at the EU-Turkey relations from this angle.

³³² Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi Parti Programı “Geleceğe Doğru” (Program of Nationalist Action Party: Towards the Future), Ankara: 9th General Assembly, 8 November 2009, pp. 127-128

³³³ 18 Nisan Seçimleri Sonrası Siyasi Gelişmeler. Dr. Devlet Bahçeli’nin Basın Açıklamaları (Political Developments in the Aftermath of April 18 Elections. Press Releases of Dr. Devlet Bahçeli) , Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 1999, p. 39

In the MHP group meetings in the parliament, Bahçeli had continuously criticized the EU for its close involvement in Öcalan case. In his speech in July 1999 he claimed that West European countries, especially Greece and Italy were campaigning in favor of the terrorist leader Öcalan and the withdrawal of his death penalty decision. He blamed the EU for using its membership prospect as a tool to prevent the capital punishment of Öcalan and to interfere in national judicial process.³³⁴ In a following speech, Bahçeli carried on his criticisms. He argued that the EU put Turkey off with vain promises for 30 years. With regard to Öcalan issue, Turkey had no need to consult with an EU, which never kept its promises.³³⁵ Bahçeli voiced those opinions of him and his party once more in his speeches in November and December 1999. He stated that this issue shouldn't have overshadowed Helsinki Summit since the Turkish effort could not be oversimplified to the capital punishment issue. He argued that the EU should have differentiated human rights issue from terrorism.³³⁶ It can be argued that it would be considerably contradicting with the party ideology if the MHP hadn't opposed to demand of European states for abolishing Öcalan's death penalty and would be strongly criticized by the party base. Thus, the cost of losing electoral support was much higher than taking a moderate approach towards the EU.

A short while before the Helsinki Summit, Bahçeli commented on the positive Commission Report³³⁷ on Turkey. He mentioned the distance covered on the way to the EU membership since 1987 and invited the EU to be sincere and to make self-criticism concerning its relations with Turkey before coming up with new demands. He continued saying that the EU should have fulfilled its responsibilities. On the other hand he blamed some of the Turkish media and elite for ranging themselves with the EU and

³³⁴ Devlet Bahçeli, **Gündemi Oluşturan Sorunlar ve MHP (Problems on the Agenda and the MHP)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 1999, pp. 37-39

³³⁵ Ibid., p. 55

³³⁶ Ibid., pp. 236-239 and pp. 249-251

³³⁷ For detailed information see European Commission, **1999 Regular Report from the Commission Turkey's Progress towards Accession**, 13 October 1999
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/1999/turkey_en.pdf
accessed on 08.10.2008

looking at the membership process from the eyes of the West.³³⁸ This statement can be taken as a sign of the MHP's skepticism about the EU.

Bahçeli analyzed the results of Helsinki Summit in his speech at the MHP group meeting in the TGNA in December 1999. He stated that the EU did not do Turkey a favor. The membership status was the outcome of Turkey's legal right gained by the agreements and its increasing geopolitical significance in changing conjuncture after the Cold War. He also related this development to the rising political stability in Turkey after the new coalition's coming into power. Despite assessing the road map suggested by the EU as "positive" in general, he opposed the EU's impositions in Cyprus, the Aegean Sea and terror issues. He underlined that Turkey should have improved the democratic and judicial standards anyway, with or without the EU.³³⁹ This also proved that the party did not perceive Turkey's accession goal as a sine qua non. Rather, the party was in favor of giving up EU project if it were to harm the national interests.

The MHP presented the issue of gaining membership status from the EU as the "success" of the 57th Government. As a result of being part of the coalition, it implicitly attributed this success to itself. However, not to displease its nationalist electorate, it stressed that the EU issue shouldn't have been confused with the issue of Öcalan. Additionally, it claimed that it had showed sensitivity about some of the expressions of the EU concerning Cyprus and the Dodecanese.³⁴⁰ Thus, the party was willing to compensate the lack of legitimacy for its EU policy; which conflicted with the prospect of its voters, those expecting capital punishment in the case of Öcalan, with its policy on Turkey-Greece relations.

The MHP appreciated the decisions concerning the fulfillment of Copenhagen criteria indicating that those criteria were parallel to Turkey's goal to reach a healthier and more democratic state of law level. Nevertheless, Bahçeli criticized the decisions

³³⁸ Devlet Bahçeli, **Gündemi Oluşturan Sorunlar ve MHP (Problems on the Agenda and the MHP)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 1999, pp. 149-153

³³⁹ Ibid., pp. 264-268

³⁴⁰ 18 Nisan Seçimleri Öncesi ve Sonrasında Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi. Gelişmeler, Eleştiriler, Gerçekler (The MHP Before and After 18 April Elections. Developments, Criticisms, Realities), Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 1999, p. 49

related to Cyprus dispute in Helsinki Summit and stated that the EU tried to bring forward the dispute as a precondition to Turkish accession. He noted that Turkey would have never accepted impartial resolution of Cyprus conflict in favor of Greek side.³⁴¹ Yet, the clash between the EU conditionality and the MHP's pro-EU attitude started to be more visible.

Bahçeli charged the EU firmly in the MHP group speech in the TGNA in February 2000 with confusing the terrorist movement in Turkey with democratization. He said that some of the EU representatives should have stopped their efforts on contacting people who were associated with terrorist groups in Turkey.³⁴² He was mainly referring to the visit of Foreign Minister of Sweden, Anna Lindh to Diyarbakır.³⁴³ In the same speech, Bahçeli also addressed to the draft bill which led France to recognize "Armenian Genocide" and condemned France for its taking such a decision which would have affected the good relations between two countries.³⁴⁴

In his group meeting speech in the TGNA in March 2000, Bahçeli commented on the controversial Article 312 of the Turkish Penal Code, which occupied the agenda for a while.³⁴⁵ Bahçeli referred to the criticisms coming from the EU circles about this article's undermining the freedom of expression. He assumed that the EU dictated its minority policy through the context of democratization in Turkey and tended to show this article as a threat to freedom of expression. He suggested the EU to show more interest in the situation in Chechnya instead of dealing with Turkey.³⁴⁶ As understood

³⁴¹ Devlet Bahçeli, **Yeni Çağın Eşiğinde Türkiye ve Dünya (Turkey and the World on the Verge of New Age)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2000, pp. 42-48

³⁴² Devlet Bahçeli, **Hoşgörü ve Uzlaşma İkliminde Türkiye (Turkey in a Climate of Tolerance and Compromise)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2000, pp. 62-65

³⁴³ The visit of Anna Lindh in February 2000 had many repercussions in Turkey. For detailed information about her visit see Günseli Onal, "Lindh'in Eteği Sorun Oldu" (Lindh's Skirt Caused Problem), **Milliyet Newspaper**, 24 February 2000,

<http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2000/02/24/t/haber/hab02.html>

accessed on 28.09.2008

³⁴⁴ Devlet Bahçeli, **Hoşgörü ve Uzlaşma İkliminde Türkiye (Turkey in a Climate of Tolerance and Compromise)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2000, p. 65

³⁴⁵ This Article had penalized the praising of an action that constitutes a legal offence, the encouragement of civil disobedience (first paragraph), or incitement of resentment and enmity on the basis of class, race, religion, sect or regional difference (second paragraph). It was amended in 2002 and completely removed from the Turkish Penal Code in 2004.

³⁴⁶ Devlet Bahçeli, **Hoşgörü ve Uzlaşma İkliminde Türkiye (Turkey in a Climate of Tolerance and Compromise)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2000, pp. 89-111

from Bahçeli's speech, the party was inclined to view most of the criticisms of the EU as interference in Turkey's domestic affairs.

At the 6th MHP Congress on November 5, 2000, Bahçeli explained the MHP's EU policy:

For the Nationalist Movement Party, Turkey's membership to the European Union is a serious and significant issue. Our party believes that if the administration of the Union approaches sincerely and realistically to this issue, the full membership can be realized in a reasonable time period. In a few days, the European Union will explain "the Accession Partnership Document" which will reflect the perspective of the administration of the Union toward both Turkey and the world. In this process, it is our most natural right to expect that the European Union will take our principal sensibilities into consideration. Also, the administration of the Union, in its relationship with Turkey should give up its approach to the Aegean and Cyprus questions as one-sided, and should not hide behind Greece in these issues.³⁴⁷

He also responded to the ones who opposed to the MHP's EU strategy:

The attitudes toward the European Union that we must be disturbed by and be concerned about them are either submissive or indifferent toward the policies of the Union. Approaches to this issue with temporary feelings and desires or with self-interests do not have any humane and national values. These kinds of approaches show not only a lack of understanding of the New Age, but also an underestimation of Turkey and the Turkish nation. It should not be forgotten that adopting a responsible and sensible approach to Turkey's relationship with the European Union is not the duty of the Nationalist Movement Party alone. It must be everybody's issue and responsibility in this country.³⁴⁸

The MHP stressed on its contribution to the preparation and approval process of National Program in its election statement for the 3 November 2002 Elections. However, it stated that it did not support the changes such as abolishment of death

³⁴⁷ Devlet Bahçeli, **Yeni Çağa Bakış. Eleştiriler, Tespitler ve Öneriler (A Look at the New Age. A Look at the New Age. Observations, Critiques and Suggestions)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2000, pp. 38-42 and Devlet Bahçeli, **A Look at the New Age. Observations, Critiques and Suggestions**, translated by Mustafa Özcan, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 5 November 2000, pp. 45-50

³⁴⁸ Devlet Bahçeli, **A Look at the New Age. Observations, Critiques and Suggestions**, translated by Mustafa Özcan, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 5 November 2000, p. 50

penalty, education in mother tongue for their threatening the national unity and integrity.³⁴⁹ In this document the MHP released its commitment to Turkey's goal of EU accession and declared that it would maintain Turkey's efforts on the way to accession resolutely if it had assumed office as government party. On the other hand, it emphasized that Turkey would have become a member of the EU in an honorable, equal and just way without giving concessions from its national identity and national interests, and it would have protected its rights on Cyprus and Aegean issues.³⁵⁰ This was a carefully designed document, which aimed at balancing the party's pro-EU policy with the nationalist concerns of its electorate on the EU issue.

During the election preparations, the MHP published a booklet concerning its perspective on the EU-Turkey relations. In this booklet, the MHP obviously appreciated Turkey's EU membership prospect and stated that it supported accession process intimately.³⁵¹ The MHP also claimed that the EU should have declared a date for starting accession negotiations with Turkey at the forthcoming Copenhagen Summit. In this comprehensive 149 pages document, which was entirely devoted to the EU-Turkey relations, the party revealed all its objections about the EU without hesitation regarding terrorism, minority issues, human rights, Cyprus and Aegean conflicts.³⁵² Thus, the MHP desired to have an accession model in which Turkey would become a full member of the EU; however its policies on minorities and disputed foreign relations would not be interfered by the Union.

When the 2002 elections resulted in a serious defeat for the MHP, the party became harsher against the EU membership issue. By these elections, it did not only lose its coalition member position but also remained below the election threshold and could not stay in the parliament. Getting the overwhelming majority of the votes, the AKP was the victorious party of the elections. This gave the MHP the opportunity to

³⁴⁹ The MHP 2002 Election Bulletin, (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi 3 Kasım 2002 Seçim Beyannameşi. Türkiye'nin Onurlu Geleceği), Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2002, p. 10

³⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 12, 89 and 91

³⁵¹ Devlet Bahçeli, **Son Gelişmeler Işığında Türkiye'nin AB Üyeliği ve Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi. Temel Yaklaşım Biçimimiz ve Görüşlerimiz (Turkey's EU Membership and the MHP in the Light of the Last Developments. Our Main Attitude and Opinions)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2002, p. 144

³⁵² For further information see Ibid.

underscore the negative aspects of the EU issue since it had no big responsibility in the decision-making process during this period.

After the 2002 elections, a party publication titled *Büyük Buluşma (Great Meeting)* in which the party revealed its national and international vision, it claimed that the EU needed Turkey to consolidate its position in relation to the USA and the current world system. Yet, it was reluctant to include Turkey as a member due to some “risks”. The MHP explained three main risks of Turkish accession for the EU. First, Turkey was a threat to the EU with its young and large population, which was around 70 million, 60 % of it being under 35 years. Second, Turkey was a Muslim country, which prevented it to be assimilated by other cultures and preserve its national identity. Especially about 3 million Turks living in Europe proved that Turks could have lived as a different culture within the European culture. Third, Turkey was seen as a burden in terms of its historical identity and socio-economic and geographical location.³⁵³ Pointing out Europe’s risk perception by including Turkey as a member, the party gave the impression that it was losing its belief in Turkey’s full membership.

On the other hand, the decline in the MHP’s motivation on the EU issue coincides with the AKP’s rise in Turkey. The MHP assumed that the AKP became the majority party by getting the votes of reaction and argued that it gave concessions to the West, mainly the EU and the USA in order to solve its legitimacy problem within Turkey. The MHP indicated that the AKP was not that naïve to overlook the “fact” that the EU had no intention to include Turkey as a member; however it fell for the mistake that it had to gain the support of external powers to be able to stay in government position.³⁵⁴ Therefore, the AKP’s fully committed approach towards the EU slowed down, if not entirely discouraged the MHP’s pro-EU approach. The party abandoned its moderate EU approach of 2002-2004 in favor of a more skeptical one after 2004.

The MHP devoted two publications in 2004 and 2005 to propagate against the AKP’s EU policy. Those publications were significant documents in terms of observing how the MHP reshaped its EU policy with regard to the steps taken by the AKP.

³⁵³ Yeni Bir Dünya Yeni Bir Türkiye için Büyük Buluşma (Great Meeting for a New World, New Turkey), Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2003, pp. 33-35

³⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 68-71

AKP'nin Teslimiyet Belgeleri (Reports on the AKP's Surrender) was published after the launch of two reports by the EU Commission in October 2004: one concerning Turkey's progress³⁵⁵ and the other concerning the impact of Turkey's membership perspective on the EU.³⁵⁶ In this publication, the MHP assessed the pinpoints in those reports and criticized them uncompromisingly. According to the MHP, those EU reports were full of unacceptable enforcements for Turkey. The EU membership was a complete ambiguous process full of exclusion and double standards for Turkey, which presented a serious threat for the unitary structure of Turkish nation-state and the actual goal of the EU was to take the control of Turkey. Furthermore, the AKP put Turkey in a shameful position by following a submissive policy instead of objecting to the EU's enforcements.³⁵⁷ Hence, the AKP was held responsible for neglecting the EU's enforcements and reflecting them as a success story of the government.

AKP'nin AB Yol Haritası (AKP's EU Roadmap. Dead end) was published in 2005. In this document the MHP indicated the risks of the process of accession negotiations which would have started by October 3, 2005 under the leadership of the AKP government since they believed that the AKP was very much ready to give any concessions that the EU wanted them to do.³⁵⁸ The course of EU-Turkey relations also laid a suitable ground for the MHP's criticisms because Cyprus had just entered the Union and the EU had conditioned the opening of the negotiations on Turkey's extension of its Customs Union Agreement to the newly accepted members of the Union, including Cyprus.

The MHP increasingly carried on its criticisms in every platform about the EU-Turkey relations and the policies conducted by the AKP government towards the

³⁵⁵ For further information, see European Commission, **2004 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress towards Accession**, Brussels, 6 October 2004

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2004/rr_tr_2004_en.pdf
accessed on 09.10.2008

³⁵⁶ For further information, see EU Commission, "Issues Arising from Turkey's Membership Perspective", Brussels, 6 October 2004,

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2004/issues_paper_en.pdf
accessed on 28.05.2008

³⁵⁷ *AKP'nin Teslimiyet Belgeleri. AB-Türkiye İlerleme Raporu (Etki Raporu-Tavsiyeler) (Reports on the AKP's Surrender. EU-Turkey Progress Report)*, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, October 2004

³⁵⁸ MHP Research and Development Center (MHP Research and Development Center), **İşte! AKP'nin Avrupa Birliği Yol Haritası. "Çıkmaz Sokak" (Here it is! The AKP's Roadmap for the EU. "Dead End")**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2005, p. 41

accession.³⁵⁹ In 2006, the suspension of the accession negotiations in eight chapters paved the way for the MHP's increasing its criticisms toward the EU and the AKP government. The EU issue turned out to be an issue of propaganda for the MHP for the upcoming elections of 2007.

Becoming the opposition party together with the CHP after the 22 July 2007 elections caused the MHP to take a completely anti-EU position. When the MHP's leader Bahçeli's speeches in the TGNA from August till December 2007 were perused, it could be said that the MHP blamed the EU for supporting terrorism in Turkey covertly and overtly. The EU was two-faced and wouldn't have kept any promises it had given to Turkey. There was no future for the EU-Turkey relations. According to the MHP, the EU instigated separatist movement in Southeast Turkey by trying to create new minorities which would have served endangering Turkey's territorial integrity and the AKP government pretended as if it hadn't known the real purpose of the EU for the sake of preserving its support.³⁶⁰ Thus, the EU was no more considered as a favorable issue to concentrate on by the MHP. In contrary, the party interpreted the EU as a hostile entity which threatens the indivisible integrity of the Turkish state with its nation and country and the AKP as its accomplice.

Bahçeli inveighed against the AKP for its EU policy and in his speech for the 60th Government Program and 2008 Financial Year Budget Talks.³⁶¹ He argued that the Cyprus dispute became part of the EU-Turkey relations and provided grounds for the EU conditionality on Turkey.

³⁵⁹ In the following documents, many paragraphs referring to EU-Turkey relations and the "submissive" policies of AKP government can be found: Devlet Bahçeli, **Başkent Ankara Mitingi (Capital Ankara Meeting)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2 October 2005; Devlet Bahçeli, **21. Yüzyıl ve 2023 Türkiye Vizyonu (21st Century and Turkey's 2023 Vision)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2006; Devlet Bahçeli, **Erciyes Zirvesi'nden Türkiye'yi Düşünmek (To Think about Turkey from the Erciyes Summit)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2006

³⁶⁰ Bahçeli's TGNA speeches between 8 August-27 December 2007 were collected in a publication by the party itself. See Devlet Bahçeli, **Terör Kışkırcısında Türkiye. Tarihi Uyarı! (Turkey on the Verge of Terror. Historical Warning)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2007, p. 34, 46, 75, 145, 153, 158, 181, 193, 205, 206, 217 and pp. 220-224

³⁶¹ Devlet Bahçeli, **60. Cumhuriyet Hükümeti Programı ve 2008 Mali Yılı Bütçesi Konuşmaları (60th Government Program of the Republic and 2008 Budget Talks)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 3 September 2007, pp. 71-74

In the MHP Group Meeting Speeches in the TGNA from 8 January to 2 December 2008, the MHP referred to the EU-Turkey relations. However, none of those were positive criticisms. At the beginning of 2008, the article 301 issue was one of the most controversial issues of the agenda. According to the article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, a person who publicly denigrated Turkishness, the Republic, the TGNA, the Government of the Republic of Turkey, the judicial institutions of the State, the military or security organizations shall have been punishable by imprisonment ranging from six months to three years. The article was seen as a threat to freedom of expression and thought and heavily criticized both inside and outside Turkey. Since this article had become law, charges had been brought in more than sixty cases, some of which are high-profile.³⁶² The MHP was in favor of this article and was consistently blaming the EU for its manipulating domestic politics by insisting on the abolishment of this article.³⁶³

Bahçeli argued that the EU-Turkey relations were used by Greece in order to settle the problematic issues between Turkey and Greece in favor of their own national interests.³⁶⁴ He also claimed that Turkey-EU relations were already imaginary. The EU had no intention to include Turkey. It pursued a biased and exclusionary policy towards Turkey. Especially the last statements of the leaders of Germany and France were the proof of the EU's real intention. The support given by the EU to terrorist groups such as the PKK and DHKP-C was also obvious. The EU was killing time with the carrot of accession and indeed predicted no membership prospect for Turkey.³⁶⁵ As seen in these statements, the MHP was more likely to view the EU as an enemy rather than a union of which Turkey should become part.

³⁶² For a general information about Article 301 see Wikipedia, **Article 301(Turkish Penal Code)**, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Article_301 accessed on 07.12.2009

³⁶³ Reference to the article can be found in the following MHP publications: Devlet Bahçeli, **Yönetilemeyen Türkiye. "Kutuplaşma, Kargaşa ve Kaos" (Nongoverned Turkey. "Polarization, Commotion, Chaos")**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2008, pp. 24-27; Devlet Bahçeli, **Siyasi Hayat ve Normalleşme Süreci (Political Life and Normalization Process)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2008; Devlet Bahçeli, **Ortak Akılda Buluşma**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2008

³⁶⁴ Devlet Bahçeli, **Yönetilemeyen Türkiye. "Kutuplaşma, Kargaşa ve Kaos" (Nongoverned Turkey. "Polarization, Commotion, Chaos")**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2008, pp. 95-101

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 141-147

From April to July 2008, the MHP associated all the statements of the EU about Turkey with the AKP government. The MHP assumed that the EU's warning about the negative effects of a possible closure of the AKP during the accession negotiations was interference to internal affairs of Turkey. From the MHP's point of view, the AKP hoped for help from the EU to support them in their closure case. Meanwhile, the EU used this vulnerable situation of the AKP to apply its conditionality in order to impose its own wishes on controversial issues such as the article 301, minority rights, and Aegean, Cyprus and Armenian disputes.³⁶⁶ The MHP interpreted the EU support for the dismissal of the AKP's closure case as an intervention to the national law. Between July and December 2008, the MHP continued to make similar criticisms about the EU and correspondingly the EU policy of the AKP government. It pointed out that the AKP interpreted the 2008 EU Progress Report on Turkey as "positive and balanced" whereas the report was an overall negative one, which gave the signs of accession for Croatia in the near future and Serbia in the long term while there was not much improvement in Turkish accession process.³⁶⁷ Thus, the MHP maintained its overall negative attitude towards the EU issue in 2008.

In 2009, the MHP continued to associate everything about the EU with the AKP and tended to define their relation as mutually beneficial. The AKP needed the EU to get the support and legitimacy, which it could not provide within the country, whereas the EU needed the AKP to manipulate Turkish politics easily. The MHP emphasized that the EU attempted to divide Turkey ethnically by using minority rights.³⁶⁸ When looked at the MHP Group Meeting Speeches in the TGNA from January to June 2009, it is observed that all the speeches concerning the EU revolved

³⁶⁶ Devlet Bahçeli, **Siyasi Hayat ve Normalleşme Süreci (Political Life and Normalization Process)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2008

³⁶⁷ Devlet Bahçeli, **Ortak Akılda Buluşma (Moving towards a Common Mind)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2008, pp. 113-116

³⁶⁸ Bin Yıllık Kardeşliği "Yaşa ve Yaşat". 13 Aralık 2009 Tandoğan Mitingi (Live and Sustain the Thousand Years Old Brotherhood. 13 December 2009 Tandoğan Meeting), Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2009, p. 41; Devlet Bahçeli, **Açılımın Karanlığında Türkiye (Turkey in the Shadow of Democratic Opening)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 13 November 2009, p. 45; Devlet Bahçeli, The Conference entitled "**Çözülen Ülke Türkiye ve Tavrımız (Resolving Country Turkey and Our Attitude)**", Kayseri: Kadir Has Congress Center, 16 October 2009, p. 45; Sonsuza Kadar Var Ol Türkiye (Turkey Live Forever), Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2009, p.13; Devlet Bahçeli, **Türk Milletinin Bekasına Yönelik Tehditler (Threats against the Survival of Turkish Nation)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2009, p. 17, 28, pp. 30-38 and pp. 46-53

around the idea that the EU supported the secessionist movements and terrorist groups in Turkey and pushed reforms to change the constitution in order to extend minority rights such as education in mother tongue or broadcasting in minority languages, which would, in fact, have served the partition of the country.³⁶⁹ In addition, in the year 2009, the MHP completely became an anti-EU party, which was totally pessimistic about the Turkey's future EU membership. There was no single pro-EU statement found in the party publications about the course of relations between the EU and Turkey.

In this regard, especially examining the last two reports on the EU-Turkey relations which were prepared by the MHP Research, Development and Assessment Centre would contribute to reach the most updated view of the MHP on the EU. Those two reports were almost identical in conclusion part. However, the one issued in 2010 additionally contained general information about historical development of the EU, the EU-Turkey relations and the structure of the EU institutions. In both reports, the MHP resembled those conditions, which were put forward by the EU to “the resurrection of Sevres”.³⁷⁰ The MHP evaluated the EU conditionality as a strategy to keep Turkey distant from the Union itself, but to be able to take the control of Turkish state at the same time. Hence, the MHP summarized its opinions on the EU as the following:

- The EU had consistently wasted Turkey's time, excluded, and degraded it.
- The reason behind its excluding Turkey was that it did not want to accept a Muslim country to a Christian project.
- The EU tried to force Turkey to create ethnic minorities. It also attempted to emphasize on the sectarian diversity in Turkey.
- The EU became a safe haven for those who wished to divide Turkey ethnically, to harm the national integrity and to support terrorism.

³⁶⁹ Devlet Bahçeli, **Teslimiyet ve Açılım Siyaseti. “Demokrasi, Ekonomi, Güvenlik” (The Politics of Surrender and Opening. “Democracy, Economy, Security)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2009, pp. 16-17, p. 25 and pp. 313-318

³⁷⁰ **Avrupa Birliği (European Union)**, Ankara: MHP Center of Research, Development and Analysis Publishing , 9 February 2009, p. 6 and **Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye (European Union and Turkey)**, Ankara: MHP Center of Research, Development and Analysis Publishing, April 2010, p. 31

- It was obvious that there would be no progress in the Turkish accession process under the offensive and imposing manner of the EU.³⁷¹

The MHP also defined its position towards the issue of the EU accession as the following:

- For the MHP, there is no policy or project, which is more important and privileged than integrity, unity and fraternity of Turkey.

- Turkey's being a nation-state; its unitary structure and its national integrity basing on national identity are above all discussions.

- The MHP sees Turkey's today and future through the lens of Turkey, not Brussels.

- To become an EU member should not be a must. Turkey is not obliged to or in need of membership.

- Turkey and the EU do not share a common future given the current negotiation mentality and the structure of Turkish nation and state.³⁷²

From the MHP documents published since 2009, it is observed that the MHP not only stopped referring to its support for Turkey's EU membership but also started an anti-EU campaign. It only used the word "EU" when it blamed the government for its policies. It defined the relations with the EU as "diseased"³⁷³ and placed the support for EU accession on the same footing with treason.³⁷⁴ At the TGNA Group Meeting Speeches during January-December 2010, the AKP government was continuously blamed for surrendering the EU's conditionality, which was considered as an effort to divide and rule Turkey.³⁷⁵ In the year 2011 the party maintained its anti-EU discourse at

³⁷¹ **Avrupa Birliği (European Union)**, Ankara: MHP Center of Research, Development and Analysis Publishing, 9 February 2009, pp. 8-9

³⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 9

³⁷³ **Bin Yıllık Kardeşliği "Yaşa ve Yaşat". 13 Aralık 2009 Tandoğan Mitingi (Live and Sustain the Thousand Years Old Brotherhood. 13 December 2009 Tandoğan Meeting)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2009, p. 17

³⁷⁴ **Sonsuza Kadar Var Ol Türkiye (Turkey Live Forever)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2009, p.76; Devlet Bahçeli, **Açılımın Karanlığında Türkiye (Turkey in the Shadow of Democratic Opening)**, Ankara: MHP Publishing, 13 November 2009, p. 45; Devlet Bahçeli, **Millet ve Devlet Bekası için Güç Birliği (Union of Forces for the Survival of Nation and State)**, Ankara: MHP Publishing, 31 October 2010, pp.32-33, p.45

³⁷⁵ Devlet Bahçeli, **Gizli Gündemler. "Demokrasi, Özgürlük, Anayasa I" (Secret Agendas. "Democracy, Freedom, Constitution I")**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2010, p. 80, 115; Devlet Bahçeli, **Gizli Gündemler. "Demokrasi, Özgürlük, Anayasa II" (Secret Agendas.**

the TGNA group meetings as well as during the election campaigns.³⁷⁶ The 2011 election bulletin of the MHP suggests redefining the character, ground and frame of Turkey-EU relations. It states that the MHP is willing to carry on accession negotiations unless the EU's attitudes towards Turkey's national unity and integrity; terrorism and secessionism; issues concerning Cyprus, Greece and Armenia harm Turkey's national interests. It also emphasizes that Turkey is not dependent on the EU and any other alternative status to full membership cannot be accepted.³⁷⁷ In this sense, the party made it clear that the EU membership was not a must for Turkey.

Especially starting from the latter years of Alparslan Türkeş and accelerating under Bahçeli, the MHP has been going through a process of shifting from the extreme right to the center right. As Arıkan puts forward, owing to this transformation, the MHP entered into a successful coalition partnership with the centrist ANAP and the center-left DSP in 1999. Thus, the party moved from its far-right position towards the center-right. However, this transformation is far from being complete and encountered substantial resistance and confusion from the party and its supporters.³⁷⁸ However, this ideological shift was not reflected in its EU policy. Contrarily, the MHP's EU stance has gradually changed from moderate to first considerably skeptic during 2004-2006; and rejective after the late 2006. Consequently, the MHP has displayed the characteristics of a far right party with regard to the EU issue although it has approached to the center right in the political spectrum.

“Democracy, Freedom, Constitution II”), Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2010, p. 20, 151, 171, 186, 192, 194, 284, 290, 313; Devlet Bahçeli, **Gizli Gündemler. “Demokrasi, Özgürlük, Anayasa III” (Secret Agendas. “Democracy, Freedom, Constitution III”)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2010, p. 278 and 300

³⁷⁶ Devlet Bahçeli, **Gizli Gündemler. “Demokrasi, Özgürlük, Anayasa IV” (Secret Agendas. “Democracy, Freedom, Constitution IV”)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2011, pp. 193-194; Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, **Karar Anı Kader Anı. 12 Haziran 2011 Milletvekili Seçimleri Aday Tanıtım Toplantıları (Decision Moment Destiny Moment. 12 June 2011 Deputy Elections Candidate Presentation Meetings)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2011, p. 22, 26, 59-60, 98,100

³⁷⁷ **The MHP Election Bulletin, 2011 (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi 2011 Seçim Beyannamesi. 2011'e Doğru Yükselen Ülke Türkiye Sözleşmesi. Ses Ver Türkiye)**, Ankara: MHP Head Office Publishing, 2011, pp. 188-189

³⁷⁸ Alev Çınar and Burak Arıkan, “The Nationalist Action Party: Representing the State, the Nation or the Nationalists?”, **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 3, No. 1, 2002, p. 38

2.3.4. Interview with Mithat Melen

One of the MHP's most experienced deputies in the EU-Turkey relations, Mithat Melen, was interviewed by the author in his chamber at the TGNA on 15 December 2010 about the EU perspective of the MHP. Melen was a member of the Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Committee as the representative of the MHP in the 23rd term of the TGNA. Besides his political career, he is a professor in economics.

Melen states that he and his party are mostly in favor of the EU accession, but they are against the EU's behaving as if they were to include Turkey and Turkey's behaving as if it were to enter the Union. In other words, he says that they want it to be a fair game. For Melen, Turkey is a more developed country than the fifteen new member states in every aspect and it has already fulfilled almost all criteria. Yet, he claims that there is a political barrier in front of the EU membership of Turkey since Turkey has progressed beyond expectations on the way of the EU, whereas the EU hasn't progressed on the way of Turkey at all.

Melen underlines that they don't have an extreme nationalism understanding. He says that they are not like the Nazis of the 1930s' Germany. Their definition of nationalism is not more than Bush's or Merkel's. They are a democratic party so that their party ideology fully corresponds with its EU policy.

He criticizes the ones who argue that the MHP is an anti-EU party and stresses on the fact that the MHP has always supported Turkey's EU accession. In this context, he assumes that his being selected by the party as the first MHP candidate in Istanbul lists during the 2002 and 2007 elections is a proof of significance given by the party for the EU issue as he holds a Ph.D in the EU studies.

According to Melen, Turkish economy has been affected mostly in a negative way by the EU accession despite some gains because Turkey does not have a say regarding the economy due to blocked negotiation chapters although there is a customs union. He also points out that they have their voters and opposition parties; national support for the EU membership decreases so that the EU should decide whether it wants Turkey or not.

Admitting the contribution of the reform packages for the EU harmonization, Melen believes that democratic reforms should be made for the development of Turkey, not for the EU accession because Turkish membership is not for sure yet. He thinks Turkey won't be a member of the EU by the year 2023. For him the Union procrastinates and at this time it won't be the same as it is now, too.

Melen does not think that there is a difference in his party's EU policy between the 22nd and the 23rd parliamentary terms. However, when the author comments that the MHP publications have taken a more critical discourse after the 17 December 2004 Summit, Melen accepts it and explains it with society's getting more critical about the issue and the EU's associating issues of Turkey with external issues. In this context, Melen confirms in a way that his party's EU discourse can be influenced by the shifts in electoral opinion.

2.4. THE EU STANCE OF THE DTP/BDP

2.4.1. EU Perspective of the DTP/BDP in the Literature

The EU perspective of the BDP or other pro-Kurdish political parties which preceded it can be better analyzed by the examination of the role the EU plays in the resolution of the Kurdish question in Turkey. That is to say, the BDP's stance for Turkey's EU membership has not been developed independently from the EU's engagement in the conflict as a third party.

2.4.1.1. A Quick Glance at the EU's Impact on Kurdish Problem in Turkey

One of the strongest impacts of Turkey's EU accession process has been on the Kurdish question since the EU has started to attribute a particular interest to the issue in the 1990s after the PKK incidents accelerated. Correspondingly, the perspectives of the parties to the conflict have also modified after the EU became concerned with the issue.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, to a large extent Turkish state considered the solutions employing military means for the settlement of the conflict. Even the socio-economic investment to the regions highly populated by Kurdish people was aimed at

making the military success an enduring one, in other words, to support the military measures already taken.³⁷⁹ The main reason behind this sort of state behavior was that the state did not recognize any legitimate actor representing the other side to sit at a negotiation table.

The state tended to view the problem as a terror problem rather than minority rights problem as a result of the fact that Kurdish population is not among the minority communities which are officially recognized. Despite the increasing regional disparities weighing against the lands of mostly Kurdish segment of the society and the demographic integration problem of Kurdish people to the rest of the population³⁸⁰, from the state perspective there was no reason to give cultural or political rights to Kurdish population of Turkey which could divide the society into ethnic clashes and harm the national and territorial integrity. This argument was also based on the Lausanne Treaty which recognizes only non-Muslim population in Turkey as minorities. On the other hand, the loss of soldiers fighting against the PKK in the mountains of the Southeastern Anatolia each day increased the public sensitivity on the issue, which, in turn, raised the nationalist sentiments countrywide. Apart from this, the rising nationalism was often referred as a political propaganda tool to attract more voters by the political parties, mostly the MHP.

The EU's entering the daily agenda of Turkish politics in the mid-1990s has added a new dimension to the issue. Especially the launch of Copenhagen criteria which were primarily targeting the democratization of Central and Eastern European countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union had a considerable effect on this dimensional change after those criteria became the membership criteria of the Union. The carrot of EU membership has encouraged the political authorities to alter their rigid perspective

³⁷⁹ Ahmet İcduygu; David Romano and İbrahim Sirkeci, "The Ethnic Question in an Environment of Insecurity: the Kurds in Turkey", **Ethnic and Racial Studies**, Vol. 22, No. 6, November 1999, p. 994

³⁸⁰ There are number of studies about those demographical indicators regarding Kurdish population in Turkey. See İsmet; Hancıođlu, Attila and Calvinş Alanur, "Demographic Differentials and Demographic Integration of Turkish and Kurdish Population", **Population Research Policy Review**, Vol. 27, 2008, pp. 447-457; Ahmet İcduygu; David Romano and İbrahim Sirkeci, "The Ethnic Question in an Environment of Insecurity: the Kurds in Turkey", **Ethnic and Racial Studies**, Vol. 22, No. 6, November 1999, pp. 991-1010; Jeffrey C. Dixon and Murat Ergin, "Explaining Anti-Kurdish Beliefs in Turkey: Group Competition, Identity and Globalization", **Social Science Quarterly**, Vol. 91, No. 5, December 2010, pp. 1329-1348

on the Kurdish question. The political leg of the Copenhagen criteria required respect for and protection of minorities beside other criteria such as the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law and human rights.³⁸¹ This development had already given the signals of the future EU conditionality on Turkey regarding the Kurdish question.

Short after the legitimization of Copenhagen criteria as membership conditionality, the EU started to make statements regarding the issue. Prior to Customs Union Agreement between Turkey and the EU in 1995, the European Parliament asked Turkey for making progress toward the solution of its Kurdish problem along with other issues such as changing the 1982 constitution, Article 8 of the Anti-terror Law as well as improving the situation of the MPs from the DEP and human rights practices.³⁸² Although Turkey made amendments in some articles of the constitution concerning the political participation and softened Article 8 of the Anti-terror Law, no improvement was recorded in the case of Kurdish MPs which was about to deadlock the ratification of the Customs Union in the Parliament. The crisis could only be overcome by a stipulation annexed to the Agreement which specified that in case of a deterioration of human rights, the financial aid enabled through the Customs Union could be suspended.³⁸³ Thereafter, human rights and Kurdish question has been one of the main concerns in the European Parliament reports on Turkey.

Turkey has been continuously criticized by the EU for its Kurdish dispute in the context of minority and human rights. At the Luxembourg Summit, beside other conditions, the Council stipulated the progress of EU-Turkey relations on Turkey's alignment of human rights standards and practices on those in force in the European Union; respect for and protection of minorities.³⁸⁴ Turkey found those conditions

³⁸¹ European Parliament, **Copenhagen European Council Presidency Conclusions**, 21-22 June 1993, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement/ec/pdf/cop_en.pdf accessed on 18.12.2009

³⁸² Ayşe Betül Çelik and Bahar Rumelili, "Necessary But Not Sufficient: The Role of the EU in Resolving Turkey's Kurdish Question and the Greek-Turkish Conflicts", **European Foreign Affairs Review**, Vol. 11, 2006, p. 209

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 210

³⁸⁴ The Luxembourg European Council, Presidency Conclusions, 12-13 December 1997 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/032a0008.htm accessed on 14 December 1997

discriminative and unfair so that it did not accept them; instead, it exposed a strong reaction and stated that “unless the EU’s approach and mentality were changed, one could not expect the EU-Turkey relations to be developed within a constructive and multi-faceted dialogue”.³⁸⁵ The time between the Luxembourg and Helsinki Summits was a state of impasse and can be marked as the worst years of the history of Turkey-EU relations. However the achievement of the candidate status at the Helsinki Summit in 1999 loosened the tense relations and enabled the imposition of stronger conditionality by the EU regarding human rights which made Turkey adopt numerous international agreements as well as the European Convention on Human Rights as part of harmonizing its laws with the *acquis communautaire*.³⁸⁶

The more powerful steps to transform Kurdish question were taken after Turkey became a candidate state.³⁸⁷ When the basic EU documents regarding Turkey’s integration to the EU such as the EU Progress Reports and Accession Partnership Documents were analyzed, it is observed that the Union consistently addresses to the human rights issue. Although those documents referred to Kurdish problem within human rights context, the problem was for the first time explicitly discussed in the 2004 Progress Report in terms of minority rights which on the one hand appreciated the improvements in the use of Kurdish language in public and the sign of international agreements guaranteeing minority protection. On the other hand, however, it criticized Turkey for not taking enough measures to develop the southeastern Anatolia where Kurds are highly congregated and pointed out the need for the establishment of conditions for the full enjoyment of rights and freedoms by the Kurds.³⁸⁸ The EU’s emphasis on the rights of Kurdish population problems in Turkey was actually a natural

³⁸⁵ “Statement by the Turkish Government on 14 December 1997 Concerning the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council Held on 12-13 December 1997 in Luxembourg”, **Perceptions**, December 1997-February 1998, Vol. 2 No. 4

<http://www.sam.gov.tr/perceptions/Volume2/December1997-February1998/STATEMENT2.PDF>
accessed on 09.11.2009

³⁸⁶ Ayşe Betül Çelik and Bahar Rumelili, “Necessary But Not Sufficient: The Role of the EU in Resolving Turkey’s Kurdish Question and the Greek-Turkish Conflicts”, **European Foreign Affairs Review**, Vol. 11, 2006, p. 211

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 210

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.* and European Commission, **2004 Regular Report on Turkey’s Progress towards Accession**, Brussels, 6 October 2004
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2004/rr_tr_2004_en.pdf
accessed on 09.10.2008

result of the recognition of Turkey as a candidate to the EU membership. This transferred the problem to the enlargement framework. The EU was reluctant to include a country which has such a serious problem that could destabilize the country itself and its neighborhood which would in turn cause instability within the Union.

Once Turkey gained candidacy status, the state's policy with respect to the solution of Kurdish question has apparently moderated, too. Prior to the candidacy, the basic settlement policy of the state concerning the conflict was to fight against the PKK terrorism till the end by implementing military means. Kurdish problem was a terror problem and it had no relevancy to the Kurdish population of Turkey. As Çelik and Rumelili put forward, "Through Turkey's involvement in the European integration process, the Turkish state started treating its Kurdish question as democratization issue if not an unpronounced minority representation."³⁸⁹ On the other side, it increased the hopes of the defenders of political and cultural rights for Kurdish people for seeking those rights on legal platforms. Yet, the alternative solutions have been discussed at length and questions such as the use of Kurdish language or the idea of remorse law for encouraging the terrorists to ceasefire and surrender could be envisaged when the EU membership emerged as an independent variable.

In this respect, the recent developments related to Kurdish question during the AKP government can be partly explained with the EU accession process given the AKP's motivation in Turkey's EU cause. Nevertheless, the failure of the Kurdish Opening initiated by the government and the rise in dead toll at the battles between the PKK and Turkish army by the PKK's cancelling its ceasefire after the 2011 elections have proved that the Kurdish problem continues to be one of the major problems of Turkey.

The EU has still some way to go in terms of facilitating a comprehensive solution to the Kurdish question in the framework of Turkey's accession process except leaving the floor to the AKP government by using its conditionality tool instead of

³⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 212

taking more active part through mediation until recently.³⁹⁰ It is evident that the solution of the problem would require the involvement of all actors to contribute to that solution. Hence, a plan for the solution of the problem excluding the BDP would not work in the long-term when it is considered that the party is supported by the majority of the Kurdish population in southeast Turkey.

2.4.1.2. Back to the DTP/BDP's EU Perspective

As it is mentioned above in detail, the EU has contributed to crucial policy changes in Turkey in terms of its Kurdish question through its membership criteria especially after Turkey was granted the candidacy status. Departing from this output, both the BDP's and former Kurdish problem oriented political parties' EU aspect can be better examined.

The Kurdish political movement has always taken a pro-EU approach. The past experiences of those parties especially the closure cases have revealed the fact that the political representation of pro-Kurdish ideology in Turkish political system is dependent on the democratization of the country. The EU accession process has motivated the sides of the conflict for modifying their rigid attitudes toward the issue and has enabled the grounds for debates in different platforms. This was a sort of political taboo before the 2000s. Thus, the BDP justifies its support for the EU integration by equating the EU accession to democratization.

The EU perspectives of the parties prior to the BDP have always been in favor of Turkey's EU membership. Those parties have put the main emphasis on the EU's approach towards the issues such as minority and human rights or democracy. They have supported the EU integration for the improvement of political, social and cultural rights of Kurdish people in Turkey. The EU accession of Turkey is perceived as a comprehensive and rapid democratization process for the country and has given the pro-Kurdish political movement the opportunity to handle the Kurdish question as an integral part of human rights issue. As Figure 3.16 confirms, the biggest public support for the EU membership also comes from the BDP voters.

³⁹⁰ Johanna Nykänen, "One Question, Any Answers? The EU's Role in Solving the Kurdish Question in Turkey", **FIIA Briefing Paper**, The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, No. 74, January 2011, p. 2

The Kurdish parties have accepted the EU as a contemporary political, economic and social unit having its roots in the Enlightenment and Renaissance and an expression of unity in which nation states perform their sovereignty rights with other member states on an upper European identity in the framework of fundamental freedoms and human rights.³⁹¹ In this sense the party has seen the Union as a role model for living together with diverse cultures. The EU's conditionality regarding human rights issues has been in line with the pro-Kurdish parties' main policy objectives such as the legalization of the education and broadcasting in mother tongue.

In this regard, the AKP's becoming government in 2002 started a new era for the pro-Kurdish movement and the then DTP. Even though its causes are different from the BDP, the AKP government has been in favor of democratization, too. Yet, it has speeded up the reforms required for complying with the EU standards. The improvement of democracy and human rights as well as the positive economic performance of the AKP has attracted voters from the mainly Kurdish populated provinces of Turkey in three consecutive national elections, fueling the rivalry between the AKP and the BDP for political supremacy over these provinces. However the BDP, along with many civil organizations representing the dissident Kurdish population has often portrayed the steps taken by the AKP government towards the Kurdish problem as insincere and insufficient, that is, far from being productive for the solution of the problem.

Meanwhile, the EU has embraced the pro-Kurdish parties as the representative of Kurds in Turkey. When the EU officials came to Turkey, they visited Diyarbakır and held meetings with the deputies of those parties. On the other side, those deputies visited the EU institutions from time to time to voice their approach on certain political developments in Turkey at the EU level. For instance, a group of DEHAP deputies have toured European capitals before the EU Summit of December 17, 2004 to convince the parties, those which are against Turkish membership about Turkey's integration to the EU.

³⁹¹ Eda Bektaş, "Turkish Political Parties: EU Integration Process", **Jean Monnet Workshop**, Koç University, 15-16 May 2009

Prior to the 2007 elections, the vice-chairman of the DTP, Tuncer Bakırhan, severely criticized the EU in his speech at a meeting of the EP (European Parliament) for causing the rise of chauvinist and nationalist sentiments in Turkey by freezing eight chapters of the accession negotiations. In this context, he pointed out the assassination of Hrant Dink as alarming. He demanded the resumption of the negotiations after the fulfillment of some of the conditions concerning southeast Turkey.³⁹² This was one the exceptional statements of the party because it usually displayed a constant and decisive pro-EU stance.

During the pre-2011 national elections, the BDP has reiterated that it is still pro-EU. Bakırhan, as the vice-chairman of the BDP in October 2010 has stated that his party is an active supporter of Turkey's EU process because they believe that the EU membership would fasten the reforms particularly in political and cultural aspects which are essential to solve the Kurdish problem. He has mentioned that the BDP shares the EU's perspectives on minority rights issue and political empowerment of local administrations in order to consolidate the democracy. He has added that the BDP opened an office in Brussels to work on projects which would ease and accelerate the accession process of Turkey.³⁹³ Therefore, the party did not hide that its support for EU was based on pragmatic reasons.

After the 2011 elections, the first Assyrian origin deputy of the TGNA from the BDP, Erol Dora, stated that the EU should prove that it was not Christian Club by accepting Turkey into the Union. He claimed that his priority was the issue of EU accession in the new governmental term and the formation of an inclusive constitution

³⁹² Haber Vitrini, "DTP'li Bakırhan AB'nin Yüzüne Baka Baka Çattı!" (The DTP's Bakırhan Criticized the EU to its Face!), <http://www.habervitrini.com/haber.asp?id=259631> accessed on 06.08.2011

³⁹³ AB Analiz, "Tuncer Bakırhan: Partimiz AB Sürecini Aktif Olarak Destekleyen Bir Partidir." (Tuncer Bakırhan: "Our Party is a Party Which Supports the EU Process Actively."), 31 May 2011, <http://www.abanaliz.com/haberdetay.asp?ID=373> accessed on 08.09.2011

for minorities.³⁹⁴ This might be counted as a sign of the maintenance of consistency in the BDP's pro-EU stance in the new governmental term.

2.4.2. EU Issue in the Party Program

The BDP's program covers the EU issue under the title of "Our Regional and Global Policy" which underlines the party's opposition to any kind of discrimination in the aspects of gender, generation and culture and declares its support for developing close and warm bilateral relations with neighboring countries basing on the principle of peace.

The party states that it strives for the regional and global peace, democracy, human rights, rule of law, justice and stability, unity and brotherhood of nations. It guarantees to work for the fulfillment of international agreements concerned with the development of democratic rights and freedoms and to abolish the implementations violating those agreements.³⁹⁵ Additionally, it supports cooperation with regional and international organizations such as Council of Europe, the UN, the EU and the OSCE and points its commitment to the adoption of the documents and agreements issued by those organizations to domestic law.

The BDP draws parallels between the relations of the EU with its member states and the relations of Turkey with other regions such as the Balkans, Middle East, Caucasus, Mediterranean and Central Asia in terms of the reciprocity in cooperation and the unity of values reached as a result of development.³⁹⁶ It points out that the countries of those regions except the Middle East have mostly internalized a similar set of values and norms with those of the EU's. It mentions that some of the countries in the Middle East are willing to strengthen their relations with the EU through Turkey's membership process.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁴ Son Dakika, "Avrupa Birliği Hıristiyan Kulübü Olmadığını Türkiye'yi Alarak İspatlamalı" (EU Has to Prove That It Isn't a Christian Club by Including Turkey), 13 June 2011 <http://www.sondakika.com/haber-avrupa-birligi-hiristiyani-kulubu-olmadigini-2795503/> accessed on 28.11.2011

³⁹⁵ **The BDP Party Program**, Ankara, 2008, pp. 157-158

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 158

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 159

The party emphasizes that it supports Turkey's EU membership process for democratization of the country. It gives its priority to the harmonization of EU norms by domestic law and goes for the formation of the Europe of unified nations based on principle of equality instead of the Europe of the capital. Hence, it attaches importance to compromise the interests of state with the interests of nation along with the democratization principle to contribute peace in the region and in the world.³⁹⁸

The program draws attention to the necessity to find a solution for the Armenian Question within the context of the EU accession negotiations. It endorses the opening of Turkish-Armenian border and the development of cultural, social and economic relations with Armenia.³⁹⁹ This could be interpreted as the party considers that the EU membership can help Turkey solve its ever-existing minority problems.

With respect to the Cyprus Question, it expresses its will for the resolution of the conflict; which rests on the unity and fraternity of the two nations on the Island. It also states that the solution of the problem in Cyprus would accelerate the negotiation process with the EU.⁴⁰⁰ However, the program does not go beyond giving peace messages since it does not offer any solid method concerning how to solve the problem.

The party suggests that "if Turkey wants to contribute the internal and external peace within the framework of human rights and anti-militarism basing on the EU criteria, it should predicate on democratization."⁴⁰¹ Yet, the party program deems the level of democratization in Turkey as a determinant for the level of commitment to the EU integration.

2.4.3. An Analysis of the Party Publications

Unlike other three parties examined in this dissertation, there is a lack of publications on the BDP's EU policy. This absence was also confirmed by the BDP's Diyarbakır deputy for the 23rd parliamentary term, Akın Birdal, during his interview which is going to be given in the following section. When Birdal was asked if he knew

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ **The BDP Party Program**, Ankara, 2008, p. 160

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 160

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 2008, p. 161

some BDP publications related to its EU policy, he couldn't remember any and he stated that the party could not manage to form any sort of party archive or an EU bulletin, brochure etc. yet.⁴⁰² Unfortunately, no party publication focusing directly on the EU could be found and the analysis of the BDP's EU discourse here rest upon the speeches of some BDP deputies; the documents acquired from the BDP Headquarters in Ankara and a DTP publication entitled *Democratic Society Party's Project of Democratic Solution to the Kurdish Question*.

According to the very limited number of sources related to the BDP's EU discourse, the party is a determined supporter of the EU membership process of Turkey. It views the EU not solely as a community of states, but also a community of people. In this context, it enjoys considerable attempts for active involvement in the negotiation process in order to watch the implementation of reforms for compliance with the EU process closely and to ensure that the process serves the widest interests of society.⁴⁰³ Hence, it is noted that the party gives the priority to the society rather than the state.

In the *Democratic Society Party's Project of Democratic Solution to the Kurdish Question*, the DTP, which is currently the BDP, defines itself as a "left leaning mass party that perceives libertarian, egalitarian, peaceful, pluralist and multi-cultural society as richness. It adopts democratic, local and horizontal style of politics in place of centralist and hierarchical politics; rejecting all forms of discrimination and racism." The party believes that the establishment of a free, democratic, ecological society will be the liberation of the humankind.⁴⁰⁴ In this sense the ideal picture of a country drawn by the BDP is considerably similar to the EU in terms of the values and structure that have been adopted by the Union.

In the same project, the DTP also undertakes responsibility for the implementation of urgent reforms to provide a well-functioning local democracy and it encourages scientific research and discussion to this end. The party reiterates that it is a

⁴⁰² For further information about the interview see pp. 193-195 and to read the whole interview see the Annex III/5.

⁴⁰³ Unpublished presentation on the DTP obtained from the BDP Head Office, December 2010

⁴⁰⁴ DTP, **Democratic Society Party's Project of Democratic Solution to the Kurdish Question**, September 2008, İstanbul: Gün Yayınları, p. 42

determined supporter of the EU membership process of Turkey and it identifies the EU not solely as a community of states, but also a community of people. In addition, the party claims that it makes considerable attempts for active involvement in the negotiation process in order to be the watchdog of the implementation of reforms for compliance with the EU process and to ensure that the process serves the widest interests of society.”⁴⁰⁵ In this sense, the party declares its full commitment to Turkey’s EU cause.

In its “democratic autonomy” model which is an administrative model designed by the party through the operation of decentralization for the solution of Kurdish problem in Turkey, the DTP indicates that the cultural diversity, particularly that of Kurdish people, is neglected within the unitary and central structure of Turkish nation state. The party argues that the elimination of cultures through assimilation is adopted as official ideology and this sort of state behavior is incapable of problem-solving.⁴⁰⁶ The DTP also underlines the importance of decentralization and the promotion of local governance in order to manage cultural diversity in Turkey. For this reason it shows the EU as a role model in which several European countries have achieved to adapt themselves to the federal administrative structure.⁴⁰⁷ In other words, the Democratic Solution Project can be considered as an attempt to transform the unitary-central structure of the state, which is criticized for being cumbersome and inefficient, into a federal one in order to provide a permanent solution to the Kurdish question.

Within the context of Democratic Solution Project, the DTP contemplates that the EU is one of the foreign powers which could take active part for the termination of clashes.⁴⁰⁸ In this regard, the party attributes an important role to the consolidation of Turkey-EU relations.

Sabahat Tuncel, who became one of the 25 members of the European Union Harmonization Committee of the TGNA in the 24th parliamentary term to represent the

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 42

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 46

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 47

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 63

BDP marks that the implementations of democratization in the EU process proceeds very slowly due to the non-recognition of Kurdish reality. She underlines that there is a great inconsistency between Turkish foreign policy and the internal dynamics of Turkey in the sense that on the one side Turkey claims that it is in favor of dialogue and peaceful policies regarding tensions in neighboring countries; whereas on the other side it espouses suppressive and military approaches regarding the internal conflicts and this contradiction is directly reflected to the negotiations with the EU. Tuncel argues that Turkey attempts to make the EU adjust itself instead of complying with the EU norms and the negotiations and reforms come to a halt under these circumstances.⁴⁰⁹ Yet, she criticizes the government's EU policy but she absolutely supports Turkey's EU membership.

An interesting point to be mentioned about the BDP's EU policy discourse is that its being the only party which approaches the EU accession from the aspect of gender equality. The party has often declared its will to improve the rights of women and the gender equality in Turkey. As it is observed from the party publications, one of the reasons of the BDP's support for Turkey's EU membership is the issue of gender equality. As Tuncel puts forward, the party claims that democratization of women's rights in Turkey would have a directly proportional impact on its EU accession process.⁴¹⁰

In the 2011 election bulletin of the Labor, Freedom and Democracy Bloc led by the BDP, Turkey's EU accession process is referred by one sentence under "Foreign Policy" title. According to this document, the bloc declares its commitment to the process with the EU for Turkey's full membership to the Union within the foreign policy frames drawn in the declaration. In this context, the bloc firmly opposes to any sort of militaristic presence abroad. It claims that it would end Turkey's membership to the NATO and close all military bases of the NATO in Turkey; work for world peace

⁴⁰⁹ Sabahat Tuncel's Speech in the TGNA which was obtained from her office in the TGNA, December 2010

⁴¹⁰ AB Haber, "Sebahat Tuncel: Kadın Hakları Türkiye'nin Demokratikleşmesi için Önemli" (Sebahat Tuncel: Women's rights is Significant for Turkey's Democratization), 13 April 2010 www.abhaber.com/ozelhaber.php?id=5914 accessed on 21.12.2010

and nuclear disarmament; ban the use of chemical, biological and bacteriological weapons; support the struggle of Middle Eastern countries, those fighting against the hegemony of the US and Israel; respect for the self-determination right of Cyprus in case it comes to power.⁴¹¹ As it is seen from the election bulletin, the BDP's motivation and commitment in terms of the EU accession process seems to continue in the 24th parliamentary term and the party seems to maintain its pro-EU policy with its focus on democratization as long as Kurdish question remains unresolved.

2.4.4. Interview with Akın Birdal

Akın Birdal was the deputy of the BDP from Diyarbakır during the 23rd parliamentary term. Parallel to his political career as a member of parliament, he is the honorary president of the Turkish Human Rights Association; where he served as president for several years and he holds many national and international prizes for his contributions in the protection of human rights. When this interview was held with him on 15 December 2010, there was no member of the EU Harmonization Commission from the BDP as well as no responsible deputy for the party's EU policy. Thus, Birdal was chosen as an interviewee because he has relatively more international perspective with a focus on human rights.⁴¹²

In the interview, Birdal defines the BDP's EU policy as mostly pro-EU and he thinks his party's EU policy corresponds with its ideology to a large extent. Accordingly, he argues that human rights should be protected and the state should be authorized to be responsible for its monitoring mechanisms in the EU. From the human rights aspect, he finds the functioning of the Union problematic. He marks that Turkey has just been fined to the tune of 29000 euros for the closure case of the HADEP; however the party was closed anyway and currently two deputies who were members of the HADEP cannot enter the TGNA due to 10 % election barrier. He states that no EU member has such a high election threshold; the maximum being Germany's with 5%. In that sense he criticizes the Union for having a cumbersome justice mechanism. Nevertheless, he thinks Turkey would have to comply with the Charter of Fundamental

⁴¹¹ The Labor, Freedom and Democracy Bloc Election Bulletin, 2011, p. 37

⁴¹² To read the whole version of the interview with Akın Birdal, see the Annex III/5.

Rights of the European Union when it becomes a member because there are penalties unless it abides by the EU law.

On the other hand, he stresses on the BDP's discontent with the AKP's EU policy and blames the government for treating like a spoilt child of the neighborhood by its arrogant behavior in the EU-Turkey relations. He thinks that Turkey has made little progress in the accession process after the AKP came to government even though he assumes that the EU process has affected Turkish economy positively especially during 1996-2011 because Turkey has benefited from the EU funds and there has been a capital flow from Europe.

Birdal states that there is a shift of axis in the context of EU reforms and democratization since 5-6 years although the government has been making some regulations to adopt the *acquis* and receive funding. He argues that democratization has remained on paper and EU reforms have not contributed democratization in Turkey. He underlines the significance of Copenhagen criteria, protection of minority rights and rule of law in many platforms since he is a human rights activist. However, he addresses the unresolved Hrant Dink case and states that Turkey has not improved in human and minority rights issues.

Birdal illustrates his argument with numbers. He marks that there are 309 applications to the Association of Human Rights. He puts stress on the fact that the number of prisoners has never been this much in Turkish history by 120.98 people under arrest and sentence, 47 % of this number being people under arrest. He says there are 54000 arrested people in Turkey and many of them have been kept in prison and even not judged in the court yet. He thinks that the AKP made a good start by launching reform packages at the beginning; however then it turned its face away from the reforms. Thus, the BDP does not believe in the AKP's sincerity in reforms as well as the Kurdish opening. Birdal also accepts the idea that the AKP uses the EU issue as a tool for legitimization of its domestic policies.

Eventually, he states that he is not sure whether Turkey will become an EU member by the year 2023, but he also adds that he is quite unsure whether the EU will

still exist or what kind of enlargement strategy and values the Union will have at that time, too.

2.5. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY ON THE EU APPROACHES OF DEPUTIES IN THE TGNA

A survey was held with the deputies in the TGNA during 13-18 December 2010 in order to be used as complementary data to the party publications and interviews. As the five-step method used in this survey is explained in detail under the title of “Methodology” in the Introduction part, only the results of the survey will be declared and analyzed in this section.

The survey targeted to measure three points while directing seven, multiple-choice questions to the deputies of the 23rd parliamentary term. First, opinions of ordinary deputies, who do not take part directly in one of their party’s EU-related duties were aimed to be explored because albeit the EU policy of the parties are mentioned in party publications and TGNA speeches, they are usually authored or spoken by the party chairmen or the vice-chairmen. This brings the question whether the rest of the party shares the same opinion or they just approve whatever the chairmen impose them.

It is important to understand if the EU perspectives of party members are consistent with the EU perspective stated in party publications and speeches since disharmony within the party might indicate that the party has no established EU policy and the existing one can change easily due to a change in party leadership.

Second, the opinion of deputies about the performance of the AKP government regarding the EU accession process of Turkey after it took office in 2002 was attempted to be viewed. For this purpose, the deputies were asked one question about the economy and one about the democratization issue in the context of the EU.

Third, the overall EU perspective of the party and the belief in Turkey’s EU membership in the medium-run were sought to be revealed. This was to complement and confirm the data already collected from the party programs, publications, speeches and interviews with some of the deputies.

Given in Annex I and Annex II, seven questions on the questionnaire sheets were prepared to measure the above mentioned three points. Accordingly, question numbers 1 and 4 were referred to the first; 3, 5 and 6 were referred to the second; 2 and 7 to the third point. The questionnaires could be distributed to 490 out of 541 deputies and 122 of them; which represents 22 % of the whole TGNA as of 2010, handed in the answered questionnaire sheets within the given time interval. Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 show the results obtained from the survey.

Accordingly, the second question about the EU approach of the deputy independent from his/her party was answered with the option “mostly pro-EU” by the majority of the deputies from all parties. The deputies answered the fourth question “Do you think that your party’s ideology corresponds to its EU policy?” mostly with either “To a large extent corresponds.” or “Fully corresponds.”

The third, fifth and sixth questions were concentrated on the progress made by Turkey in the accession process. The third question directly interrogates the AKP’s performance in the eyes of other parties’ deputies as well as the AKP deputies. Here, it is interesting to see that most of the CHP, MHP and BDP deputies claim that there is no or very little progress made, whereas a large majority of the AKP deputies think that progress beyond the expectations was made and some others think that progress made was sufficient if not beyond the expectations. In the fifth question, the deputies were expected to evaluate the impact of the EU accession process on Turkish economy especially with regard to the Customs Union. The answers of the AKP deputies and the opposition deputies were adverse again. While the AKP deputies mostly think that it had a positive impact on economy despite some having reservations. However, all the other party deputies tended to have a negative approach in this issue. The sixth question asks the impact of the reforms, which were made for the harmonization of the *acquis communautaire*, on democratization in Turkey. The majority of all deputies answered this question positively.

The question numbers 1 and 7 sought to find out the general EU policy of those four parties. In this respect, the first question about the EU approach of the party which the deputy belongs to was answered with the option “mostly pro-EU” by the

majority of the deputies from all parties just like the second question. In that sense, it can be noted that there is a consensus between the EU approaches of individual party members and the party as a whole. Finally, when the opinion of the deputies were asked about whether Turkey would become an EU member by the year 2023, which would be the 100th Anniversary of the Republic. The majority of the AKP deputies confirmed their belief in being a member till that time; whereas the majority of the other parties' deputies either do not believe in it or they are undecided.

Findings of the survey are very much in line with the research done through the assessment of party publications and the interviews with some of the deputies. The survey reveals the fact that party members do not have diverse opinions regarding the EU issue. Instead, their approaches are almost identical to the official party discourses. It is noted that the party members can justify the EU policies of their parties with their party ideologies although each of those parties are supposed to have distinct ideologies. It is also interesting to see how members of government and opposition parties respond the questions aiming to measure the performance of the government since the majority of the government party members appreciate the progress made by the government concerning the EU accession process; whereas the majority of the members of the opposition parties consider that just a little or no progress made. It is also observed that government party members are far more optimistic about Turkey's membership in the medium-run.

Table 2.1: Distribution of Answers of the Survey According to the Parties

QUESTION 1					
	A	B	C	D	Blank
AKP	23	0	55	0	1
CHP	3	0	26	0	1
MHP	0	3	6	0	0
BDP	1	0	3	0	0
	26	3	90	0	2

QUESTION 2					
	A	B	C	D	Blank
AKP	19	2	53	0	3
CHP	4	0	25	0	1
MHP	0	3	6	0	0
BDP	1	1	2	0	0
	24	6	86	0	4

QUESTION 3					
	A	B	C	D	Blank
AKP	0	9	12	56	0
CHP	13	13	3	0	1
MHP	5	3	0	1	0
BDP	1	3	0	0	0
	19	28	15	57	1

QUESTION 4					
	A	B	C	D	Blank
AKP	0	4	54	19	0
CHP	0	4	15	10	1
MHP	0	0	4	5	0
BDP	0	2	2	0	0
	0	10	75	34	1

QUESTION 5					
	A	B	C	D	Blank
AKP	1	23	19	32	2
CHP	6	18	0	4	2
MHP	4	5	0	0	0
BDP	0	1	1	2	0
	11	47	20	38	4

QUESTION 6					
	A	B	C	D	Blank
AKP	76	0	1	0	0
CHP	24	2	3	0	1
MHP	6	0	3	0	0
BDP	3	1	0	0	0
	109	3	7	0	1

QUESTION 7					
	A	B	C	D	Blank
AKP	62	4	10	0	1
CHP	4	19	5	0	2
MHP	0	8	1	0	0
BDP	1	1	1	0	1
	67	32	17	0	4

Table 2.2: Distribution of the Survey Answers for Each Party

AKP					
	A	B	C	D	Blank
1. Question	21	0	55	0	1
2. Question	19	2	53	0	3
3. Question	0	9	12	56	0
4. Question	0	4	54	19	0
5. Question	1	23	19	32	2
6. Question	76	0	1	0	0
7. Question	62	4	10	0	1
Total	77				

CHP					
	A	B	C	D	Blank
1. Question	3	0	26	0	1
2. Question	4	0	25	0	1
3. Question	13	13	3	0	1
4. Question	0	4	15	10	1
5. Question	6	18	0	4	2
6. Question	24	2	3	0	1
7. Question	4	19	5	0	2
Total	30				

MHP					
	A	B	C	D	Blank
1. Question	0	3	6	0	0
2. Question	0	3	6	0	0
3. Question	5	3	0	1	0
4. Question	0	0	4	5	0
5. Question	4	5	0	0	0
6. Question	6	0	3	0	0
7. Question	0	8	1	0	0
Total	9				

BDP					
	A	B	C	D	Blank
1. Question	1	0	3	0	0
2. Question	1	1	2	0	0
3. Question	1	3	0	0	0
4. Question	0	2	2	0	0
5. Question	0	1	1	2	0
6. Question	3	1	0	0	0
7. Question	1	1	1	0	1
Total	4				

2.6. A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE EU STANCES OF THE TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE CASES OF POLICY CHANGE

This chapter aimed at answering the first research question asked in this dissertation: “Do the major political parties in Turkey have a consistent EU policy?” Accordingly, a comprehensive research was done for each of the four political parties which received the largest vote shares over the last three general elections in Turkey.

Once the EU policy stances of each party is revealed, certain developments in the course of EU-Turkey relations between 2002 and 2011 which resulted in a change in the attitudes of those parties towards the EU are extracted from the party discourses. By this means, the cases which are going to be considered in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 to analyze the factors affecting the cost-benefit calculations of the parties in making their EU policies are formulated.

In the light of all sources of data collected about the EU policy stances of the four political parties, it is concluded that the parties did not pursue consistent EU policies during the concerned time period with the exception of the DTP/BDP. When looked at the EU discourses of the three major parties in the parliament, there is a difference in their EU approaches between the two parliamentary terms of 2002-2007 and 2007-2011. There is also a difference between the periods of 2002-2004 and 2004-2006 within the first parliamentary term. Therefore, the periods of 2002-2004, 2004-2006 and 2006-2011 are determined as the cases in which the effects of three factors, namely electoral behavior, intra-party dynamics and party identity, are going to be analyzed.

There has been a general shift from enthusiasm to first skepticism; and then, negligence in the EU stances of the political parties during these three periods. If a closer look at the party discourses is taken, then it can be noticed that those periods coincide with the three European Council meetings which resulted in significant outcomes for Turkey’s EU accession. This, in turn, caused political parties to recalculate their costs and benefits from their EU policies and adjust them to the new circumstances. In this respect, 12-13 December 2002, 16-17 December 2004 and 11

December 2006 EU Council meetings can be considered as the turning points for the change in the attitudes of Turkish political parties towards the EU accession. Below, Table 2.3 shows the cases when changes observed in the EU discourse of the political parties.

Table 2.3: Changes in the EU Discourses of Turkish Political Parties during 2002-2011

First Parliamentary Term of the AKP Government (2002-2007)		Second Parliamentary Term of the AKP Government (2007-2011)
Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
2002-2004	2004-2006	2006-2011
pro-EU & eager to make reforms	pro-EU but skeptical about national interests	pro-EU in principle but highly skeptical about national interests & Turkey's ever being an EU member

Although Turkey formally acquired candidate country status in 1999, a date was not given to open the accession negotiations. December 2002 EU Council was very much expected to start the negotiation process especially after serious reforms such as the abolishment of death penalty were realized. Nevertheless, the EU decided on watching further progress until Turkey fulfilled the Copenhagen criteria so that it did not refer to any date for negotiations. This caused disappointment but did not discourage political parties to continue reforms. Instead, Turkey entered a rapid reform period to harmonize its laws with the EU *acquis communautaire* in the aftermath of the 12-13 December 2002 EU Council. As it is seen in Table 2.3, between the 2002 and 2004 EU Council meetings, there is an overall pro-EU attitude in the parties' EU discourses. When they are compared, despite having different levels of desire and commitment, the EU policies of all the parties can be characterized by motivation to fulfill the requirements of the EU and to start the accession talks after the EU Council.

This positive atmosphere changed after the 16-17 December 2004 EU Council. In fact, the developments which paved the way for a negative turn began earlier, in the spring of 2004. The very positive attitudes of parties towards the EU accession regardless of their different historical, ideological and institutional backgrounds started to change negatively when Annan Plan was not approved by the Greek side of Cyprus. As Yenigün underlines, Cyprus conflict was one of the most important foreign policy concerns of almost all parties in Turkey since his study reveals that 44 out of 100 speeches on foreign policy issues in the TGNA from 1995 till 2003 were on Cyprus conflict.⁴¹³ When the Island was included to the Union without any solution was provided to the conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, it caused a general frustration in the parliament. Thus, at the time the EU Council was held, there was already disappointment with the accession of Cyprus even though the referendum concerning the reconciliation of the Cyprus conflict was rejected by the Greek Cypriots.

In the 2004 EU Council, progress made by Turkey was finally found sufficient to open negotiations basing on the European Commission's progress report on Turkey which confirmed that Turkey fulfilled Copenhagen criteria.⁴¹⁴ However, Turkey could only receive a date to start the decisions although it was willing to start the negotiations immediately after the Council meeting. In addition, the decisions taken on the structure of the negotiations were perceived negatively in Turkey because they included lots of ambiguities about the future of Turkey's accession into the Union and concerns about the national interests.

Once the negotiations started in 2005, the extension of the Customs Union to the new members became a problem since Cyprus was already a member of the Union and Turkey had to sign a Customs Union Agreement with it although it was not recognized by Turkey as a state. Until the December 2006 EU Council, a decline in motivation and a shift from enthusiasm to skepticism is visible in the EU discourses of

⁴¹³ M. Cüneyt Yenigün, **Soğuk Savaş Sonrasında TBMM ve Dış Politika. Belgeler-Yorumlar (The TGNA after Cold War and Foreign Policy. Documents-Comments)**, Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım, April 2004, p. 477

⁴¹⁴ European Commission, **2004 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress towards Accession**, Brussels, 6 October 2004
http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2004/rr_tr_2004_en.pdf
accessed on 09.10.2008

the three parties. Although the EU issue was still frequently on the daily agendas of the parties, during 2004-2006, the references to the EU in the discourses of the opposition parties were mainly critical regarding the content and there was loss of enthusiasm in the government.

Yet, in 11 December 2006 EU Council, the suspension of eight relevant negotiation chapters with Turkey was approved by the EU. This led a serious slowdown in the pace of integration as well as a pessimistic atmosphere about the EU in Turkey. The EU was tended to be perceived as biased in the eyes of Turkish people and parties since it was punishing the compromising side of the Cyprus conflict by blocking the negotiation chapters. After this summit, there has been a considerable decline in motivation of the parties to accelerate the negotiation process. Thanks to the arising internal problems within the EU and the busy agenda of domestic affairs, the EU was no more a focus of attention in daily life politics.

In the 2007-2011 parliamentary term, no EU Council meeting took a critical decision on Turkey other than evaluating the course and pace of reforms made in the country. Meanwhile, Turkish political parties fully concentrated on domestic issues and the EU issue, which was already a less appealing issue for Turkish public, was no more priority on the agenda of the political parties. They continued referring to the EU in their publications and speeches, but this time more rarely, comparing to the previous parliamentary term of 2002-2007. This combined with the EU's reluctant attitude to include Turkey because the Union withdrew into its shell to deal with serious internal economic problems especially in its Eurozone.

When the EU policy of each political party is evaluated separately, it is noted that there is a shift towards more skeptic EU approaches in general; however, the level and timing of this shift shows differences according to each party.

Amidst hidden agenda debates, the performance of the AKP government during 2002-2004 in terms of the introduction of reform packages to comply with the political criteria of the EU was considerably high. The EU issue was on the daily agenda and the party members frequently referred to the EU cause of Turkey (See Table

2.4) and their commitment to that cause in their speeches. From a rational choice perspective, it can be interpreted as the benefits of its pro-EU stance were much higher than its costs.

The AKP's EU approach was still mostly pro-EU in 2004-2006 because the party achieved to be the initiator of the negotiation process. This was used as a tool for propaganda in its EU discourse while the party was preparing for the upcoming 2007 general elections. As Table 2.4 shows, the frequency of references to the EU is just a little bit lower than the period of 2002-2004 so that the EU issue was still covering some part of the daily agenda of the party. When the content of those references are reviewed, it can be seen that the party mostly emphasized on its success of starting negotiations by responding the criticisms of opposition parties. Therefore, this period can be identified with a less enthusiastic but still not skeptical pro-EU stance for the AKP.

The EU stance of the party after 2006 was characterized by skepticism, even if the party always confirmed its commitment to the EU and it was not as critical as the opposition parties. The frequency of references to the EU in daily life politics considerably decreased and the content of those references included more emphasis on the benefits of Turkish membership for the EU. Being the government party, the AKP took a defensive position in its EU policy and mostly gave the message that they worked hard for the accession process, however those efforts were not well appreciated by the EU and some of the member states used the strategy of opposing Turkey's membership as a tool for increasing their vote share in their domestic politics. Contrary to the first one, the second parliamentary term of the AKP government was highly inactive regarding the EU accession process.

Table 2.4: Frequency of References to the EU in the AKP Group Speeches in the TGNA

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
1*	7	23	27	22	22	31	21	27	15	26	8
2**	41	188	114	150	148	153	49	64	60	47	7
3***	6	8	4	7	7	5	2	2	4	2	1

* Number of group meeting speeches reviewed

** Number of references to the word “EU” or “European Union”

*** Average number of references per speech

Likewise, the EU stance of the CHP was enthusiastically pro-EU during 2002-2004. Although the 2002 general elections ended up with a defeat for the party while the AKP as a new born party got the chance to enjoy the government alone, the CHP did not use the EU issue as a tool for political competition with the AKP. Rather, the party cooperated with the AKP government to speed up the reforms. Looking at the frequency of the CHP speeches and publications referring to the EU, it is also realized that the EU issue was often handled on the party’s daily agenda and the commitment of the party to Turkey’s EU cause was usually stressed. The party started to change its optimistic EU approach in 2004 when Cyprus dispute rose as a problem in the EU-Turkey relations.

In 2004-2006, the CHP became skeptical in its EU discourse and it began to mention Turkey’s national interests together with the EU accession. The party developed the “honorable membership” thesis to explain its EU stance. Accordingly, it advocated the idea that Turkey should not give up its national interests to become an EU member. During that period, the EU issue was very often on the party agenda and the party seriously worked on the EU issue which led an increase in new party publications explaining the party position concerning the subject.

After the freezing of eight negotiation chapters in 2006, the EU approach of the party turned into being fully skeptical. Honorable membership was justified as the only

way of proceeding in accession process. One more visible change in the party discourse was that the party associated the EU issue with the failures of the AKP government in almost every reference to the EU in its publications and speeches. The EU issue became a way of blaming the AKP policies so that party competition was felt deeply in post-2006 EU discourse of the CHP. In terms of commitment to Turkey's EU cause, only the establishment of a CHP office in Brussels in 2008 to make lobbying activities and to represent the party in the EU can be considered as a remarkable initiative. However, the CHP mostly pursued an inactive EU policy in the parliamentary term of 2007-2011 with the exception of the party chairman Kılıçdaroğlu's visits in the EU capitals to make speeches after 2010.

Even if it was not as motivated as the AKP and the CHP, the MHP also followed a pro-EU policy in 2002-2004. As a nationalist party, the MHP never adopted a completely pro-EU stance in its history and always gave the priority to Turkish national interests. Nevertheless, the unchallengeable and unquestionable role attributed to Turkish state caused the party accept Turkey's EU membership goal since it already became a state policy. Thus, the party did not block the reform packages although it did not approve all of them so that those reform packages could pass in the TGNA without problems. Additionally, it repeatedly claimed that it is in favor of Turkey's EU membership. The course of the EU-Turkey relations was also followed carefully by the party. Interestingly, the MHP was the only party among those four in terms of documenting its EU approach and making publications on the subject regularly.

In 2004-2006, however, the cost of being pro-EU was too high for a nationalist party since many national interests were at stake. As a party which had a strong focus on the protection of Turkish Cypriots in its foreign policy, the developments in 2004 and its aftermath which disadvantaged Turkish Cypriots caused a serious negative shift in the MHP's EU stance. The party discourse on the EU issue was to a large extent shaped by opposing the AKP policies. It published several documents in order to explain how the AKP pursued a submissive EU policy and often put the issue in its daily agenda. On the other hand, the party maintained the claim that it always supported EU membership in principle.

After 2006, the MHP increased the dose of its criticisms for both the EU and the AKP. It viewed the behavior of the EU towards Turkey as unacceptable and the AKP's EU policy as entirely submissive and threatening for the preservation of national interests. Comparing to other parties, the MHP was far more active in sharing its EU approach by keeping its publications updated. In 2007-2011, the party reiterated its reluctance to be an EU member under those circumstances and suggested for a reconsideration of Turkey's EU membership goal. The MHP discourse became highly skeptical.

In contradiction with others, the DTP and its successor BDP followed a consistent line in their EU stances. They always adopted a highly motivated pro-EU approach. When three periods are compared, no difference indicating a policy change is noticed regarding these parties' EU discourses. However, it should also be highlighted that the EU discourse of the DTP/BDP is not possible to be evaluated profoundly because of the absence of party publications on the EU issue. The only way of analyzing the EU stance of the party is to read between the lines of the party program and go through some speeches or interviews of the party members published by media. The BDP is likely to support the EU membership as long as it associates it with democratization and solution of Kurdish problem in Turkey.

The evaluation of Turkish political parties' EU discourses produced results which corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work done by rational choice theorists. The research done for this chapter proved that Turkish political parties change their EU policy decisions rationally according to the change in their interest perceptions. In other words, they reshape their policies in accordance with the political conjuncture which reshuffles their interest perceptions. Thus, the parties are highly pragmatic in their decisions and they can change their policies firmly when the conditions change.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 take the findings of this chapter and analyze the relation between the EU approaches of the parties and the electoral behavior, intra-party dynamics and party identity. Then, they attempt to find out how those factors affect the party behavior in the context of the EU issue.

CHAPTER 3

THE IMPACT OF ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR ON TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES

The previous chapter so far investigated the EU stances of political parties between 2002 and 2011 and detected certain periods of change in their EU discourses. By this means, it found out that the Turkish political parties did not have a consistent EU policy during that time. Having the first research question answered, this chapter switches to the second research question of the thesis and asks why political parties change their EU stances.

As it is discussed in Chapter 2, political parties act rationally when they make their policies, that is, they make cost-benefit analysis before deciding on a certain policy issue. Departing from this assumption, this chapter aims at examining the Turkish electoral behavior as one of the most significant factors affecting the cost-benefit calculation of the parties to determine their attitudes towards the EU issue. From the rational choice approach, it is argued that the parties do act accordingly with the electoral preferences because the main goal of a political party is to survive within the system. It only achieves this goal by pulling votes in an electoral democracy. The parties which cannot collect sufficient amount of votes are destined to be ineffective if not completely disappear by dissolving itself or merging with another party. Once increasing their power, they strive for assuming office as government or at least becoming the main opposition party because the more votes they get, the more influence they have in policy-making of the country.

Hence, the chapter divides into four parts to take a deeper look into Turkish electoral structure. The first part gives a theoretical background on how the relation between electoral behavior and political parties is explained by using rational choice. It mainly focuses on the implication of rational choice to voter behavior. In this context, the concept of rational voter and collective action are studied. Furthermore, aggregation of preferences and two common voting models of rational choice theory are assessed. Then, the role of information in rational choice is mentioned concisely.

The second part goes through the partisan affiliations of Turkish voters and their effects on the preferences of voters while choosing the party they vote for.

The third part delves into election politics in Turkey as the main element of the party-electorate relation. Then, it goes with the election politics in Turkey while touching upon all the local and general elections of 2002, 2004, 2007, 2009 and 2011 and reviews the transformation of the Turkish party system since the AKP took over the government in 2002.

Eventually, the fourth part deals with the impact of the electoral behavior on the attitudes of political parties towards the EU during the concerned time interval.

The chapter concludes with drawing parallels between the rise and fall of the support of Turkish public for the EU accession and the change in the EU stances of the political parties.

3.1. RATIONAL CHOICE AND VOTING BEHAVIOR

Electoral studies were one of the first fields, which witnessed the penetration of rational choice models into political science. Since the rational choice theory is originally based on the analysis of individual behavior, early rational choice scholars in political science viewed the voter as individual and examined his behavior in elections. However, later studies started to move from individual political actors to collectivities and questioned collective behavior. As a result, many rational choice models explaining the voting behavior were derived from the assumptions of the below mentioned early attempts.

3.1.1. The Rational Voter

The American economist Anthony Downs was the first who attempted to incorporate rational choice theory into the study of political phenomena such as voting behavior, political party behavior, voter turnout, party convergence etc. Downs constructed a brand new theory of democratic decision making that assumes rational, self-serving behavior on the part of the range of the political actors, including voters as well as party leaders. When his article *An Economic Theory of Political Action in a*

Democracy was published in 1957, “citizens were perceived to stay informed and vote, and political parties were viewed as existing to offer sharp alternative agendas to the candidates” in the dominant normative school of political science. The article was “something of an embarrassment to the discipline of political science” because it brought sound explanations to some of the core political phenomena by borrowing the assumptions and the deductive method of another discipline than political science.⁴¹⁵ In this sense, he has substantially contributed to political science with a new perspective on electoral and party studies. One of the early readers of Downs, Gabriel Almond, despite criticizing him, admits that Downs enabled him to organize and interpret his data more systematically and parsimoniously than his earlier constructs did.⁴¹⁶ Downsian approach has aroused scholarly interest in voting behavior and helped develop the contemporary form of electoral studies.

Downs explains the relation between party candidates, which offer policy platforms, and voters, which decide how and whether to vote. He assumes that each voter estimates a *party differential*, that is, the difference between expected utilities derived from the policy choices of two parties’ candidates. A voter whose party differential is non-zero can be counted on to vote if the costs of voting are zero. If the costs of voting are non-zero, then he discounts that party differential by the closeness of the election, which implies the likelihood that his vote will make a difference to the outcome, and votes if the discounted party differential is greater than the cost of voting.⁴¹⁷ This logic determines a voter’s decision for whether the incumbent party should be elected for another term or it should be replaced with another party.

After describing individual voting as a rational cost-benefit calculation, Downs calls attention to the problem of abstention. He underlines that the returns from voting are usually not so high, particularly if parties converge to a similar position, that even small costs entail the abstention of many voters in a sizable electorate. However, a rational voter knows that if everyone goes through this cost-benefit calculation of voting and no one votes, then the presence of democracy is threatened. Moreover, it is also

⁴¹⁵ Gary J. Miller, “The Impact of Economics on Contemporary Political Science”, **Journal of Economic Literature**, Vol. 49, September 1997, p. 1175

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., p. 1176

possible that the voters are uninformed. Since acquiring information about candidates and policies is costly and individual voter has little impact on the final outcome, voters may discount the value of that information resulting in *rational ignorance*.⁴¹⁸ Downs' idea, that is, a rational voter does not really bother to vote, was one of the turning points of electoral studies because after he launched the rational voter concept, it has become more common among political scientists to investigate the reasons why individuals vote rather than trying to understand why they don't vote.

For instance, Riker and Ordeshook question Downsian rational ignorance in *A Theory of the Calculus of Voting* and they add some factors such as sense of civic duty, voter's satisfaction, partisanship that matter to the logic of rational voter.⁴¹⁹ To know how those factors change is important because it affects the turnout probability. However, this is far from being a formula that helps predict the turnout probability of any specific voter. Miller remarks that the Downsian assumption of rational ignorance has been confirmed by the improvement of opinion polls, surveys etc. which are designed to measure the electoral awareness of candidates; however his prediction of the turnout rise in close actions remains ambiguous because the empirical studies about this issue could not find any link between voter's perception of election closeness and the decision to vote although they confirmed that the turnout increases in close elections just as Downs claims.⁴²⁰

To sum up, Downsian formulation of voting process is entirely instrumental. He tends to view political action as self-interest driven, which targets to minimize cost of information. In this sense, the significance of ideology and partisanship is inconsiderably low because voters behave rational. In multiparty systems, strategic voting may occur which implies that an individual may vote for a party different than the one he actually supports for many reasons. It might be an effort to prevent an unwanted party to be elected or to consolidate the power of a small party can be counted as one of those reasons.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ William Riker and Peter Ordeshook, "A Theory of the Calculus of Voting", **American Political Science Review**, 1970, p. 28

⁴²⁰ Gary J. Miller, "The Impact of Economics on Contemporary Political Science", **Journal of Economic Literature**, Vol. 49, September 1997, p. 1176

Nevertheless, Downs' rational voter concept, in particular, his assumptions about electoral turnout have raised the questions how voters in large groups behave and why people act for collective goals or in their group interest although it would be considered as irrational for a rational individual. Yet, in Downsian analysis of voting behavior there was a paradox of representation of large-group interests in democracies and this has brought the collective action studies to the political science agenda.

3.1.2. Collective Action and Inaction

Unlike the classic pluralist perspective of political science, which claims that good policies are the outcomes of the bargaining and interaction of all interest-groups in society, another leading rational choice political scientist Mancur Olson has argued that the policy goals pursued by interest groups constitute public goods, which are also free to those who choose not to contribute. Thus, citizens might free ride on the lobbying efforts of others with similar goals even when they are interested and this might result in many shared interests not to be represented in society. On the other hand, those interests that are effectively organized must induce support by means of *selective incentives* unrelated to the supply of the public good. Those selective incentives can be positive or negative. It can, for example, be a loss or punishment through imposition of more taxes and penalties for the member unwilling to contribute the production of collective good. Olson's book *The Logic of Collective Action* focuses on the function of selective incentives in many political organizations, the failure of some interests to organize effectively, and manage public policies.⁴²¹ It also compares the function of selective incentives in small groups and large groups.

Olson draws attention to the behavior of individuals which are belonged to different communities in society such as trade unions, cartels and any other interest group. He points out that the higher wage won by a union applies to all members; every lobby obtaining a general change in legislation or regulation obtains a public or collective good for everyone who benefits from this change, and every cartel using market or industrial action to acquire a higher price or wage must increase the price for every seller when it limits the quantity supplied. This forms a collective good for all

⁴²¹ Ibid., p. 1177

sellers. Then, for governments and combinations exploiting their political or market power, there is a dilemma of producing public or collective goods that inevitably go to everyone within a group because there is no incentive for the individuals and firms they serve to contribute voluntarily to their support. This means that governments, cartels or lobbies would not exist unless individuals somehow support them for a reason other than collective goods.⁴²² *Logic of Collective Action* suggests taxation for governments and selective incentives for organizations as the driving force of individuals to contribute the support of group interests and indicates that the smaller and more homogenous the group is, the stronger social selective incentives are because in larger groups it is more difficult for each member to agree on the exact nature of any collective good provided.

Miller mentions that citizens who voluntarily contributed to group goals were a puzzle to interest group researchers, just as citizens who voted in large electorates were a puzzle to the followers of Downs. In this regard, the followers of Olson have benefited from game theory, especially the prisoners' dilemma which shows that individual pursuit of self-interest led to suboptimal outcomes.⁴²³ Likewise, the development in the studies of group impact on individual political behavior has also caused the reinterpretation of the Downsian problem of voter turnout. New studies have highlighted that voters are not only rational but also social and they have defined voting as a form of political participation that groups can encourage by reducing costs and increasing incentives.⁴²⁴

3.1.3. The Aggregation of Preferences in Rational Choice Theory

Once political behavior of individual and the motives behind collective action were examined, the aggregation of individual preferences has become a focal point of research among rational choice theorists. How do the preferences of individuals aggregate in order to form a harmony, for instance, to choose their representatives or decide on a certain policy within a political party? Hence, the relation between

⁴²² Mancur Olson, "The Logic", *The Rise and Decline of Nations*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 19-20

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, p. 1177

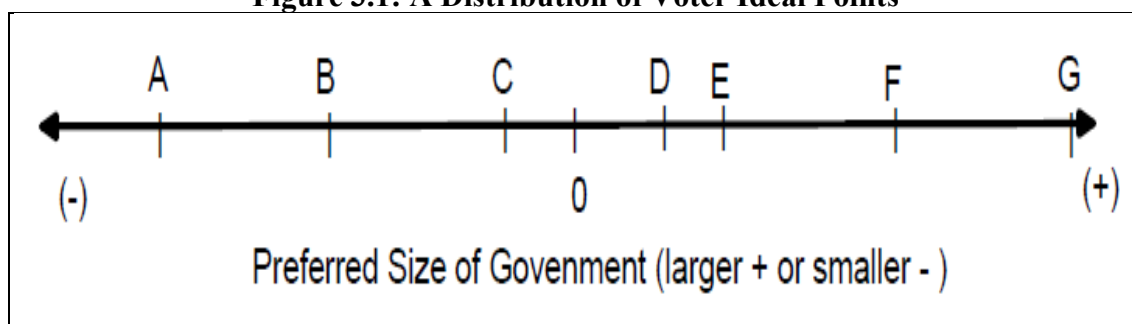
⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1178

individual behavior and policy outcomes in democracies has been studied. How policy preferences can aggregate forming equilibrium in a political environment characterized by rational individuals who act in accordance with their self-interests. Efforts made to analyze the aggregation of preferences have helped the formulation of the spatial voting and median voter models based on issues such as party competition, voter behavior and political party equilibrium.

3.1.3.1. The Spatial Voting Model

One of the most well-known models of the rational choice political science is the spatial modeling which examines voting behavior. The model assumes that it is possible to represent an individual's ideal combination of public policies as a "point" on a diagram of "policy space."⁴²⁵ Then, distance from an individual's ideal point, that is, his policy goal is used to represent a voter's preferences over other "less ideal" policy options. Since there is very little possibility for voters to see their ideal policy or candidate on the ballot, they vote for the most preferred of the available policies or candidates. In the spatial representation of voter preferences, a voter prefers a policy or politician "A" to policy or politician "B" if and only if "A" is closer to his or her ideal point than is "B".⁴²⁶ Figure 3.1 below shows an example of policy space diagram and each point on it represents the ideal point of a voter.

Figure 3.1: A Distribution of Voter Ideal Points



Source: Introduction to Rational Choice Politics, Background Material for Constitutional and Political Economy Courses, <http://rdc1.net/class/BayreuthU/CONSINTR.pdf> accessed on 21.02.2012

⁴²⁵ Introduction to Rational Choice Politics, Background Material for Constitutional and Political Economy Courses

<http://rdc1.net/class/BayreuthU/CONSINTR.pdf> accessed on 21.02.2012

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

Downs has been the architect of spatial model in political science by his formulation of party competition. Inspired from Harold Hotelling's spatial competition theory which explains how location affects competition in the market, Downs infers his own competition approach for parties and develops an argument on party ideologies by means of spatial analogy for political action. Once making use of the political spectrum and mapping all political parties on a single ideological line, he formulates his thesis around five assumptions:

1- The political parties in any society can be ordered from left to right in a manner agreed upon by all voters.

2- Each voter's preferences are single peaked at some point on the scale and slope monotonically downward on either side of the peak (unless it lies at one extreme of the scale)

3- The frequency distribution of voters along the scale is variable from society to society but fixed in any one society.

4- Once placed on the political scale, a party can move ideologically either to the left or to the right up to but not beyond the nearest party toward which it is moving.

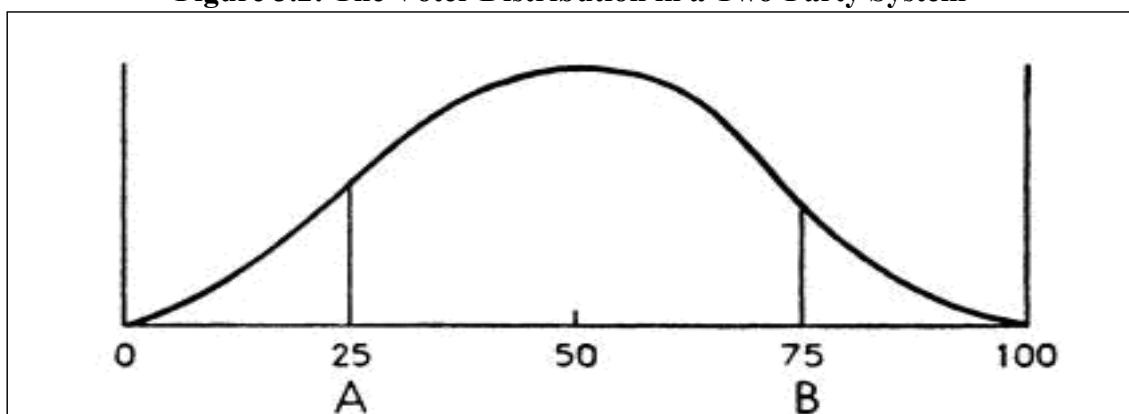
5- In a two-party system, if either party moves away from the extreme nearest it toward the other party, extremist voters at its end of the scale may abstain because they see no significant differences between the choices offered them.⁴²⁷

In his first assumptions mentioned above, Downs mainly focuses on American politics based on two-party system. Later on, he applies them to multi-party systems as well. The following figures illustrate his assumptions.

Figure 3.2 shows the voter distribution in a two-party system. The distribution of voters along the spectrum makes both party A and party B choose to move from their starting points 25 and 75 towards each other and converge on the center 50 to be able to gain more votes since they would lose at the extremes because of the abstention.

⁴²⁷ Anthony Downs, "An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy", **The Journal of Political Economy**, Vol. 65, No. 2, April 1957, p. 142

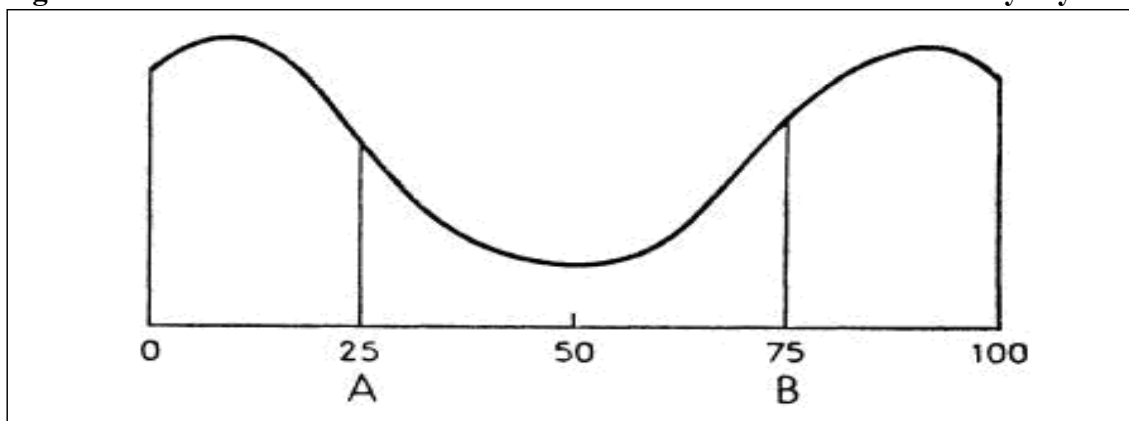
Figure 3.2: The Voter Distribution in a Two-Party System



Source: Anthony Downs, “An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy”, *The Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 65, No. 2, April 1957, p. 143

Figure 3.3 represents a different distribution of voters in a two-party system which results in different reaction of parties. This time the two parties diverge towards the extremes rather than converge on the center because a radical position would help them gain more votes.

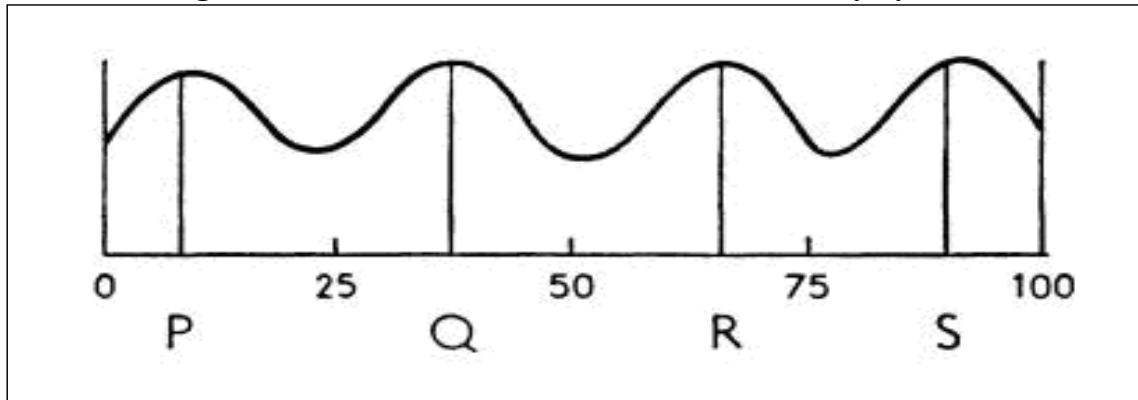
Figure 3.3: Another Possible Distribution of Voters in a Two-Party System



Source: Anthony Downs, “An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy”, *The Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 65, No. 2, April 1957, p. 143

This model can be applied to multiparty systems as well. As shown in Figure 3.4, in a multiparty system each party creates a mode and stays at this mode rather than moving to left or right because it has more advantages when it differentiates itself from other neighboring parties. If it moves to the left/right, it would lose as many votes to the party on its right/left or if it were an extremist party at the right/left end of the spectrum, it would lose them for its abstention.

Figure 3.4: The Voter Distribution in a Multi-Party System



Source: Anthony Downs, “An Economic Theory of Political Action in a Democracy”, *The Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 65, No. 2, April 1957, p. 143

In Downsian spatial analogy parties adapt their ideology to the opinions and values of their likely supporters in the electorate because it rests on the idea that a voter votes for the party which stands as the closest to his ideological position on the political spectrum. In other words, each voter votes for the party which stands on his ideal point.

The spatial model is also widely applied in the context of Turkish electoral studies. One of the prominent works on spatial analysis of Turkish party preferences has been done by Çarkoğlu and Hinich so far. They have examined different characteristics of voter preferences in Turkey by employing spatial model. In their *A Spatial Analysis of Turkish Party Preferences*, they aim at portraying the rationale of voters’ attitudes about issues and evaluations of political parties that compete for their vote. Their spatial analysis shows that there are two dimensions: First dimension is the dimension of secularists versus pro-Islamists as expected from the center-periphery framework and the second dimension is the impact of recent conflict involving Kurdish minority on rising nationalist sentiments.⁴²⁸ In another study, Schofield, Özdemir, Gallego and Zakharov develop a valence model of 1999 and 2002 general elections by employing spatial model. They claim that activist groups contribute resources to their favored parties in response to policy concessions from the parties so that “parties balance a centripetal electoral force against a centrifugal activist effect in order to maximize vote

⁴²⁸ Ali Çarkoğlu and Melvin J. Hinich, “A Spatial Analysis of Turkish Party Preferences”, *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 25, 2006, p. 369

share.”⁴²⁹ In his doctoral thesis, Erdoğan employs alternative spatial models to evaluate the perceptions of voters to prove the presence of electoral change in Turkey and claims that electoral change can be explained by analyzing similarities between competing political parties and effects of political institutions on this competition.⁴³⁰ The number of those examples of spatial modelling can be increased since the model suggests a solid theoretical basis for the interpretation of voter choice.

3.1.3.2. The Median Voter Theorem

Building on the logic of spatial voting model, a median voter refers to the voter at the center of the diagram of voters’ ideal points so that there are equal numbers of voters before and after the median voter. The median is shown with “D” in Figure 3.1. A simple version of median voter theorem concludes that the policy, which is supported by the median voter, wins and the median voter is always a member of the majority coalition.⁴³¹ If a political candidate or a political party succeeds in predicting a median voter’s ideal policy and promises in election campaigns to implement that ideal policy, the candidate/the party definitely wins those elections according to the median voter theorem.

The strong form of the median voter theorem assumes that the median voter is completely satisfied from the public policy within a majority rule. It can be used for analyzing and predicting a wide range of public policy outcomes in democracies. Any change in the status of the median voter tends to change public policy if he always gets what he wants. Therefore, policy can change as the median voter becomes older, richer, more educated etc. or as suffrage laws change in a manner that changes the median such as women’s attaining the right to vote at the beginning of the 19th century.⁴³² The model

⁴²⁹ Norman Schofield; Uğur Özdemir; Maria Gallego and Zakharov, “Competition for Popular Support: A Valance Model of Elections in Turkey”, **Social Choice and Welfare**, No. 36, 2011, p. 451
<http://polisci.wustl.edu/files/polisci/9.scwxxpublishTurkey.pdf>

accessed on 22.04.2012

⁴³⁰ Emre Erdoğan, **Between Exit and Loyalty: Dealignment and Realignment in the Turkish Party System**, Ph.D Dissertation, Boğaziçi University, 2001

⁴³¹ Introduction to Rational Choice Politics, Background Material for Constitutional and Political Economy Courses

<http://rdc1.net/class/BayreuthU/CONSINTR.pdf>

accessed on 21.02.2012

⁴³² Ibid.

has been applied by many scholars to measure different aspects of voter-party relations and to interpret numerous issues in public policy making. For instance, Kim and Fording estimate the median voter position in 25 western democracies including Turkey in order to make cross-national comparisons of voter ideology among these countries as well as cross-time comparisons within individual countries.⁴³³ A similar study was conducted by De Neves to provide a median voter data set that allows for comparison across time and across countries. For this reason, they apply a methodology which consists of linking party positions with electoral outcomes to arrive at revealed voter preferences.⁴³⁴ A similar method is applied in the last section of this chapter to understand the relation between electoral preference in terms of the EU support and the EU stances of Turkish political parties.

Nevertheless, if there are two or more important policy dimensions, the median voter rarely exists and policy choices under democracy can be problematic in the absence of a median voter. Thus, democracy works if other institutions or norms limit political choices or reduce complex political choices to one-dimensional choices. It is also accepted by rational choice that the problems of majority cycling, weak voter turnout and rational ignorance should be overcome for a successful democracy.⁴³⁵ In sum, the median voter theorem has contributed significantly to the efforts of understanding political decision making in democracies.

3.1.4. The Aggregation of Information

The notion of imperfect information was also introduced to political science by Downs, who remarked that information is costly. In his analysis, he underlines that rational citizens are mostly interested in getting informed about their own private purchases rather than public policies on which they cannot have so much impact.

⁴³³ Heemin Kim and Richard C. Fording, "Voter Ideology in Western Democracies: An Update", **European Journal of Political Research**, No. 42, 2003, p. 95
<http://www.bri.olemiss.edu/courses/pol628/kimfording03.pdf>
accessed on 21.04.2012

⁴³⁴ Jan De Neve and Emmanuel De Neve, "The Median Voter Data Set: Voter Preferences across 50 Democracies", **Electoral Studies**, Vol. 30, No. 4, December 2011, p. 865

⁴³⁵ Introduction to Rational Choice Politics, Background Material for Constitutional and Political Economy Courses
<http://rdc1.net/class/BayreuthU/CONSINTR.pdf>
accessed on 21.02.2012

Additionally, they may use informational short cuts including opinion leaders and party labels when they vote in order to economize on the cost of gathering information.⁴³⁶ In this respect Downs' rational choice analysis has reconsidered the conditions under which individuals make their decisions. It has challenged the existing theories which took the information as a given or as a citizen's duty to acquire assuming that we live in a world of perfect information.

Drawing an analogy between voters and shareholders of a large firm Miller claims that voters encounter difficulties in monitoring the activities of large hierarchies staffed by people who have information and expertise that is unavailable to the average voter or shareholder. As a result of the high costs of monitoring managers although it supplies a public good for shareholders, a collective action problem occurs for large numbers of shareholders.⁴³⁷ Thus, in hierarchies there is decentralized information which means that there are multiple sources of information and they are available according to the hierarchical level that individual belongs to, that is to say, it is difficult for the subordinate to be aware of all the steps taken by his superior.

By the development of principal-agency theory as part of rational choice approach, scholars started to investigate the problem of accountability and the issue of information aggregation in democracies. The principal-agency theory provides the means to analyze the mechanisms of accountability among government institutions. It assumes that "if relatively uninformed legislators can shape the actions of informationally advantaged bureaucrats, then, perhaps the same can be said of the even more uninformed voters vis-à-vis legislators."⁴³⁸ In this context, even though many models of voting behavior accept from the beginning that voters are perfectly aware of candidate positions, Downs' notion of rational ignorance has proved the problem of information aggregation by provoking further empirical studies which indicate that the majority of voters are unlikely to be aware of the names of the candidates and even less aware of the policy positions that they took in the course of campaigns.

⁴³⁶ Gary J. Miller, "The Impact of Economics on Contemporary Political Science", **Journal of Economic Literature**, Vol. 49, September 1997, p. 1189

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., p. 1191

Having referred to some basic concepts and models of rational choice interpretation of voter-party relations, the following sections of the chapter concentrate on the main features of Turkish electoral behavior, election politics and the party-electorate relevance regarding the parties' EU policies.

3.2. PARTISAN AFFILIATIONS OF VOTERS IN TURKEY

To analyze the voting behavior in a country can give us considerable data about how a party makes its decisions in certain policy areas because as rational actors, parties do not shape their policies independent from the attitudes and expectations of voters.

In his distinguished work on the voting behavior in Turkey, Kalaycıoğlu defined four hypotheses which were formed by using four independent variables. He put each of those hypotheses to empirical tests, using data collected by means of a nationally representative survey. Accordingly, he examined the role of parents' party identification (socialization), ideological orientations, economic expectations, and the ethnic identities of voters.

With regard to Kalaycıoğlu's analysis on the partisan affiliations in Turkey, the most significant determinant of partisan affiliation for the CHP and MHP, which have longer past, is socialization. For the AKP supporters, the priority was the economic performance of that party in government although they took few cues from their parents. Ideology was mostly an issue of concern for the CHP voters in comparison with the AKP and the MHP voters, but it was not sufficient to differentiate the preferences of the AKP from the MHP voters. Ethnicity was a strong determinant of partisan affiliations with the MHP.⁴³⁹ Although it is not included in Kalaycıoğlu's work, ethnicity can be pointed as the major determinant of partisan affiliations with the BDP as well in the context of this dissertation.

Basic personal values of people in their political choices play a considerable role in Turkish voting behavior. The findings of a study reveal that the values of the

⁴³⁹ Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "Attitudinal Orientation to Party Organizations in Turkey in the 2000s", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 9, No. 2, June 2008, p. 297

supporters of Turkey's two major parties, the AKP and the CHP are very different from each other. Those who voted for the CHP had higher scores than those who voted for the AKP on both the openness and interests dimensions. Another important finding of the study is that the left-right ideology and religiosity are useful variables to determine the party choices of Turkish voters.⁴⁴⁰ For instance, Kalaycıoğlu marks that “the AKP still seems to be more attractive to those whose political origins sprouted from the political Islamist Nationalist Outlook movement and its parties” although the party insists on distancing itself from Nationalist Outlook. He relates the weak parental records of party identification in AKP voters to the lack of information or any meaningful cues from their parents in developing their partisan affiliations since the party is brand new.⁴⁴¹

Additionally, the findings of Kalaycıoğlu's survey prove that secular versus religious and Turkish versus Kurdish ethnic identities of the voters play a role on top of the initial socialization to party identification they acquire at home.⁴⁴² Hence the policy approach of political parties in Turkey is highly concerned with the identity of voters.

There are certainly other factors such as the personality which affect the voter behavior in Turkey. Another study draws the attention to the interactions between the personality and voter behavior in Turkey by putting forward four sub-dimensions, namely rule-obedience, innovativeness, reactivity and self-confidence. It concludes that three demographic variables, which are age, gender and occupation, are able to explain the intentions of voters depending on their political orientations.⁴⁴³ More factors can be added to those findings; however, they will not be further examined in this chapter due to the limited scope of this dissertation which mainly deals with the party policies rather than voter behavior.

⁴⁴⁰ Cem Başlevent and Hasan Kırmancıoğlu, “The Role of Basic Personal Values in the Voting Behavior of Turkish People, **Social Science Research Network**, 25 November 2008, p. 10
<http://ssrn.com/abstract=1307031>

accessed on 31.01.2011

⁴⁴¹ Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, “Attitudinal Orientation to Party Organizations in Turkey in the 2000s”, **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 9, No. 2, June 2008, p. 312

⁴⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 313

⁴⁴³ Ceyhan Aldemir and Gül Bayraktaroğlu, “Determining Effects of Personality Traits on Voter Behavior Using Five Factor Personality Inventory”, **Journal of Faculty Business**, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2004, p. 129

3.3. ELECTIONS IN TURKEY

In electoral democracies voter behavior realizes its significance for political parties through elections. According to Ware, elections connect voters with the output of government in a three stage process. First, election means competition, that is to say, “people vote for the parties that are competing for their vote in elections. Thus parties try to attract voters through the claims they make about the types of policies they will enact if they join the government.” Second, no matter single-party or coalition government, a government is formed after the election and the composition of that government reflects major shifts in voter preferences. Finally, once elected to government, the level of incentive to comply with the political program promised during the election campaigns depends on the need to face reaction and the prospect of having to retain the support of their electorate.⁴⁴⁴

Turkey has experienced seventeen nationwide general elections since 1945 when the multiparty system has been adopted. In conjunction with the 1980 coup d'état, the party system has come to a halt for three years and began restoring itself from then on. By the 1990s, the rise of Islamist and ultra-nationalist parties became salient in Turkish politics that has been reflected in the elections of 1991, 1995 and 1999 comparing to the prior elections. For instance, the Islamist Welfare Party (Later Refah Partisi/RP) has increased its votes from 7.2 % in the 1987 elections to 21.4 % in the 1995 elections being the party which obtained the largest amount of votes. Needless to say, the socio-economic and political conjuncture has paved the way to the success of political Islam as it is examined deeper in the third chapter while the historical background of the AKP was mentioned.

The rise of political Islam has caused polarizations in Turkish politics in the aftermath of the 1995 elections when the DYP-RP coalition was set up. The secularist parties which have perceived pro-Islamist success as a challenge for the secularist Republican principles began to develop a more secularist discourse in order to differentiate themselves from those Islamist parties. Existing cleavages between secularist and anti-secularist groups widened as well as the polarization of Sunnis

⁴⁴⁴ Alan Ware, **Political Parties and Party Systems**, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 316-317

against Alevis and even Turkish against the rising Kurdish nationalists became visible.⁴⁴⁵ Nevertheless the rising pro-Islamist movement has been interrupted by the 28th of February Process and this time Turkish nationalists drew ahead following the events such as the capture of the PKK leader, the death of nationalist leader Türkeş and the restructuring process in the MHP cadres, mass demonstrations against the headscarf ban at the universities, corruption scandals and the changes in the international arena such as military action of NATO in Kosovo.⁴⁴⁶ Those developments increased the nationalist sentiments in the country and as a result, brought the MHP, DSP, ANAP coalition into government by the 1999 early elections.

The coalition government was far from an ideological unity. They have come together as an outcome of the period after February 28 buffering the country from the political Islam. Yet, their common nationalist approach was not sufficient to stick them together and overcome several problems which the country has faced during the time. The government failed to tackle the mounting trouble started with a big earthquake in 1999 which was followed by two major economic crises in 2000 and 2001 that hit the country. The Prime Minister Ecevit's health problems came on top of it. There was a growing lack of accountability in the party system that culminated in the loss of public support for the existing parties. This pessimistic picture of the political parties has led optimal conditions for the emergence of a new party system revolving around a newly established party, namely the AKP. It is mostly agreed among scholars that 3 November 2002 elections were a turning point in Turkish election history.

3.3.1. What Changed in Turkish Party System after the 2002 Elections?: Towards an AKP Government

The outcome of the 2002 elections has been widely discussed among the scholars for it headed into a party system which has considerably different characteristics than the considerably fragmented, polarized party system that prevailed in Turkey from 1991 till 2002. The dissatisfaction of the voters with most of the established parties; the impact of the economic and financial crises and the political

⁴⁴⁵ Ali Çarkoğlu and Melvin J. Hinich, "A Spatial Analysis of Turkish Party Preferences", **Electoral Studies**, Vol. 25, 2006, p. 376

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 378

consequences of the electoral system have been the main reasons of the change by the 2002 elections.⁴⁴⁷ After the 2002 elections first the number of parties in the Parliament decreased and second, by the emergence of the AKP as the dominant force in party competition, a transition from coalition or minority governments to single-party majority rule was experienced.⁴⁴⁸ Almost 500 out of 550 deputies in the TGNA lost their seats while the coalition parties of the prior government lost representation by remaining below the 10 % election threshold. The AKP, having no prior electoral experience, became the net beneficiary by obtaining 363 seats (34% of the votes) in the Parliament. The only opposition party entering the Parliament which could barely exceed the election threshold was the CHP with 19.39 %. All those changes caused to investigate the motives behind the Turkish electoral behavior which led the 2002 election results.

Although the aftermath of the 2002 elections portrays a completely different political landscape than the one prior to the elections, it would be an overestimation to attach this change merely to the landslide victory of the AKP since there was also the Young Party which won remarkable number of votes (7.3 %) as a brand new party just like the AKP. In this regard, the success of the AKP can be mostly attributed to the suitable political conditions of the time.

In the spatial analysis of the seven leading political parties in Turkey in which they calculate the mean positions of constituencies across the parties, Çarkoğlu and Hinich define the Turkish electorate as overwhelmingly “centrist” right before the 2002 elections.⁴⁴⁹ As it is mentioned above while explaining the spatial model, they conclude that two dimensions dominate the ideological competition in the Turkish party system depending on the findings. Accordingly, the first and relatively more dominant dimension is the secularist versus pro-Islamist cleavage and it largely overlaps with the center versus periphery formations in Turkish politics. The second dimension is the ethnic based nationalist cleavage placing the Turkish and Kurdish identities as opposed

⁴⁴⁷ Sabri Sayari, “Towards a New Turkish Party System?”, **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2007, p. 207

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 205

⁴⁴⁹ Ali Çarkoğlu and Melvin J. Hinich, “A Spatial Analysis of Turkish Party Preferences”, **Electoral Studies**, Vol. 25, 2006, p. 387

to one another. They point out that perceptions of the voters clearly differentiate all major parties along these two dimensions.⁴⁵⁰ Another conclusion they reached is that for all parties, the party placements are more extremist than their corresponding constituencies' estimated positions.⁴⁵¹ In other words, the voters tend to see those parties more towards the center than they see themselves.

The 2002 elections are also significant for changing the right-left spectrum in Turkish politics. In any circumstance, within the existing political system in Turkey, political parties can be divided into three main camps according to their stance in the political spectrum: center-right, social democratic left and Islamist-nationalist extreme right.⁴⁵² Since the fact that each getting less than 1 % of the votes, the small radical left and right parties are neglected in this classification.

Referring to Sayari's formulation, before 2002 elections, one could address two relevant parties to each of these blocs. The ANAP and the DYP occupied the center-right political space; the SHP/CHP and the DSP belonged to the social democratic left and the RP/FP and the MHP represented the Islamist and the nationalist extreme right.⁴⁵³ After the 2002 parliamentary elections, the AKP, despite its links to the Islamist RP/FP can be considered as the party covering the center-right space while the CHP is the social democratic left with a more nationalist and secularist approach and the MHP representing the nationalist extreme right with less emphasis on Islamism. The main center-right parties of 1991-2002 periods, namely the ANAP and DYP almost lost their influence on Turkish politics together with the DSP as the center left party since they were not able to get into the Parliament. The AKP emerged as a party that fell into the category of ground-breaking parties which dominated an era in Turkish history such as the 1950s' Democrat Party and the 1980s' ANAP.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., p. 388

⁴⁵² Sabri Sayari, "Towards a New Turkish Party System?", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2007, p. 197

⁴⁵³ Ibid., p. 203

3.3.2. Local Elections of 28 March 2004

Despite varying widely across the countries, local elections are quite different than general elections given that they are run by local interests. In Turkey the electorate votes for city mayors and administrative council members for five year terms. Thus, the main driving forces are rather the candidates and their policies for local issues than government performance etc. in local elections.

On 28 March 2004 the first local elections during the AKP government were held and the AKP won an overwhelming victory with 41.8 % of the votes which was even higher than the percentage it received in the 2002 elections. It might be interpreted as the positive impact of the former experiences of the AKP members in local politics.

One prominent outcome of the 2004 elections was that the share of the electoral pie consumed by the Turkish left shrunk to among its smallest ever; the two left-wing parties, the CHP and the DSP, received only 20.3 percent of the vote. On the other hand, support for parties on the right grew to 70.2 percent, from 63.6 percent in November 2002.⁴⁵⁴ This was a sign of a move towards conservative dominance in Turkish electoral base. Yet, many factors affecting the results of these elections can be enumerated. The defecting of the DEHAP voters in big cities to the AKP, consecutive reform packages within the context of the AKP's determined pro-EU agenda, the weak performance of opposition parties, Deniz Baykal's decreasing popularity among the Turkish left wing voters versus Erdoğan's charismatic leadership that could appeal electoral masses from multiple segments of society were some of the controversial points during the election process.

3.3.3. The 22 July 2007 Elections

The pre-election period of April to June 2007 was marked by several boycotts from the secularist masses against the AKP government although later the election results would prove that the AKP got stronger than it used to be. The mass

⁴⁵⁴ Soner Çağatay, Local Elections in Turkey: A Landslide Victory for the Incumbent AKP, Washington Institute Special Policy Forum, 29 March 2004
<http://www.cagatay.com/663/local-elections-in-turkey-a-landslide-victory-for>
accessed on 08.12.2010

demonstrations started when the issue of presidential elections to succeed President Ahmet Necdet Sezer was brought to the government agenda. Secularist circles feared that Erdoğan or another outwardly devout AKP politician who had been involved in pro-Islamist activities in their past, would be nominated for presidency. The prospect of the AKP taking over the presidency which had the veto power over legislation provoked strong protests and warnings from the military.⁴⁵⁵ Despite the efforts of the AKP to resolve the conflict by nominating a more centrist presidential candidate, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül, it could not appease the rising secularist tensions.

At that time an interfering statement of the Turkish Armed Forces on April 27, which was implicitly warning the government about the secularist sensitivities of military, came on top of those events and fueled the political crisis. Many republican protests were held with large amount of demonstrators to support the Kemalist principles and secularism and to oppose the candidacy of Gül. When the opposition parties joined these protests and boycotted two rounds of presidential voting in the TGNA, the Constitutional Court delayed the elections to the aftermath of 22 June 2007 general elections.

Nevertheless, the resounding victory of the incumbent AKP government on 22 July 2007 elections showed that the majority of the electorate in Turkey was satisfied with the policies of the AKP or at least did not see any alternative party which could replace it. Başlevent and Kırmanoğlu emphasize on the role of economic concerns of the society in supporting the AKP and state that in the 2007 elections the majority of Turkish voters felt along the same lines as the AKP leadership on socio-economic and cultural issues that had divided the ‘center’ and the ‘periphery’ of Turkish society for decades, and they did not seem to be concerned by widespread allegations of corruption and nepotism in the government’s actions.⁴⁵⁶ In contrary, there had been an increase in

⁴⁵⁵ Stephen J. Flanagan and Samuel J. Brannen, Turkey’s Shifting Dynamics. Implications for US-Turkey Relations, **A Report of the US-Turkey Strategic Initiative**, Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2008, p. 4

http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/080606_turkeyshiftingdyn.pdf
accessed on 07.08.2010

⁴⁵⁶ Cem Başlevent and Hasan Kırmanoğlu, “The Role of Basic Personal Values in the Voting Behavior of Turkish People, **Social Science Research Network**, 25 November 2008, p. 10

the number of people who oppose the AKP policies for the sake of a modern and secularist life-style.

In the 2007 elections two features of Turkish politics during the post-1980 coup period strongly affected voter decisions: First one is that the traditional center-right collapsed due to continuous economic failure and was replaced by the pro-Islamist electoral tradition which prepared the intellectual and organizational structure of the AKP. Owing to Şerif Mardin's well-known center-periphery analysis of the Turkish society, second feature can be explained by the dual nature of Turkish society.⁴⁵⁷ To put in another way the "peripheral" forces of the rural and relatively more religious, conservative masses were against the "center" bureaucracy and its supporters among relatively less religious and socio-economically better off segments of Turkish society.⁴⁵⁸

It is observed that the voters' evaluation of the government's economic performance had been the most determining factor in shaping the voter behavior of the 2007 elections. The only exception to this was the voters with Alevi background who largely voted for the CHP. That might also be considered as the reason of the AKP's reformist initiative for the Alevi community right after the election.⁴⁵⁹ The findings of Çarkoğlu's research indicate that economic pragmatism had been more significant than all ideological concerns for the AKP constituency. The ideology had only been influential on the votes of the highest education group which had secularist concerns.⁴⁶⁰ In this regard, it can be said that economic stability is a vital criterion for Turkish citizens while choosing parties compared to ideology.

On the other hand the voter choice depends on the background of the voter as well. Çarkoğlu examines how demographic features affect the voting behavior of Turkish people by looking at voter profiles in 2007. In accordance with his analysis, it is

<http://ssrn.com/abstract=1307031>

accessed on 31.01.2011

⁴⁵⁷ For more information see Şerif Mardin, "Centre-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?", **Daedalus**, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1973, pp. 169-190

⁴⁵⁸ Ali Çarkoğlu, "Ideology or Economic Pragmatism: Determinants of Party Choice in Turkey for the July 2007 Elections", **Studies in Public Policy**, No. 439, 2008, p. 5

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 40

observed that younger voters had a tendency towards the AKP and older ones towards the opposition parties. Women were more likely to vote for the CHP rather than the MHP and when the MHP was compared to the AKP, then they were more likely to vote for the AKP. Education level was another important factor in differentiating party constituencies. Lower education groups tended to vote for the AKP, and higher education groups tended towards the CHP and the MHP. Voters with Kurdish ethnic background were more likely to vote for independent candidates.⁴⁶¹ Islamist or nationalist partisan family background persistently remained insignificant as an influence upon party choice; whereas center-left and right partisan family background appeared significant for choosing different parties. That is to say, when only parental partisan background is focused, parents of the present generation voters diverged away from the older generation centrist parties and pushed their offspring towards the AKP. However, the older generation's polarization between the CHP and the MHP still continued to be effective.⁴⁶²

When the pre-election activities such as election campaigns, mass meetings or political discussions on TV are scrutinized, a struggle for legitimacy by the AKP government can be noticed in the 2007 election period. The driving issues of the elections were mainly associated with the reforms already made by the AKP during the 2002-2007 period as well as their future plans and projects that they suggested in case of staying in government. Particularly, the attitude of the AKP between 2002 and 2007 concerning Turkey's bid for the EU, Turkey-US relations, Cyprus; terrorism in Southeast Anatolia, higher education and its plans for making a new constitution helped it with creating the image of a strong party in front of the public eye.

3.3.4. Local Elections of 29 March 2009

The local elections held on 29 March 2009 once again assured the AKP's position as the ruling party despite a relative decline to the 2004 local and 2007 general elections. On the other side, the opposition parties found the opportunity to increase their vote shares even if just a bit. The government failed especially along the

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., p. 36

⁴⁶² Ibid., p. 38

Mediterranean and Aegean coastal line and in the southeastern provinces. Below, Table 3.1 shows the comparison of the 2004 and 2009 local elections in detail.

The outcomes of the 2009 local elections can be taken as a proof of the strong correlation between the economic performance of the AKP and the electoral support of the AKP proponents. As Taşpınar underscores, the 12 % decrease in AKP's votes in the 2009 elections showed that the economy matters for Turkish electorate and they voted for the AKP mainly because of economic reasons. It is because in 2009 the economy was showing some signs of recessionary dynamics; unemployment had an uptick.⁴⁶³

The local election results also confirm Çarkoğlu's estimations which he derived from the outcomes of the 2007 general elections since he underlined that despite the AKP's apparent dominant position at the east and southeast Anatolian provinces, micro-individual level data indicates that Kurdish background had no significant positive impact upon vote for the AKP after controlling for other influences.⁴⁶⁴ According to Çarkoğlu, the appeal of the AKP in the east and southeast can be explained by having no rival in the region other than the BDP and ideological conservative predispositions as well as economic evaluations prevalent among the citizens of Kurdish background rather than pure ethnic identity issues.⁴⁶⁵ The reforms made in the context of the EU process which met some of the democratization demands coming from the region, the impact of the overall economic development on the people of the region, the government's taking a favorable approach for strengthening civilian power in politics which paved the way for more democratic platforms to discuss the Kurdish question and the restarting social unrest in 2004 by the PKK's decision for annihilation of the ceasefire that was in force since 1999 increased the competition capacity of the AKP against the BDP in southeastern provinces because it restrained the

⁴⁶³ Ömer Taşpınar, **Assessing the Outcomes of Turkey's Elections**, the Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 17 June 2011, p. 18
http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2011/0617_turkey_elections/20110617_turkey_elections.pdf

accessed on 27.12.2009

⁴⁶⁴ Ali Çarkoğlu, "Ideology or Economic Pragmatism: Determinants of Party Choice in Turkey for the July 2007 Elections", **Studies in Public Policy**, No. 439, 2008, p. 36

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 39

domains of ethnic politics which the BDP feeds on and changed the grounds for the solution of Kurdish problem.

Table 3.1: Local Election Results of 2004 and 2009

March 2004 Elections				March 2009 Elections			
	Provincial General Council Election	Mayorships won		General Election	Provincial General Council Election	Mayorships won	
	Vote share (%)	Greater City /Provinces	Districts	2007	Vote share (%)	Greater City /Provinces	Dist- ricts
AKP	41.7	58	470	46.6	38.8	45	447
CHP	18.2	8	125	20.9	23.1	13	170
MHP	10.5	4	70	14.3	16.1	10	129
Other	16.4	1	120	10.7	5.8	1	45
DTP*	5.2	5	29		5.6	8	50
SP	4.0	1	12	2.3	5.2	0	23
DSP	2.1	3	5		2.8	2	10
BBP	1.2		3		2.2	1	3
Independents	0.7	1	17	5.2	0.4	1	15
	100	81	851	100	100	81	892

*The DTP was part of a six party pre-election coalition in 2004 and supported independent candidates to pass 10 % threshold for representation in 2007. Similarly, the DSP joined the CHP in a pre-election coalition in 2007.

Source: Ali Çarkoğlu, “Turkey’s Local Elections of 2009: Winners and Losers”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2009, p.3

3.3.5. The 12 June 2011 Elections

On 12 June 2011 the 17th general elections of Turkey were held, being the first non-early elections since 34 years. It was also for the first time in Turkish history that a party won the general elections three times in a row with each time increasing its votes. The four parties which could receive sufficient number of votes in order to be represented in the Parliament were respectively the AKP with 49.83 %, the CHP with 25.98 %, the MHP with 13.01 % and the independents (the BDP) with 6.57 %. The AKP became the incontrovertible winner of the elections by receiving almost half of the votes.

Furthermore, Turkish voters have entered the 2011 election period with a couple of novelties in the electoral law, those which were supposed to bring it up to the EU standards. Age limit to be elected to the TGNA was reduced from 30 to 25, campaigning languages other than Turkish was allowed, citizens which have identity numbers gained the right to vote without identification, a penalty of three to five years imprisonment was adopted in case of preventing someone from casting his vote and some practical changes were made in the shape and material of voting booths, envelopes and ballot boxes. However electronic voting for the Turkish voters residing abroad could not achieve the chance to vote for these elections although some efforts were put on that issue.

One of the biggest changes of these elections was that the main opposition party, the CHP participated in these elections with its new leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu following the resignation of former chairman Deniz Baykal due to a video tape scandal. Kılıçdaroğlu had gone for a considerable reshuffling of the CHP organization and staff short time before the elections. Meanwhile, some arrested Ergenekon suspects such as Mustafa Balbay and Mehmet Haberal had also been nominated from the CHP candidate lists.

The BDP participated in the 2011 elections with independent candidates and 36 of them achieved to be elected to the Parliament. Leyla Zana was reelected to the TGNA after two decades. Nevertheless, the deputyship of the BDP deputy Hatip Dicle, who was reelected to the Parliament while he was in prison, would be abrogated by a decision⁴⁶⁶ of the Supreme Election Board (Yüksek Seçim Kurulu) after he was elected due to the accusations of belonging to the terrorist organization PKK.

The MHP entered the elections in the shade of a serious video tape scandal associated with some of the MHP deputies. Six deputies resigned from the party due to this scandal prior to elections. That was an unexpected and discouraging situation to handle for the party and especially its chairman Bahçeli during the election campaigns.

⁴⁶⁶ The Supreme Election Board, **Decision No. 1071**, 23 June 2011, <http://www.ysk.gov.tr/ysk/docs/Kararlar/2011Pdf/2011-1071.pdf> accessed on 19.08.2011

Despite all, the MHP continued mobilizing nationalist identity and they put a polemical Ergenekon suspect, Engin Alan, on their candidate list just as the CHP did.

The election results displayed a dramatic picture of the evaluations of the current political parties by Turkish electorate. The AKP became the biggest winner of the elections; whereas the BDP could also achieve a considerable success. The CHP could not perform a real success except increasing its votes a little bit comparing to the 2007 elections despite the leader change and all efforts made to reform the party. The MHP, on the other hand, was a big loser in these elections relative to the 2007 elections that it could barely exceed the 10 % election threshold.

There were also other remarkable outcomes of these elections such as the number of female deputies increased from 46 to 78 (44 from the AKP, 20 from the CHP, 11 from the BDP and 3 from the MHP), the lawyer Erol Dora was elected from the independents as the first Christian Syriac to enter the TGNA, the first Christian since 1960 and the first non-Muslim since 1999 and the AKP candidate Bilal Macit was elected as the youngest deputy of the TGNA at the age of 27.

Fuat Keyman underlines that the 2011 elections were fair and democratic elections that would cause no suspicion about the results. He substantiates this point with five other points:

- 1- The level of participation of the Turkish electorate was quite high, with a record percentage of 87.
- 2- The electorate voted in such a way that they actually increased the representational capacity of the Parliament despite the antidemocratic 10 % threshold which would be important in terms of making the new constitution in a democratic and participatory way.
- 3- It was not a kind of win-lose election. Every party won a bit, but they all actually got warnings from the electorate, too.
- 4- Not only the representation capacity was increased but also newcomers were brought in the Parliament in terms of women's percentage rose up to 15 %. More Kurds, more young people and a Syriac Christian even symbolic to represent the multi-religious structure of the Turkish society became MPs.

5- The electorate in fact voted in such a way that it opposed to the polarizations of parties in the pre-election time.⁴⁶⁷

To evaluate the results of 2011 elections, it is essential to analyze the reasons behind the absolute victory of the AKP. First of all, economy was an important criterion for the electorate. The AKP had no alternative in terms of its economic performance because there was a 9-year-period of government for the AKP to prove itself as successful which made it more advantageous than other parties. The AKP could increase the economic growth rate as well as the purchasing power of people during its government. It also worked for meeting the basic infrastructural needs of citizens such as healthcare, education and housing. Second, it managed to establish a very functioning balance or relationship between traditional modernity, tradition and globalization by redefining tradition in a way that the tradition becomes integral element of Turkey's active globalization and Turkey's market oriented economy. Third, Turkey's active globalization not only in terms of its proactive foreign policy but also the increasing global visibility of Turkey in different realms of society affected the electoral choice.⁴⁶⁸

In contrary, the opposition parties could not find such platform to perform their policy alternatives due to the fact that they had no big representation power in the TGNA during the 2002-2007 and 2007-2011 governmental periods.

Another point inferred from the election results is that the counter-arguments of the CHP appeared not to be very effective for helping improve its votes. In fact, the CHP was expected to challenge the AKP at least to a certain extent after giving up strong statist approach in favor of a more populist discourse with its new social democrat image which is parallel to the former chairman Ecevit's style. There were also public protests prior to the elections which seemed to be in favor of the CHP. For example, thousands of people demonstrated against the internet censorships imposed by the government and many others protested the cheating scandal that erupted in the ÖSS (University Entrance Exam). However those incidents did barely cause a positive

⁴⁶⁷ Fuat Keyman, Nuh Yılmaz and Ömer Taşpınar, **Assessing the Outcomes of Turkey's Elections**, the Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 17 June 2011, pp. 3-5
http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/events/2011/0617_turkey_elections/20110617_turkey_elections.pdf accessed on 19.08.2011

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 7-8

change in the CHP votes. The party's even not being able to reach 30 % of the votes and losing support over the AKP even in its strongholds on the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts caused frustration within party circles.

Being the third party the MHP's election performance has been surprising as well because the sex scandal involving several senior party officials was seen as the death knell for MHP's electoral fortunes. In opposition with the widespread speculation that the party's power base would defect to the AKP which would effectively hand it a two-thirds majority, the MHP's obtained 13.01 % of the votes disproving this speculation which was just a bit less than its performance in 2007.⁴⁶⁹ Thus, the issues that came into prominence after the 2011 elections are briefly mentioned in the next section.

3.3.6. Issues at Stake after the 2011 General Elections

There are some lessons to be drawn from the 2011 elections in the sense that they shed light on the next four years of Turkish politics. Therefore, the results of the elections should be read carefully in order to prepare a roadmap for the future steps that are necessary to be taken for the main interests of Turkish electorate since their votes represent their evaluations of the existing parties and policy choices. Below, those results are analyzed under five titles.

3.3.6.1. The Role of Economic Concerns

The results of the 2011 elections indicated that the economic concerns are significant for the Turkish electorate. After two major economic crises in 2000 and 2001, Turkey experienced an era of economic stability during the first and second AKP governments. The AKP could achieve a rapidly increasing economic growth reaching 8.9 % in 2010 which made Turkey the second fastest growing economy after China among G-20 countries.⁴⁷⁰ Amid international economic circumstances which caused big

469 Gerald Robbins, "Understanding Turkey's 2011 General Election Results", **Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes**, June 2011
<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/201106.robbins.turkey.pdf>
accessed on 04.08.2011

⁴⁷⁰ Official Website of Ministry of Economy, "Minister Zafer Çağlayan Evaluated the Growth Numbers",

economic crises in countries such as Greece, Portugal or Ireland, Turkey's high economic performance was admirable. This economic upturn had directly proportional reflections on daily lives of Turkish citizens for it almost tripled the per capita income increasing purchasing capacity.⁴⁷¹ As a result, the electorate voted for the AKP for a third time.

However, the election results covertly give the message that any ruling political party in Turkey should not underestimate the impact of a possible overheating of the economy which could suddenly backfire and turn into a risk of economic crisis undermining political stability.

The recent economic situation in Turkey in a way confirms this message. According to Robbins, there were various signs that economic difficulties lied ahead such as the ballooning account deficit which was likely reached 8 % of the GDP of 2011. In April 2011 alone, the deficit figure widened to \$7.7 billion from \$4.4 billion in April 2010. The first four months of 2011 saw a 44 percent increase in imports, while exports grew only 21 percent. There was also an alarming rate of unemployment with 10.7 % that was higher than the EU average of 9.6 %.⁴⁷² Taking these data into consideration, Robbins interprets Erdogan's statements about zero interest rates and a tax amnesty to keep the economy growing as overly simplistic solutions. Instead, he suggests that consumer credit can be tightened and low lending rates can be applied.⁴⁷³ In summary, the economy needs a special attention in the post-election period.

<http://www.ekonomi.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=bakanlikofisi&bolum=detay&haberid=1448>

accessed on 12.03.2012

⁴⁷¹ For more information about Turkey's economic indicators by 2010 see

Turkish Statistical Institute,

<http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/Start.do>

accessed on 22.09.2011

http://www.edc.ca/english/docs/gturkey_e.pdf

accessed on 18.09.2011

⁴⁷² Gerald Robbins, "Understanding Turkey's 2011 General Election Results", Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes, June 2011

<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/201106.robbins.turkey.pdf>

accessed on 04.08.2011

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

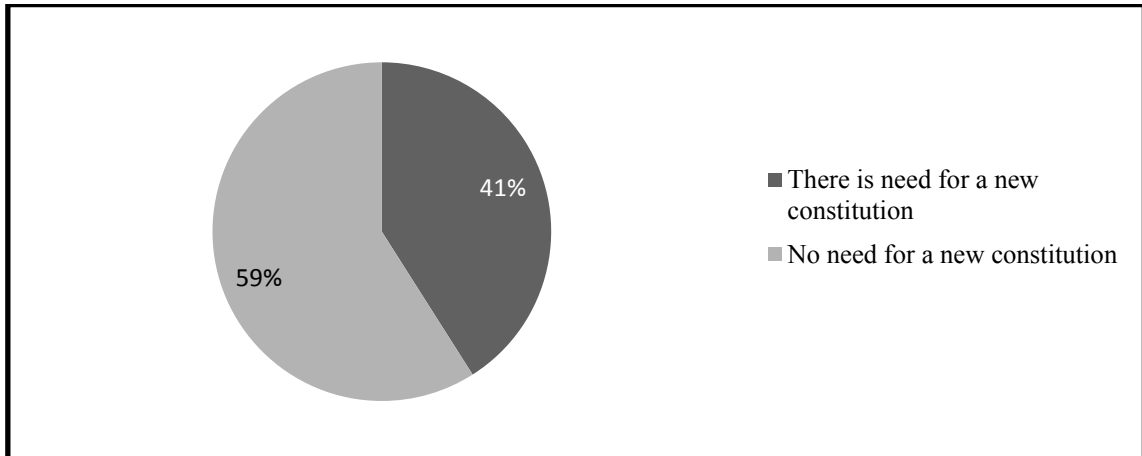
3.3.6.2. The Making of a New Constitution

The 2011 general elections have considerable importance not only because they affected the configuration of the party system dramatically by strengthening the AKP and weakening the other main parties institutionally but also because the election results were decisive for determining the preparation and ratification of a new constitution, due to be carried out in the new parliamentary term.⁴⁷⁴ To have an absolute majority which would give the power to the AKP to make a constitution on its own, two-thirds or in other words 367 of the 550 seats in the TGNA was required. However, the AKP remained at 326 seats despite winning almost half of the votes. This means that the AKP does not have enough authorization to alter the constitution alone so that it has to reach a political consensus with other parties. That is to say, the new Turkish constitution will be a result of consensus and negotiation instead of being a document which represents purely AKP's outlook. It is a kind of natural security measure since a constitution which is not inclusive can lead serious institutional instability across the country.

On the other side, there is a consensus across Turkey's political spectrum that a new constitution is essential because the existing one is inclined to be seen as the product of military following its 1980 coup d'état. Figure 3.5 shows that 41 % of Turkish people were in favor of a new constitution in 2008.

⁴⁷⁴ Carmen Rodriguez López, Pre-Election Analysis: Turkey/ General Elections-12 June 2011, TEIM Election Watch Analysis, 9 June 2011
http://www.observatorioelectoral.es/en/ImgBase/PA-Turkey_2011.pdf
accessed on 18.08.2011

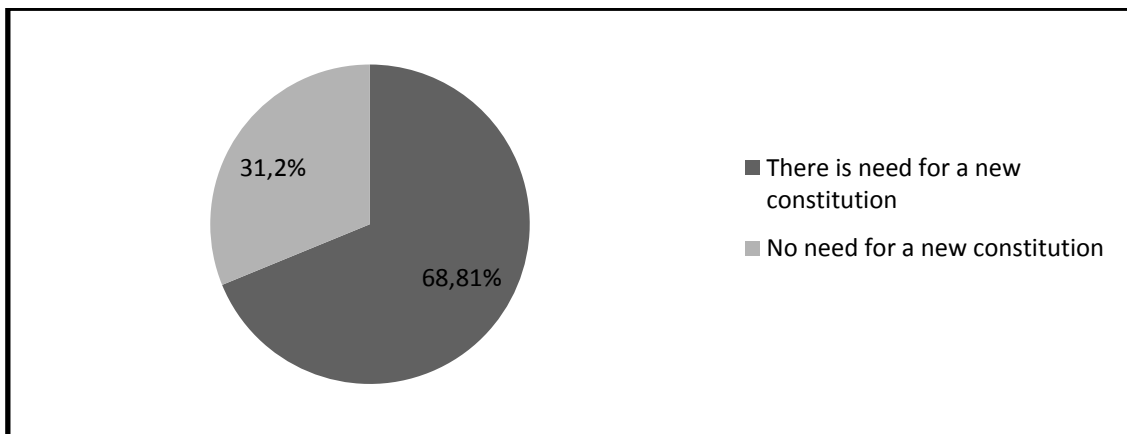
Figure 3.5: Need for a New Constitution (November-December 2008)



Source: TEPAV (Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey), **Social Demand Grows for a New Constitution**, 2011, <http://www.tepav.org.tr/en/haberler/s/1982> accessed on 02.05.2011

As Figure 3.6 shows, the percentage of people who think that Turkey needs a new constitution increased to 68.81 % in 2011 comparing to 2008 polls. TEPAV interprets this transformation as evidence of the growing social confidence about making a new constitution and claims that 12 September 2010 referendum played a major role in this change.⁴⁷⁵

Figure 3.6: Need for a New Constitution (February 2011)



Source: TEPAV (Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey), **Social Demand Grows for a New Constitution**, 2011, <http://www.tepav.org.tr/en/haberler/s/1982> accessed on 02.05.2011

⁴⁷⁵ TEPAV (Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey), **Social Demand Grows for a New Constitution**, 2011, <http://www.tepav.org.tr/en/haberler/s/1982> accessed on 02.05.2011
accessed on 02.05.2011

Thus, a constitutional referendum incorporating several philosophical viewpoints besides AKP's perspective could be possible.⁴⁷⁶ Since the far right MHP and the Kurdish-oriented BDP which are two ideological extremes prevented the AKP from completely controlling the constitution making process by receiving votes revolving around the 10 % barrier for parliamentary representation, they will have a voice in the new constitution.

3.3.6.3. Kurdish Question

Given that the AKP and the BDP shared the votes of Southeastern provinces, the 2011 elections showed that Kurdish question has gone far from being a cultural reality and turned into a political reality involving multiple actors, not only the BDP and the PKK but also the AKP since the majority has voted for the AKP in the region.⁴⁷⁷

Taşpınar marks that the Kurdish question has reached a critical level in Turkey even though the PKK is not as active as it used to be during the 1990s. He states that Kurdish nationalism as a political force has reached a point of no return and a young, frustrated, ethnically conscious Kurdish generation which have high expectations but not much political space for ethnic expression have emerged in Turkey. Furthermore, a political party that most Turks consider as the political wing of the PKK, that is the BDP, has won 36 seats gaining most of the municipalities in the Kurdish parts of Turkey.⁴⁷⁸ These developments indicate that the government has to take the issue more serious in its new term.

Nevertheless, prior to the elections Erdoğan's discourse has turned into a nationalist tone after the Kurdish opening which was initiated in 2009 came to a halt. There are of course incidents such as the former PKK members' being welcomed like a hero and the BDP deputies' bold statements in their public meetings that made the AKP

⁴⁷⁶ Gerald Robbins, "Understanding Turkey's 2011 General Election Results", **Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes**, June 2011
<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/201106.robbins.turkey.pdf>
accessed on 04.08.2011

⁴⁷⁷ Fuat Keyman, Nuh Yılmaz and Ömer Taşpınar, **Assessing the Outcomes of Turkey's Elections**, the Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 17 June 2011 , p. 8
http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/events/2011/0617_turkey_elections/20110617_turkey_elections.pdf accessed on 19.08.2011

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 19

retreat the opening not to strengthen the MHP's and nationalists' hands, especially to keep the MHP below 10 %. The Armenian opening of the government was the victim of this nationalist turn as well. No initiative has been taken over the last year.⁴⁷⁹ In this governmental term more structural initiatives which can address many dimensions of the problem have to be taken if the AKP is willing to solve the Kurdish problem.

3.3.6.4. Turkish Foreign Policy

During the former AKP governments, the AKP's foreign policy has been widely discussed among the scholars and in the media. The AKP has conducted a proactive and multi-dimensional foreign policy which targeted "zero-problem with neighbors" as Davutoğlu explains it.⁴⁸⁰ With regard to this new foreign policy understanding the government has taken a more ambitious mission to make Turkey a strong regional and global power. Some appreciated this attitude in the sense that it improves the visibility of Turkey in global politics; however some named it as "Neo-Ottomanism"⁴⁸¹ or regarded it as "shift of axis", suggesting a drift away from the predominantly Western orientation.⁴⁸² No matter which argument is more convincing, there is a fact that the AKP has implemented a different foreign policy approach than other governments.

Given that Turkey has decided to go ahead with the AKP government for one more election term, foreign policy is an issue of concern in both national and international arenas. According to Yılmaz, the result of the last elections show that in this term, Turkey will be a more result-oriented, a more assertive, and also more active player in the issues that are mainly related to Turkey's broader neighborhood so that

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 20

⁴⁸⁰ See the interview "Mr. Zero Problems" with Ahmet Davutoğlu made by Blake Hounshell on December 2010

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/11/29/mr_zero_problems?page=0.1

accessed on 21.06.2011

⁴⁸¹ Ömer Taşpınar, "Turkey's Middle East Policies. Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism", **Carnegie Papers**, Carnegie Middle East Center, September 2008, pp. 14-17

⁴⁸² Ziya Öniş, "Multiple Faces of the "New" Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique", **Insight Turkey**, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2011, p. 47

Turkey will no longer be just a player in the international affairs arena, but will be a critical player as well as a game-maker in the international affairs.⁴⁸³

Nevertheless, there are concerns about the applicability of the AKP style of zero-problem foreign policy in the new term since the international conjuncture has changed rapidly by the early 2011 particularly in the Middle East where Turkey is supposed to play role as a regional power. The Arab Spring broke out in Egypt and spread around the whole region making a domino effect. Therefore, it is essential for the government to recalculate the national interests and reformulate the foreign policy strategy in the Middle East.

Another problem with the AKP's foreign policy can occur in Turkish-Syrian relations. It seems that "zero-problem with neighbors" philosophy would not be easy to adopt if the deteriorating situation in the next-door Syria lasts long. It seems to be that it will be quite hard for the AKP government to return to the positive mood achieved with Syria prior to the political upheaval in the country if Assad's regime manages to survive because Turkey explicitly sided against Assad rule over the last months. The fate of all the initiatives between two countries taken up to present such as abolition of visas, removal of trade barriers, signing of bilateral trade agreements and a cooperation agreement in defense will also be determined by how the conflict in Syria will be resolved.

Taşpınar points out the necessity for Turkey to find its comparative advantages in the Middle East because its zero problems policy reaches its limits. According to Taşpınar, Turkey can take the advantage of being a western country and NATO member and an EU candidate. Those advantages can provide Turkey with the ability to speak on behalf of the Islamic World in western platforms. Furthermore, being the most secular and most democratic country of the region, Turkey could help overcome sectarian strives mainly between Sunnite and Shiite.⁴⁸⁴ However, in order to contribute the

⁴⁸³ Fuat Keyman, Nuh Yılmaz and Ömer Taşpınar, **Assessing the Outcomes of Turkey's Elections**, the Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., 17 June 2011, p. 11
http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/events/2011/0617_turkey_elections/20110617_turkey_elections.pdf accessed on 19.08.2011

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 24-25

reconciliation of Israel-Palestine dispute, Turkey also needs to find a solution for improving the deteriorated relations with Israel, which once enjoyed good relations with Turkey prior to the AKP's tenure.

Under these circumstances the AKP might have to modify its Middle Eastern policy in its new governmental term. Hence, the electoral support given for its proactive and zero-problem foreign policy approach in these elections can change accordingly.

3.3.6.5. Future of Turkey's EU Accession

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the 2011 elections was that no single party mentioned its EU approach during the election campaigns. It seems as if Turkey's EU goal was shelved in the chaos of other issue concerns. Given Turkey's almost half century long EU cause and all the legal harmonization in order to comply with the EU law, the relations with the EU issue mean more than just a matter of foreign policy; it is a state policy which has effects inside and outside the country.

Even if there is a growing indifference in Turkish public towards the EU accession regarding the decline in the willingness of people to be a part of the EU over the last years, the EU issue went far beyond an issue of gaining electoral support for the state and political parties. The ongoing EU accession process has no return as long as both sides decide on declaring it off. Yet, it was quite unexpected that the parties, which struggle for parliamentary representation, wouldn't include the EU in their election discourses.

However, Turkey's integration with the EU might be vital for the solutions of all of the issues mentioned above especially in Kurdish case. Most of the democratic steps were taken in Turkey owing to the EU agenda during the last two AKP governments and the AKP government received the fruits of those steps in political arena. It learned from the past government experiences that even the most polemical issues can be discussed under the umbrella of the EU accession.

The results of a survey shown below in Figure 3.7 confirm that Turkish public perceives the relations with the EU as the most important foreign policy issue. Thus, the government might concentrate on the course of accession negotiations with the EU in this parliamentary term.

3.4. THE ATTITUDE OF TURKISH ELECTORATE AND THE POLITICAL PARTIES TOWARDS THE EU DURING 2002-2011: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

This thesis argues that the most prominent factor affecting cost-benefit analyses of the four political parties in determining their EU approaches is the electoral behavior regarding the EU issue. As it is explained in subsection 3.1.3.2 of this chapter, there is a strong bond between the voters and policies. According to the median voter model of rational choice theory, the policy, which is supported by the median voter, wins so that parties try hard to adopt the policy preference of the median voter in order to enjoy as many as possible votes. Thus, it is crucial to evaluate the change in Turkish public opinion on Turkey's EU accession. It can be noted that the fluctuations in public support for the EU are parallel to the fluctuations in the EU approaches of Turkish political parties. That is to say, there is a strong relation between the formation of the EU approaches of political parties and Turkish electoral preferences on the EU issue.

One can also argue that the relation between political parties and electorate has a two-way nature so that the power of political parties and their politicians to influence public for legitimizing their own EU approaches cannot be underestimated. In this sense, it should be accepted that there is no public opinion which is completely independent from the views of politicians and the dominant discourse on any policy. Nevertheless, it is hard to claim that public opinion is merely derived from the perspectives of political parties. The public perception cannot be simply confined to the reflection of the views of foremost politicians or political parties because there is no political discourse which can embrace the interests, positions and expectations of all groups in a society as well as no consensus among major political parties in every

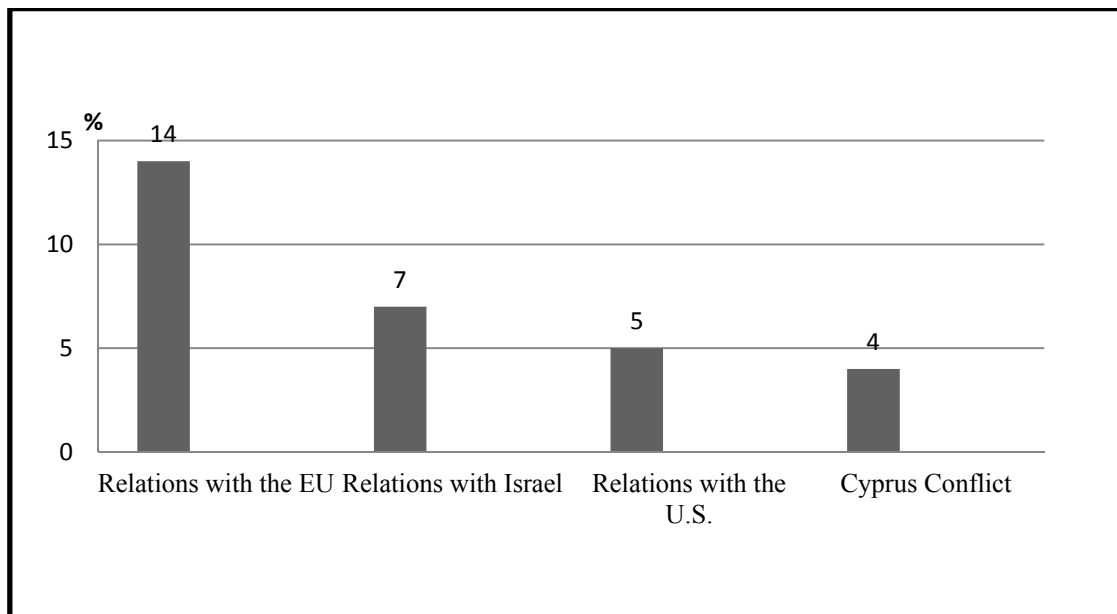
aspect of a certain issue.⁴⁸⁵ Seufert asserts that this is especially true for public opinion on the EU issue when data acquired from the latest survey of TESEV (The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation) is assessed. He illustrates it with the results of the survey question concerning the Cyprus dispute. Accordingly, he argues that although the Cyprus conflict has been pointed as the main obstacle for Turkey's EU accession by official and semi-official policy discourse and by politicians who debate the issue in numerous programs on TV channels, the survey reveals that Turkish electorate does not attribute a central role to Cyprus conflict regarding the obstructed negotiation process.⁴⁸⁶ Therefore, nation-wide opinion polls provide us with unique source of data to reveal the contradictions between how political parties reflect a specific political issue and how public actually perceives the issue.

As it is seen in the Figure 3.7, the most important foreign policy issue for Turkish electorate was the EU-Turkey relations in 2011 leaving the relations with Israel, the US and Cyprus far behind. In fact, it is surprising to receive this result at a time when the pace of integration with the EU is quite slow. In this regard, the role of the EU issue for the Turkish political parties in increasing their electoral support is inevitable. The parties, as rational actors, have to be more sensitive while calculating the costs and benefits of changing their EU policy stances in comparison with other foreign policy issues since the public reaction could be much stronger for the EU issue.

⁴⁸⁵ Günther Seufert, **TESEV'in Kamuoyu Araştırması Üzerine: Türkiye'de Dış Politika Algısı (About TESEV's Public Opinion Poll: Foreign Policy Perception in Turkey)**, İstanbul: TESEV Yayınları, 2011 p. 3

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3

Figure 3.7: The Most Important Foreign Policy Issue for Turkish Electorate



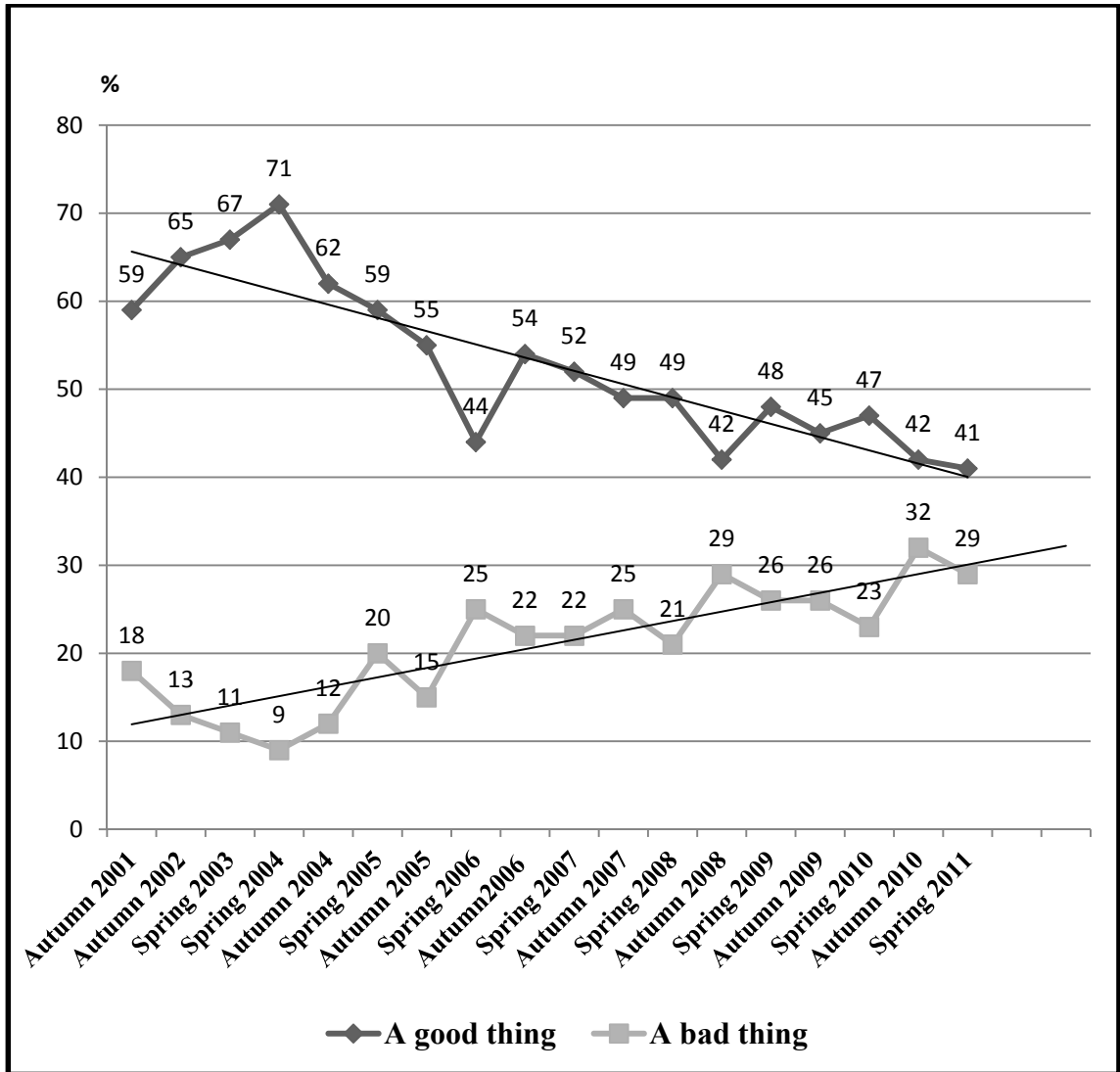
Source: Mensur Akgün; Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar; Aybars Görgülü and Erdem Aydın, **Türkiye’de Dış Politika Algısı, (Foreign Policy Perception in Turkey)**, İstanbul: TESEV Yayınları, May 2011

Inversely proportional to the broad literature on the EU-Turkey relations, there are seldom empirical works analyzing public attitude towards the EU membership.⁴⁸⁷ None of the existing studies on the EU perception of Turkish electorate entirely covers the era of 2002-2011; and they are mainly based on the nation-wide surveys either conducted by European Commission or some research institutions/companies.

Figure 3.8 below shows the results of the Eurobarometer public opinion surveys held in Turkey from 2001 to 2011. It is clearly visible that there is a decline in the number of people believing that the EU membership is a good thing while the number of people who think the opposite is increasing. Turkish public, more or less, views the membership as not necessarily a good thing.

⁴⁸⁷ Ali Çarkoğlu and Çiğdem Kentmen, “Diagnosing trends and determinants in Public Support for Turkey’s EU Membership”, **South European Society and Politics**, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2011, p. 365 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2011.598348> accessed on 31.08.2011

Figure 3.8: Public Opinion in Turkey on the EU Membership Issue (2001-2011)

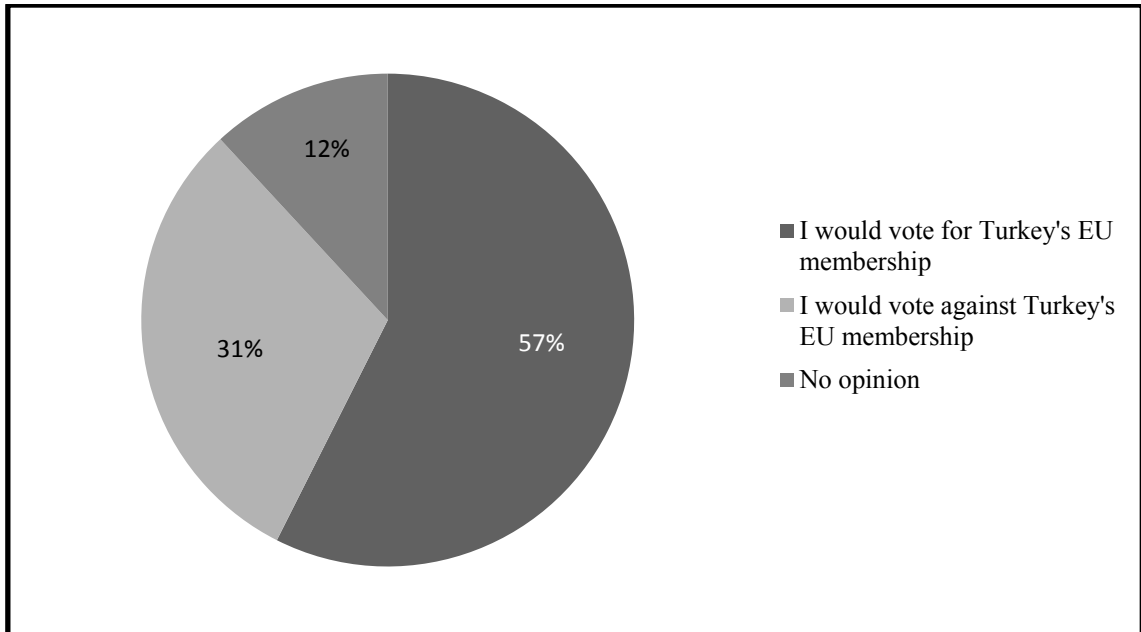


Source: Eurobarometer surveys 2002-2011 (See Bibliography)

Another public opinion survey conducted by the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) also confirms the decline in support for the EU membership in Turkey from 2008 to 2011. Figures 3.9 and 3.10 show the results of TEPAV’s surveys. Although TEPAV’s numbers are different from the Eurobarometer surveys, the two sources are consistent with each other. Accordingly, the number of people who say “I would vote for Turkey’s EU membership” decreased from 57 % to 54 %; whereas the number of people who say “I would vote against Turkey’s EU membership” rose from 31 % to 35 %. There were more people who had no opinion in

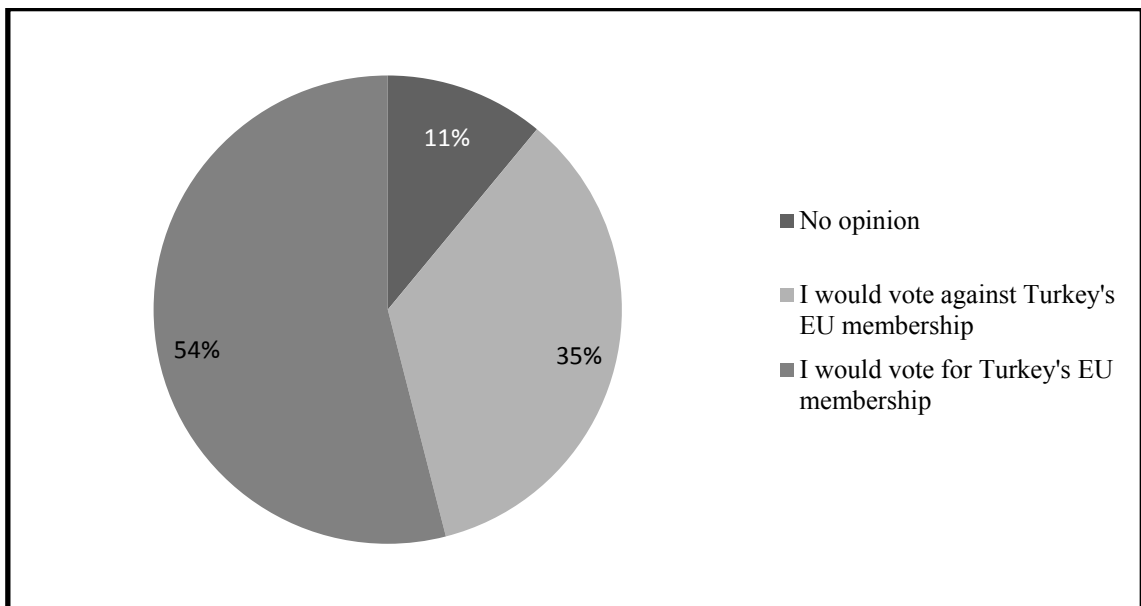
2008 (12 %) comparing to 2011 (11 %). This meant that some hesitant respondents became anti-EU in three years.

Figure 3.9: Public Support for the EU membership in Turkey in 2008



Source: TEPAV (Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey), **Public Opinion Poll on Turkey's EU Membership**, 2011, <http://www.tepav.org.tr/en/haberler/s/1991>, accessed on 01.09.2011

Figure 3.10: Public Support for the EU Membership in Turkey in 2011



Source: TEPAV (Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey), **Public Opinion Poll on Turkey's EU Membership**, 2011, <http://www.tepav.org.tr/en/haberler/s/1991> accessed on 01.09.2011

According to those results, the support for EU membership in Turkish society increased rapidly from 2001 to 2002. By the year 2002, with a 6 point increase comparing to the previous year, 65 % of Turkish population believed that the EU membership of Turkey would be a good thing.⁴⁸⁸ This positive attitude is highly compatible with the enthusiasm of the AKP government to speed up the reforms; the CHP's support for the enactment of the reform packages and the pro-EU discourse of the MHP and the DTP at the time. The four political parties were aware of the fact that concentration on democratic reforms to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria would help them pull votes given the high electoral support for the EU membership.

It is observed that there was a considerable despair in public about the economy in both 2001 and 2002 Eurobarometer surveys. March 2001 Eurobarometer survey shows how negatively the questions concerning the perception of Turkish economy were answered. 30 % versus 9 % were "not at all satisfied" rather than "very satisfied" with their lives in general. Only 29 % stated that their life satisfaction improved compared with five years ago; whereas 56 % agreed that it got worse. Interestingly, when people were asked "In the course of the next five years, do you expect your personal situation to improve, to stay about the same or to get worse?", 30 % chose "It will improve" while 41 % selected the option "It will get worse."⁴⁸⁹ Likewise, in the survey of autumn 2002, when Turkish people were asked whether they believe that the economic situation of Turkey will be better in 2003 or not, 54 % of them answered with "It will get worse."⁴⁹⁰ This is important to understand how much frustration the 2001 economic crisis entailed in Turkish public since people were

⁴⁸⁸ European Commission, **Eurobarometer 2001, Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries, Summary**, Autumn 2001,

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/cceb/2001/aceb20011_summary.pdf

accessed on 24.02.2012 and European Commission, Eurobarometer 2002.2, **Die Öffentliche Meinung in den Kandidatenländer (Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries)**, Brussels, December 2002

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/cceb/2002/cceb_2002.2_full_de.pdf

accessed on 25.03.2012

⁴⁸⁹ European Commission, **Eurobarometer 2001, Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries**, Autumn 2001,

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/cceb/2001/cceb20011_en.pdf

accessed on 24.02.2012

⁴⁹⁰ European Commission, Eurobarometer 2002.2, **Die Öffentliche Meinung in den Kandidatenländer (Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries)**, Brussels, December 2002

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/cceb/2002/cceb_2002.2_full_de.pdf

accessed on 25.03.2012

desperate for the upcoming years. The electorate was looking forward to having a more stable economy and a change in political atmosphere which could increase motivation for the future of the country.

The EU seemed to be an alternative solution for people to alter the pessimistic mood. The 2001 survey results proved that the Turkish public is not satisfied with the pace of integration at the time and wanted the reforms to be accelerated. When the public was asked “In your opinion, what is the current speed of the accession process?”, the majority (39 %) chose the lowest option in the answer sheet, that is, “standing still”. When they were to ask the desired speed of the accession process, 52 % chose the option “as fast as possible”. It was realized that the biggest difference between the current speed of the accession process and the desired speed was in Turkey among thirteen applicant countries with -2.99 points.⁴⁹¹ This indicates that majority of Turkish electorate was in favor of the EU membership and wanted to have the necessary reforms as fast as possible; however they believed that the accession process was not moving on. In other words, they were disappointed with the low performance of the government.

On the other hand, the reason for the high public support for the membership was mostly related to material gains expected from the membership rather than idealistic reasons such as increasing cultural diversity or preserving peace in the region. In 2002 survey, 75 % of the respondents stated that the EU membership of Turkey would mean the ability to change the country of residence; to 73 % it was job opportunities and to 71 % it was education alternatives.⁴⁹² When people were asked whether Turkey’s becoming a member of the EU would bring personally more advantages or not, % 62 of Turkish electorate stated that the membership would provide personal advantages being the highest percentage among the thirteen candidate states.⁴⁹³

⁴⁹¹ European Commission, **Eurobarometer 2001, Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries, Summary**, Autumn 2001, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/cceb/2001/aceb20011_summary.pdf accessed on 24.02.2012

⁴⁹² European Commission, Eurobarometer 2002.2, **Die Öffentliche Meinung in den Kandidatenländer (Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries)**, Brussels, December 2002 http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/cceb/2002/cceb_2002.2_full_de.pdf accessed on 25.03.2012

⁴⁹³ European Commission, Eurobarometer 2002.2, **Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries**, Brussels, 2002

Thus, it is not possible to evaluate the high public support for the EU membership as independent from the overall negative perception of the economic situation of Turkey. In the eyes of public, the possible membership offered prosperity or sort of escape from low life standards of the county after the staggering economic crisis in 2001. Put differently, the parties, which declared their commitment to Turkey's EU cause; and, which worked hard for the required reforms to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria, would enjoy the majority of the votes.

In this respect, it can be claimed that the AKP, the CHP and the MHP took this fact into consideration in their cost-benefit calculations while making their EU policies. The consecutive reform packages launched in the TGNA between 2002 and 2004 corresponded with the perceived need for changing the electoral frustration inherited from the previous coalition government which was held responsible for dragging the country into a political and economic chaos.

The results of the Eurobarometer surveys in Spring 2003 (63 %) and in Autumn 2004 (62 %) are almost the same with 1 % decline. However, it is observed that in Spring 2004, the support for the EU membership in Turkish public made its peak with 71 %. (See Figure 3.8) This is, of course, not a coincidence given that at the time Spring 2004 survey was conducted, Turkey had already experienced major changes. First of all, the AKP had become government alone so it gave an end to the long tradition of weak coalition governments in Turkey. As the majority in the parliament, the AKP government gave the priority to economic progress and could achieve a high level of economic performance within a short time. This brought social confidence and optimism regarding the future of the EU-Turkey relations, in particular, increased the expectations in Turkish electorate for receiving a date from the EU to open accession negotiations.

As it is examined profoundly in Chapter 2, 2002-2004 is the period of time when four political parties display the most pro-EU attitude in their discourse. By the year 2004, the TGNA had already introduced seven reform packages and was preparing

for passing the eighth one. In this regard, their high motivation to fulfill the political criteria and to start the accession negotiations overlaps with enthusiastic support of Turkish public within the first half of 2004.

When the period of 2002-2004 is reconsidered, the pro-EU approaches of the AKP and the CHP can be explained by the goal of increasing their vote shares since the two parties were the only parties that could enter the parliament in the 2002 general elections. The CHP was shocked with the unforeseeable rise of the AKP as a newly born party and was disappointed with its low performance in the elections as the deepest rooted party of Turkey in comparison to the AKP. On the other side, despite its election victory in the 2002 elections, the AKP was still not an overwhelming majority and needed the support of the CHP to introduce laws in the TGNA. The benefit of pursuing a pro-EU policy was to increase its vote share, in other words, to have the possibility of being the sole party in the TGNA in the next elections which means being the most powerful political actor in Turkey as agenda-setter.

Even the MHP, being the ideologically furthest party to the EU membership because of its nationalist orientation, which could cause difficulties to accept the idea of giving up some of the country's national sovereignty, pursued a pro-EU policy regarding the period of 2002-2004. In this sense, increasing its vote share can be pointed as one of the main underlying reasons for the MHP's positive EU approach. The cost of adopting a skeptical EU approach was much higher than the benefit of ideological loyalty when it is considered that the public support for the EU membership was at its peak.

Perhaps, the only party which could not be directly associated with the electoral behavior for its very positive EU approach was the DTP. In fact, it can be related to the party's focus on minority issues, more specifically, on the Kurdish conflict because the party traditionally pulled the votes of people whose priority are the policies seeking for a solution regarding the Kurdish problem. Although there is a tendency in the DTP circles towards the idea that the EU membership would help solve the Kurdish problem by pushing democratization in Turkey, the electoral support was not the driving force in the DTP's pro-EU approach from 2002 till 2004.

Nevertheless, as Figure 3.8 shows, there is a sharp decline from the spring to autumn of 2004 within a few months. The number of people who found the membership “a good thing” decreased from 71 % to 62 %. This is parallel to the loss of motivation due to a couple of developments towards the end of the year. First, despite all the efforts of Turkey, Cyprus conflict could not be resolved because in the referendum the Greek side of Cyprus rejected the Annan Plan proposed by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The plan had aimed to unite the two conflicted sides of the Island. When it failed, it became certain that the Greek side of the Island would become a member of the EU without a solution and the Turkish side would be isolated although they voted for reaching a compromise. This caused the EU’s loss of prestige in Turkey since it gave the impression as if it were punishing Turkish side for being the compromiser while rewarding the other side with membership. It would also cause problems in the negotiation process of Turkey because Turkey would have to negotiate with a country which it didn’t recognize and the extension of Customs Union between Turkey and the EU would be problematic because Turkey wouldn’t make any agreement without recognizing Cyprus.

Second, at the time of the fieldwork of the Autumn 2004 Eurobarometer survey, the European Commission’s 2004 country progress report was declared which admitted that Turkey finally fulfilled the political criteria and ready to start the accession talks. Even though the report seems to be positive, it stressed on an open-ended negotiation process including several conditions and derogations. This indicated that the membership would not be an easy one for Turkey. It could have taken years; and then, there was still the possibility of being not accepted as a member due to the referenda which would be held by member states at the end of the negotiations.

Hence, after 2004 cost of taking a pro-EU approach for political parties rose gradually while cost of taking a skeptical approach declined since there were many ambiguities with regard to the full membership. Although the majority of the Turkish people were still in favor of Turkey’s membership, increasing nationalism and the signs of growing skepticism about the EU were apparent. In autumn 2004, 73 % stated that Turkey would gain benefits from being a future member of the EU. The Union had a

positive image for 63 % of Turkish public. 51 % of people tended to trust the Union. When the question “what does the EU represent for you?” was asked, the top three answers were “economic prosperity” by 48 % ; “social protection” by 34 % and “freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU” by 30 % among other options such as democracy, peace, cultural diversity etc. On the other hand, in this survey the 72 % of Turkish people stated that they perceived themselves only Turkish rather than European or both Turkish and European, which was 49 % in 2002; and 96 % of Turkish public stated that they were proud of being Turkish, which was 86 %.⁴⁹⁴ Those results reveal that the public desire for membership can still be attached to material gains and pragmatic concerns rather than the attraction of European value system. In addition, national identity still seemed to be the only dominant identity for Turkish people and rising nationalist sentiments in public concerning the EU-Turkey relations became more visible.

The public support hit the bottom in spring 2006 surveys. (See Figure 3.8) From Spring 2004 until Autumn 2005, there was a steady decline in the number of people who viewed the membership positively. In Autumn 2005, 55 % of Turkish public supported the EU membership and the percentage of Turkish people, who believed that Turkey would benefit from the EU membership, was 68 %.⁴⁹⁵ Nevertheless, by the spring of 2006, Turkish public support for membership decreased sharply to 44 % which made it less than half of the society for the first time since 2001. In the same year, the percentage of Turkish people, who believed that Turkey would benefit from the EU membership diminished to 51 %.⁴⁹⁶

The reason of this rapid decrease in public support should be searched in the period between 2004, when the support for the EU was at its peak, and 2006, when the

⁴⁹⁴ European Commission, Eurobarometer 62, **Public Opinion in the European Union**, Autumn 2004, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb62/eb_62_en.pdf accessed on 24.02.2012

⁴⁹⁵ European Commission, Eurobarometer 64, **Public Opinion in the European Union**, National Report on Turkey, Autumn 2005 http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb64/eb64_tk_nat.pdf accessed on 15.03.2012

⁴⁹⁶ European Commission, Eurobarometer 65, **Public Opinion in the European Union**, National Report on Turkey, Spring 2006 http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb65/eb65_tr_nat.pdf accessed on 14.03.2012

support for the EU was at its bottom. In 2004, Turkey had already adopted various reform packages to harmonize its law system with the EU acquis. Both the political elite and public were motivated to start the accession talks as soon as possible. In this respect, the decisions taken in the 17 December 2004 EU Summit were insufficient to fulfill the expectations of both Turkish public and the political parties because in this summit Turkey could only receive a date to start the negotiations instead of starting them immediately. Additionally, as mentioned above, it was understood that the negotiation process would be full of ambiguities and at the end; there would be no guarantee for full membership. On top of these, there was the problem of an EU member Cyprus which was not recognized by Turkey. When the negotiations started on 3 October 2005, it became clear that chances were very low for Turkish accession without a solution for the Island and since the Greek side was already in the Union, there was little hope for a just solution which would not be mostly favoring the Greek side. Soon after the negotiations began, the EU increased its pressure on Turkey about the extension of Customs Union Agreement to the new members including Cyprus.

As seen in Chapter 2, during 2004-2006 there is also a parallel decline in the motivation of the political parties regarding their EU discourse with the exception of the government party, the AKP. The AKP maintained its enthusiastic pro-EU approach despite the course of relations became more complicated after 2004. When the discourse of the AKP in party documents and other sources is considered, it can be claimed that the party acted rationally since it used the decision of starting accession talks as a great success of its government which could not be achieved by other governments during Turkey's more than forty years history of integration to the EU. Being the party which signed this decision was a significant political advantage over other parties in terms of the competition for the next elections.

On the other hand, the CHP became more skeptical in its EU policy after December 2004. The electoral support seems irrelevant in the CHP's policy shift because the reward of being the party which brought Turkey to the negotiation table with the EU was already taken by the AKP being the incumbent government. The cost of being completely pro-EU was higher than taking a skeptical EU approach because

after 2004 there were more problematic issues on the agenda of the EU-Turkey relations conflicting Turkey's national interests.

For the MHP, the situation was a bit different than the CHP. The political wind was not against the party anymore because the EU membership started to be perceived not as entirely advantageous for Turkey. The EU accession could harm the national interests of Turkey and the Turkish electorate was inclined to view the EU as unfair and biased towards Turkey for not giving what it deserved by working hard during 2002-2004. This was an opportunity for the MHP to pull votes of frustrated EU proponents with its nationalist discourse and to please its party base which had traditionally more propensity towards a union of Turkic world than integration with Europe. Therefore, the benefit of a skeptical EU approach was much feasible than the benefit of remaining in pro-EU line.

The DTP maintained its pro-EU approach after 2004. Despite the limited number of party documents or speeches of party members particularly regarding the EU perspective of the party, no sign of skepticism is noticed in the party discourse at the time of the 17 December 2004 EU Council or its aftermath.

Finally, in the EU Council of December 2006, the Union's decision of freezing the negotiation chapters related to the implementation of the customs union was the last straw that changed the optimistic atmosphere in relations to a pessimistic one. Following the spring 2006, a stable decline can be observed in public opinion surveys of the 2006-2011 period with small fluctuations. (See Figure 3.8) It can be argued that there are two reasons for the electorate's becoming increasingly negative towards the EU after 2006.

First, the negotiation process came to a deadlock. The eight chapters concerning the customs union with Cyprus was just the beginning. Especially after French President Nicolas Sarkozy assumed office, the accession talks became even harder for Turkey. The opening of many chapters was blocked by either Cyprus or France. No new negotiation chapter was opened since 2010. This resulted in a common

belief among Turkish people that the Union was biased in terms of Turkey's membership.

Second, although this thesis does not focus on the perspective of the EU on Turkish membership, it should be mentioned that the developments within the Union particularly after 2008 made the EU members more skeptical about enlargement, specifically in the case of Turkey. A financial crisis broke out in eurozone countries in the late 2009 having significant impact on the southern and eastern European countries, those which had relatively less powerful economies to the countries on the north and west of the Union. In 2010 and 2011, the whole Union suffered from the euro crisis and the tension peaked by the Greek bailouts after that country declared its bankruptcy. Those events raised the questions about the future of the EU and its economic credibility. The Union became more introverted since it dealt with how to save the euro and its economy.

On the other hand, Turkish economy was growing fast while Europe was struggling with crisis. The statement of the incumbent minister of economy, Zafer Çağlayan, reflects the general perception in public and political elite over the last years. He emphasizes on the fact that Turkish economy grew 8.9 % in 2010 being the fastest growing economy of Europe and the third fastest growing economy of the G 20; whereas the EU could only grow 1.7 %.⁴⁹⁷ As a response to Turkish economic progress and the recession in the EU, the EU membership became less attractive for Turkish public which supported the Union mostly because of material benefits. There was even a kind of popular image at the time that Turkey would be economically too strong to be part of a union of states striving for economic survival.

Hence, the cost of pursuing an enthusiastic pro-EU policy when there was a weak EU, whose foremost members as well as public were reluctant to include Turkey, became much higher than the cost of following a skeptical EU policy for the Turkish political parties to pull the majority of votes. This caused a negative shift in the EU policies of the parties. As seen in Chapter 2, the parties except the DTP/BDP took a

⁴⁹⁷ Official Website of Ministry of Economy, "Minister Zafer Çağlayan Evaluated the Growth Numbers", <http://www.ekonomi.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=bakanlikofisi&bolum=detay&haberid=1448> accessed on 12.03.2012

skeptical EU stance after 2006. It is not possible to draw such a conclusion for the DTP/BDP because no specific publication or speech on the party's EU approach has been found during this research. Thus, there is no proof of change in this party's EU approach. On the other hand, there is also no proof that the party decided on its EU policy in accordance with the electoral preferences because the opening of the negotiations did not cause a remarkable improvement in the solution of Kurdish problem which could have made a significant effect on the DTP/BDP voters. As Evren Balta Paker underlines, although the EU negotiation process made the Kurdish issue more easily discussed in Turkish political circles in the context of individual and partially cultural rights, a sentiment of strategic isolation which increasingly took roots remained constant.⁴⁹⁸ It can only be predicted that the party carried on its pro-EU discourse. However, from the other side, it proves that the EU issue was not a vital policy area for the party since it remained indifferent to the developments concerning the changes within the Union or the decline in Turkish electoral support for the EU membership.

The AKP as the most enthusiastic pro-EU party of 2002-2004 and 2004-2006 took a more ignorant and skeptical approach for the EU accession after 2006. The party did not refer to the EU issue as often as it did in 2002-2006. The "Ankara criteria" started to be often used by Erdoğan as an alternative to Copenhagen criteria. It referred to the idea that Turkey would go on making reforms following the guidance of its own criteria if Turkey's accession path were to be blocked by the EU.⁴⁹⁹ The disappointment of the Turkish electorate with the EU accession process combined with reluctant attitude of the EU to cooperate; the problems in domestic politics such as presidential and general elections, the referendum for the constitutional amendments, Ergenekon case as well as the closure case of the party caused the AKP to lose its concentration and motivation on the EU issue. It can be alleged that gaining the support of the

⁴⁹⁸ Evren Balta Paker, "Dış Tehditten İç Tehdide: Türkiye'de Doksanlarda Ulusal Güvenliğin Yeniden İnşası", Evren Balta Paker and İsmet Akça, **Türkiye'de Ordu, Devlet ve Güvenlik Siyaseti (Army, State and Security Policy in Turkey)**, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, May 2010, p. 430

⁴⁹⁹ Turkish Journal, "Erdoğan AB Üyelerine Seslendi: Önümüzü Keserseniz Ankara Kriterleri ile Yolumuza Devam Ederiz." (Erdoğan called out to EU members: If you block Turkey's path, then we go on with Ankara criteria.), 22 April 2011, <http://www.turkishjournal.com/i.php?newsid=240> accessed on 23.03.2012

electorate was effective in the AKP's EU stance after 2006 since the party took a skeptical EU approach as the public became more skeptical.

The change in public support played role in the change of the CHP's EU policy, too. As highlighted in Chapter 2, the party became more skeptical than 2004-2006 and tended to use the EU issue as a way of blaming the AKP government. In almost every TGNA group speech of the CHP, which had a reference to the EU in 2006-2011, the party members put forward the honorable membership concept and the failure of the AKP to manage the EU-Turkey relations without harming Turkey's national interests. Increasing its dose of skepticism was in line with the general EU tendency of the Turkish public.

The MHP also calculated that the cost of being skeptical towards the EU was inconsiderably lower compared to the cost of supporting the EU. In the second AKP term (2007-2011), the party was on the verge of being anti-EU although it went on stressing that it supported Turkey's EU cause in principle. The MHP, just like the CHP, used the EU issue as a source of advantage for political competition with the AKP. In this sense, the party tried to benefit from the votes of people which increasingly became more negative towards the EU.

According to the results Eurobarometer's national report on Turkey in Autumn 2010, Turkish public considered unemployment (59 %) and terrorism (54 %) as the two biggest problems encountered by Turkey. 42 % of Turkish public stated that the EU membership of Turkey would be positive.⁵⁰⁰ Examining the validity of three models-the winners and losers in economic circumstances model, the winners and losers in democratic transitions model, and identity-based models within the context of Turkey, Çarkoğlu and Kentmen argue that perceived national economic conditions and national identity affect Turkish electorate negatively while satisfaction with democracy is

⁵⁰⁰ European Commission, Eurobarometer 74, **Public Opinion in the European Union**, National Report on Turkey, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb74/eb74_tr_tr_nat_pre.pdf accessed on 14.03.2012

positively linked to support for EU membership. They underline that, unlike predictions, religion does not play a significant role over membership preferences.⁵⁰¹

By the spring of 2011, 41 % of respondents in Turkey stated that the EU membership of Turkey would be positive and only 36 % of Turkish people found the image of the EU as positive. Almost half said that EU membership would benefit Turkey (48%, stable), whereas the opposite opinion grew slightly since Autumn 2010 (38%, +2 points).⁵⁰² The findings also prove that the general public confidence in the possibility of Turkey's EU membership in the near future is not clear but likely to be negative.

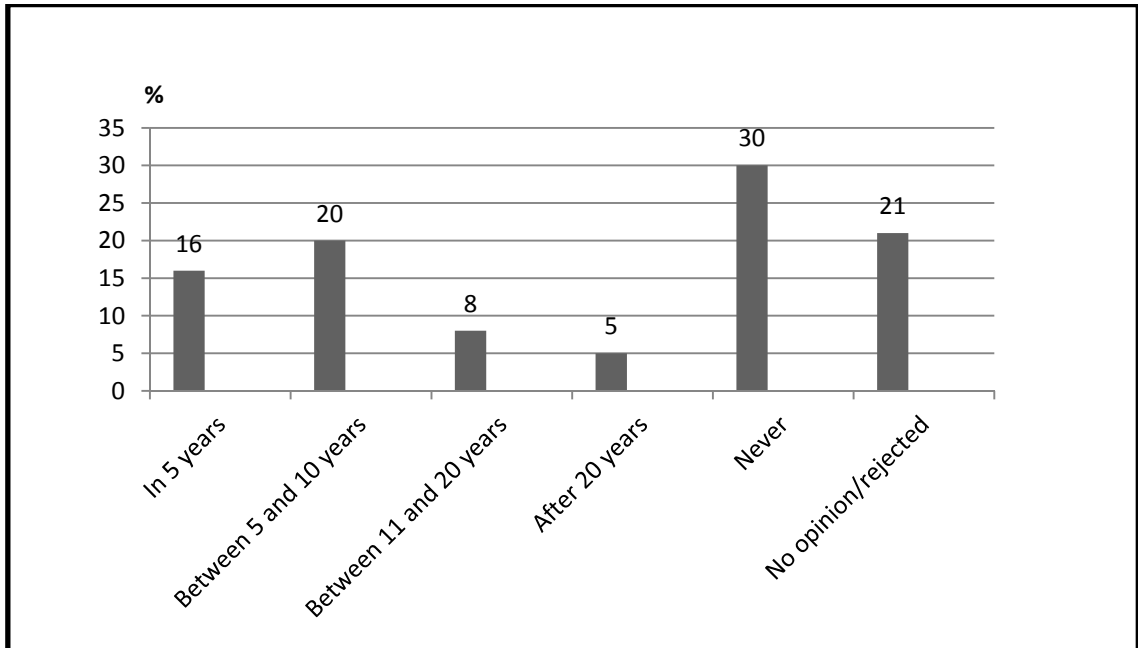
The data acquired from the recent public opinion survey of TESEV confirm that Turkish public does not expect Turkey to be an EU member. However, when the answers are examined carefully, it is observed that they are far from being consistent. As seen in Figure 3.11, the majority of Turkish people participated in the survey (30 %) believed that Turkey would never be an EU member. This shows that the public is not so optimistic about the future of the accession process of Turkey.

On the other hand the number of people who believe that Turkey would be a member after 20 years is only 5 % while the number of people believing that it would happen in 5 years is 16 %. It can be argued that the public has confused feelings about the future of Turkey-EU relations. This confusion can also be understood from the fact that the number of respondents who rejected to talk or had no opinion is the second highest among the six answers.

⁵⁰¹ Ali Çarkoğlu and Çiğdem Kentmen, "Diagnosing trends and determinants in Public Support for Turkey's EU Membership", **South European Society and Politics**, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2011, p. 365
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13608746.2011.598348>
accessed on 31.08.2011

⁵⁰² European Commission, Eurobarometer 75, **Public Opinion in the European Union**, Spring 2011, Brussels, August 2011
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb75/eb75_publ_en.pdf
accessed on 15.03.2012

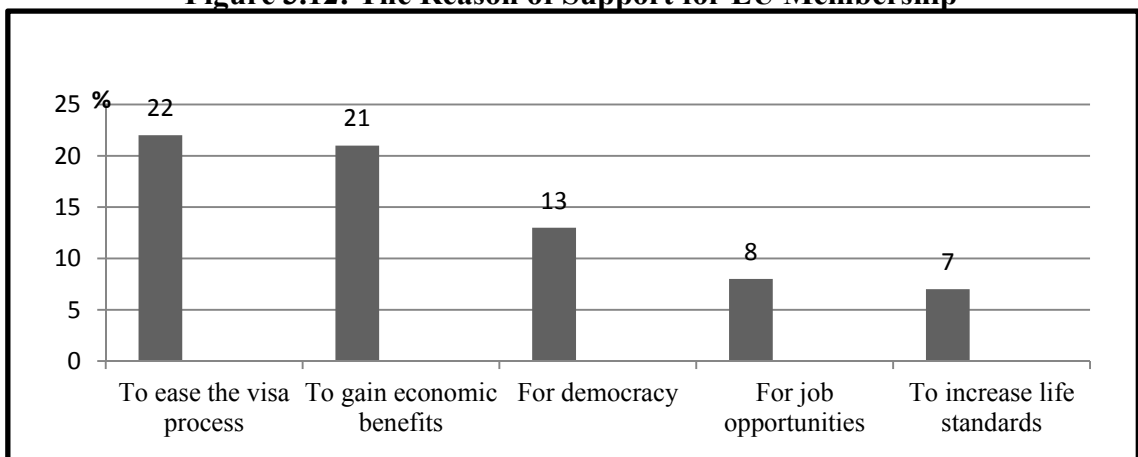
Figure 3.11: The Expected Date of EU Accession



Source: Mensur Akgün; Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar; Aybars Görgülü and Erdem Aydın, *Türkiye’de Dış Politika Algısı (Foreign Policy Perception in Turkey)*, İstanbul: TESEV Yayınları, May 2011

TESEV’s survey also shows that material gains of membership are still the most important reason of public support for the EU membership of Turkey by the year 2011. Easing the visa process to travel within the Union is seen as the biggest reason of public support. (See Figure 3.12)

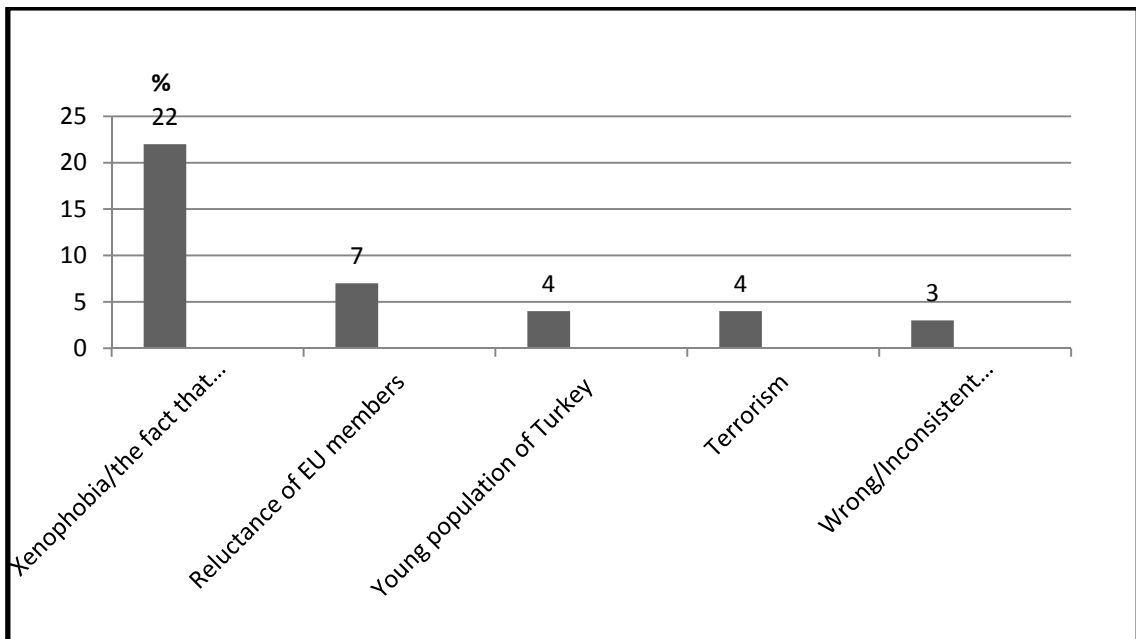
Figure 3.12: The Reason of Support for EU Membership



Source: Mensur Akgün; Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar; Aybars Görgülü and Erdem Aydın, *Türkiye’de Dış Politika Algısı (Foreign Policy Perception in Turkey)*, İstanbul: TESEV Yayınları, May 2011

Another finding of TESEV’s survey was that Turkish people do not see Cyprus conflict as crucial as the official political discourse sees it in terms of its effect on the obstruction of negotiation talks. Contrary to what could be predicted, as shown in Figure 3.13, the majority of the respondents of the survey stated that xenophobia is the main obstacle for Turkish accession (22 %) while reluctance of EU members is pointed as the second major obstacle (7 %).

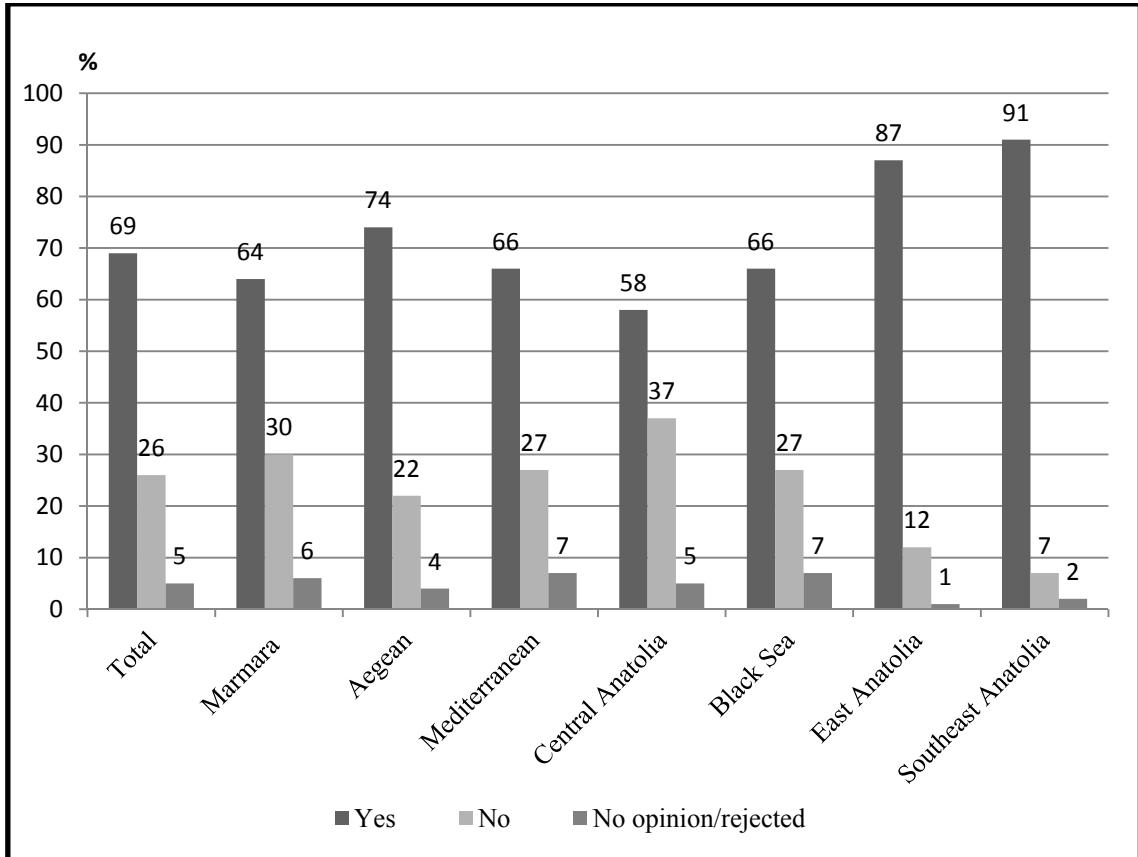
Figure 3.13: Obstacles for Turkey’s EU Membership



Source: Mensur Akgün; Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar; Aybars Görgülü and Erdem Aydın, *Türkiye’de Dış Politika Algısı (Foreign Policy Perception in Turkey)*, İstanbul: TESEV Yayınları, May 2011

The distribution of people supporting and opposing the EU membership according to the seven geographical regions of Turkey should also be mentioned since it gives an idea about the relation between the party constituencies and their EU approaches. When looked at Figure 3.14, it is observed that the largest support for the EU membership of Turkey comes from the Southeastern and Eastern Anatolia with 91 % and 87 % respectively. Contrarily, Central Anatolia has the least support for the EU membership (58 %) and the highest rate of opposition (37 %) among other regions.

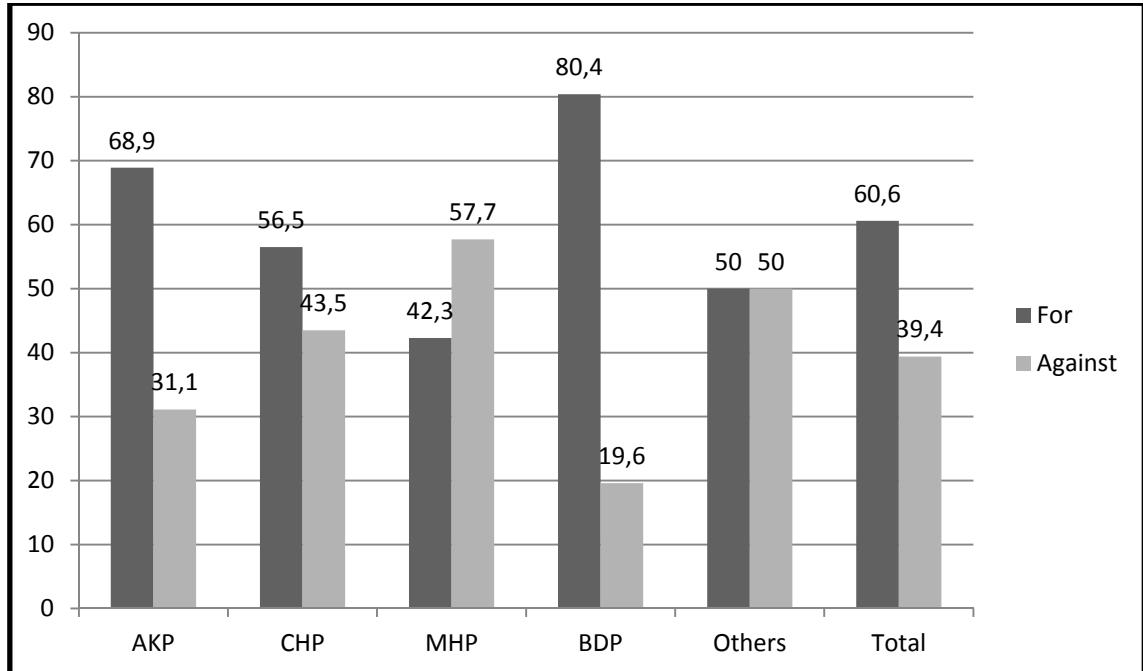
Figure 3.14: Regional Distribution of Support for Turkey’s EU Membership



Source: Mensur Akgün; Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar; Aybars Görgülü and Erdem Aydın, *Türkiye’de Dış Politika Algısı (Foreign Policy Perception in Turkey)*, İstanbul: TESEV Yayınları, May 2011

In this context, the surveys of TESEV and TEPAV, both being held in 2011, are complementary. The survey of TEPAV attempts to evaluate the correlation between the voters of each party and their EU approaches. In order to do this, it asks the respondents what party they would vote for if the elections were held today as well as whether they support Turkey’s EU membership.

Figure 3.15: Party Preference and the Support for EU Membership



Source: TEPAV (Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey), **Public Opinion Poll on Turkey's EU Membership**, 2011, <http://www.tepav.org.tr/en/haberler/s/1991> accessed on 01.09.2011

As observed in Figure 3.15, 80.4 % of the BDP voters support the EU membership followed by the AKP voters with 68.9 % and the CHP voters with 56.5 %. In the case of the MHP voters, the majority opposes the EU membership with 57.7 %. This justifies the current EU stances of those political parties and can be taken as an indicator of their rational behavior.

In conclusion, it can be argued that there is a significant relation between the change in the EU approaches of political parties and the electoral support for the EU accession. From the rational choice perspective, it is noted that the political parties take the electoral choice into consideration while calculating costs and benefits of their EU stances.

Nevertheless, as discussed profoundly in previous chapters, the electoral behavior is not the only factor affecting the policy making process of the parties

regarding the EU issue. Chapter 4 continues with delving into the effects of intraparty dynamics and party identity being the other two significant factors on their EU stances.

CHAPTER 4

THE IMPACT OF INTRAPARTY DYNAMICS AND PARTY IDENTITIES ON TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES

Self-identification is one of the most studied aspects of electoral politics likewise in other sub-disciplines of political science. Within the context of electoral democracies, identification with political parties and ideologies has particularly attracted attention among scholars. However, those scholars define identification and expression as “cultural or psychological processes, either basic to human motivation or deriving immediately from some form of built-in-human orientation toward social groups” which are not easily accommodated to rational choice accounts of human behavior.⁵⁰³ However, contrary to the general tendency among scholars which consider rational choice accounts of political behavior and identity issues as “irreconcilable”, the rational explanation of identity issues receives attention from rational choice theorists.

Calvert summarizes the rational choice efforts to address identity and expression chronologically in three categories:

- 1- Analyses in which choice phenomena replace identity and expressive phenomena, essentially denying their importance,
- 2-Analyses that take identity and expressive motivations as given features of individual preference and examining their effects in rational choice terms,
- 3- Analyses that construct more foundational rational choice models of social interaction and use them to examine the nature and effects of identity and expressive phenomena that occur within social interaction.⁵⁰⁴

This thesis falls into the second category defined by Calvert since it takes the identity and expressive motivations as given and analyzes their effects on the EU stances of Turkish political parties in rational choice terms. Since it does not attempt to

⁵⁰³ Randall Calvert, “Identity, Expression, and Rational-Choice Theory”, Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner (Eds.), **Political Science: The State of the Discipline**, New York: W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 2002, p.568

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., p.569

construct a specific model of rational choice to include the examination of identity, the scholarly works of this kind are not considered necessary to be explained in this part.⁵⁰⁵

As briefly discussed in Introduction and Chapter 1, although vote concern is the most important factor affecting the decision making process of political parties regarding a certain policy issue, there are also other factors playing role in this process. Within the context of this thesis, intraparty dynamics and party identities are selected as the other two important factors which have strong impact on the EU stances of Turkish political parties.

Intraparty dynamics mainly refer to the dominant political groups within the political parties. Even though political parties are viewed as if they are homogenous entities in terms of their basic interests, they are composed of various interest groups. Those different groups choose to cooperate with each other under the party umbrella as they share the ideology, basic principles and perspectives of the party. Cooperation between a party and its political groups is mutually beneficial. The groups help the party get political support and funding through lobbying activities. In return, they expect the party to pursue policies which are in line with their group interests. Each group forming the party can have different levels of susceptibility towards the same policy issues since each one of them has divergent goals which necessitate acting in certain ways. A party has to protect and work for the interests of those groups in order to keep them loyal because the support of those groups is vital for the party to get elected. Put differently, parties have to consider their expectations to be supported by those groups. Therefore, intraparty dynamics affect the cost-benefit analysis of a party while taking a policy position or changing the existing one.

On the other hand, another important factor which has an effect on a party's policy positions is the party identity. In the context of this thesis, the concept of identity is taken from a rational choice perspective. Thus, the party identity refers to the combination of all components which make a party different than others. Party ideology and party history can be counted among the most prominent elements making a party

⁵⁰⁵ For more information, Calvert's work can be utilized as a bibliographical source on the prominent studies which could achieve developing mix theories by bridging the theoretical gap between identity and rational behavior.

distinctive. From the rational choice perspective, those elements can also be interpreted as party differential. Accordingly, a party has to preserve its differential in order to compete with other parties in elections.

Parties have to act within the boundaries of their identities while deciding on a certain policy issue. In this sense, they do not dare to conduct policies which would severely challenge their historical background and ideology because these two, in a way, represent the party identity and any contradiction with the party identity could considerably decrease the credibility of the party which would bring about a loss of support in the party base. Thus, parties, as rational actors, are usually reluctant to formulate policies that would not match with their party identity. Even if they make a significant policy change which might be incompatible with the party ideology, they try to put it in a way that it seems a necessary change in order to legitimize themselves in the eyes of their party base.

This chapter depicts both intraparty dynamics and party identity together within one section for each party instead of dealing with those factors separately. Ideological roots of the parties are investigated through an historical overview while revealing the characteristics of the party such as its political base, political groups and leadership for this purpose. Finally, the chapter summarizes how those factors affected the EU approaches of the Turkish political parties during 2002-2011 by referring to the identified cases and the findings about parties' EU stances given in Chapter 2.

4.1. IDEOLOGICAL AND STRUCTURAL ROOTS OF THE AKP THROUGH AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Compared to the MHP and CHP, the AKP can be considered as a young party since it entered Turkish political scene in the new millennium (14 August 2001). Despite its short history, it showed a considerably high performance by winning the majority of the votes in the last three elections which would bring it to government alone. In this sense the party deserves a special attention since it achieved to form a one-party government which was one of the exceptions in Turkish politics characterized by

minority and coalition governments after 1980 military intervention. Hence, its history sheds light on the political atmosphere of the last decade as well.

The AKP stands at the center-right of the political spectrum although its ideology has become a focus of harsh debates. Those debates have usually stemmed from a general tendency to see the AKP as ideological succession of former Islamist parties such as the RP (Welfare Party-Refah Partisi) and the FP (Virtue Party-Fazilet Partisi), putting the party into a religious category. In fact, the AKP is even criticized by some scholars for its vague ideology which provides the potential to make the party open to anybody. It is argued that the party program and statements do not give a clue about how to define the party essence such as which values will protect it and by whom it will be protected.⁵⁰⁶ Being one of the founding members of the party, in his interview Yakış also confirms it by stating that the AKP is not a party of ideology.⁵⁰⁷ The party linked to the European People's Party as an observer member since 2005.

The argument about political Islamism has never been officially accepted by the AKP members. Even though they did not hide that they were religious in their private lives as they did not hesitate to be viewed by the media while practicing Islam, they firmly refused the idea that they benefited Islam in their policy making. Additionally, the AKP leader Tayyip Erdoğan declared his party's red lines as religionism, racism and regionalism⁵⁰⁸ and denied any ideological connection with other parties implicitly responding to those who question its link to Erbakan and Nationalist Outlook Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi) by saying "we took off that shirt."⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁶ Ergün Özbudun and William Hale, **Türkiye'de İslamcılık, Demokrasi ve Liberalizm. AKP Olayı.** İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, September 2010, p. 66

⁵⁰⁷ See Annex III/4

⁵⁰⁸ Hürriyet Newspaper, "Kırmızı Çizgilerim" (My Red Lines), 17 May 2003
<http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/printnews.aspx?DocID=147349>
accessed on 09.01.2010

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid; Yeni Asya Newspaper, "Erdoğan: Kaç Kez Milli Görüş Gömleğini Çıkardım Dedim." (Erdoğan: How many Times I Said I Took Off the Nationalist Outlook Shirt), Yeni Asya Newspaper, 21.07.2007,
<http://www.yeniasya.com.tr/2007/07/21/haber/h3.htm>
accessed on 09.01.2010

4.1.1. The Emergence of the AKP

It is arguable whether today's AKP is a pro-Islamist party as few claim or it is a conservative democrat party that has no religious basis as above mentioned by Erdoğan. There is only one simple fact that the conditions which prepared the formation of the AKP emerged within the Turkish political Islamist movement which was mostly driven by the Nationalist Outlook Movement and the political parties chaired by Necmettin Erbakan. In this regard, it would not be wrong to delve into the origins of the AKP through a short glance at the past of religious-conservative parties in Turkey.

The parties established under the leadership of Erbakan (National Order Party, National Salvation Party, Welfare Party, Virtue Party and Felicity Party) followed more or less the same line of political Islamism which was nourished by a deep communitarian structure. They were composed of strong grassroots organizations in a manner reflecting communitarian, family and religious order mentality. Unlike in modern party identity, communitarian imaginations and aspirations dominated his parties.⁵¹⁰ The Nationalist Outlook Movement⁵¹¹ formed the ideological basis of those parties. It has been a movement mostly gained popularity among the Turkish people living in Europe. Avcı defined the Nationalist Outlook as an anti-secularist and nationalistic-religious movement:

The term "Milli Görüş" (National Vision) reflects a nationalistic-religious vision and has been the key concept in the ideology of Islamic parties in Turkey. It is openly critical of the secular system in Turkey and has been known to advocate the shari'a.⁵¹²

The Nationalist Outlook ideology was based on opposition to the western civilization. It assumed that there was a fundamental clash between the Judeo-Christian western and the Islamic civilizations; the former relied on force, whereas the latter

⁵¹⁰ M. Hakan Yavuz, **Islamic Political Identity**, London: Oxford University Press, 2003 in YILDIRIM, Ergün; İNAÇ, Hüsamettin and ÖZLER, Hayrettin, "A Sociological Representation of the Justice and Development Party: Is It a Political Design or a Political Becoming?", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 8, No. 1, March 2007, p. 6

⁵¹¹ It is possible to find more than one English translation for Milli Görüş such as "National View", "National Vision", "Nationalist Outlook" etc. but Nationalist Outlook Movement is preferred to be used in this study.

⁵¹² Gamze Avcı, "Religion, Transnationalism and Turks in Europe" in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry M. Rubin (Eds.) **Religion and Politics in Turkey**, New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 64

relied on God. It described western civilization as materialistic, cruel, imperialist and destined to vanish. It explicitly objected Turkey's process of westernization equating it simply to the imitation of the West, which, in turn, resulted in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. It also opposed the secularist reforms of the CHP government in the early Republican era for their having an antagonistic attitude towards Islam. In this context, the Nationalist Outlook blamed all political parties other than the ones adopting its ideology as being either imperialist-capitalist or materialist-socialist, but imprudently imitating the West.⁵¹³ This anti-secular and anti-western approach was read, particularly by the military and the CHP circles, as a major threat to the founding Kemalist elements of the Republic which must have been kept under control.

Moreover, the Nationalist Outlook ideology envisioned a unified world of Islam under the leadership of Turkey. In its foreign policy, it took an anti-Semitic, anti-Zionist, anti-Israel approach which sometimes reached to a level of conspiracy such as viewing Israel as a country which aimed to constitute the "big" Israel by invading Syria, Egypt and Turkey or the UN was founded to create an Israeli state. As a matter of fact, the parties based on this ideology also objected Turkey's EU cause and the customs union with the EU countries by defining the Union as a "Christian Club".⁵¹⁴

Despite all of its radical approaches clearly distinguishing itself from the mainstream state policy especially regarding secularism, the Nationalist Outlook Movement was an outcome of the political and economic trends in Turkey from the 1980 military coup onwards which put Islamist movements in an advantageous position in politics. The nationalist view of Islam was supported by both the military and the government. This caused a gradual politicization of Islam. For the new middle and bourgeoisie classes, Islamic movements and networks provided social capital with which to establish business links and NGOs.⁵¹⁵ After Özal governments lost their

⁵¹³ Ergün Özbudun and William Hale, **Türkiye'de İslamcılık, Demokrasi ve Liberalizm. AKP Olayı.** İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, September 2010, pp. 34-35

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 35-36

⁵¹⁵ Ergün Yıldırım; Hüsamettin İnaç and Hayrettin Özler, "A Sociological Representation of the Justice and Development Party: Is It a Political Design or a Political Becoming?", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 8, No. 1, March 2007, p. 7

credibility, due to corruption scandals, the Nationalist Outlook Movement became a center of attraction for the Anatolian and Islamic bourgeoisie.

This newly emerged businessmen class had different characteristics from those living in big cities of Turkey. They were coming from relatively conservative small towns which were more attached to national and religious values. Notable amount of them were used to be guest workers in Germany and other parts of Europe and started business in Turkey with their savings. Those groups approached to the RP lines as they saw this as a functional and beneficial strategy.⁵¹⁶ In the 1995 elections, this electoral base made the RP to a coalition partner to the government together with the DYP and the power of political Islamist groups became more visible in Turkish politics.

On the other hand rise of political Islamism led to reaction of the secular elites including the military and the judiciary. As soon as the RP came to government, those groups challenged their policies and finally on February 28, 1997 the National Security Council (NSC) found the Erbakan government's activities as "reactionary" and launched a military memorandum which initiated a process known as "Postmodern Coup"⁵¹⁷ in the literature since the decisions taken by the NSC forced Erbakan to resign. Doğan defines February 28 as the military's attempt to reshape the order of the state and political system by controlling the Islamist circles which were allowed to get stronger after the 1980s and to prevent the political Islam as well as the Islamist capital from growing to the extent which would conflict with the regime and its dominant class.⁵¹⁸

Shortly after 28 February Process, on 16 January 1998 the RP was closed down by the Constitutional Court. Yet, the RP's ideas were continued to be conveyed by the FP. The FP kept the communitarian structure of the RP. Nevertheless, a reformist group, who openly objected the party leadership and demanded a transformation of the party

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 7-9

⁵¹⁷ This term first used by the retired Admiral Salim Dervişoğlu in a TV discussion program. Then, the program moderator Hulki Cevizoğlu wrote a book about it. See Hulki Cevizoğlu, **Generalinden 28 Şubat İtirafı "Postmodern Darbe"**, İstanbul: Ceviz Kabuğu Yayınları, 2001

⁵¹⁸ Ali Ekber Doğan, "İslamcı Sermayenin Gelişme Dinamikleri ve 28 Şubat Süreci", İlhan Uzgel and Bülent Duru, **AKP Kitabı: Bir Dönüşümün Bilançosu (The AKP Book: An Account of a Transformation)**, Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, October 2010, p. 304

identity, had derived within the party. As Yıldırım, İnaç and Özler point out “the single-handed and ‘behind the scenes’ leadership and evidence of Erbakan’s charismatic character were clear signs that the FP still preserved its communitarian characteristics.”⁵¹⁹ These series of developments prepared the birth of the AKP. Consequently, when the FP was shut down by a decision of the Constitutional Court in 2001 for its activities jeopardizing the secular order of the Turkish Republic⁵²⁰, two successor parties, the SP and the AKP, emerged. The AKP was founded by the reformist wing of the former FP whereas the traditionalist wing formed the SP (Felicity Party-Saadet Partisi).

There are two dominant political groups which formed the AKP. The first one is the newly emerged political Islamist group which reconciles with the principles of free market economy and has its roots in the Nationalist Outlook Movement. In other words, it represents the Anatolian-based Islamist bourgeois which developed after Özal’s neoliberal economic policies in the late 1980s and was supported during the RP government. Majority of them were the Islamists coming from middle class and often holding a university degree which were once given the chance to take economic initiatives during Özal’s rule. They were usually raised in Anatolian villages or small towns, and had moved to big cities after university education. Thus, they had been introduced with Islamist values before they settled in cities. Rising economic power of the Muslim bourgeois of Anatolia which had conservative and political Islamist ideological orientations started to compete with the Istanbul-based capitalists which has a consensus with the state on the Kemalist ideology.⁵²¹ This group established the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association (MÜSİAD) as an alternative to TÜSİAD and supported the EU accession for the improvement of market economy in Turkey contrary to the traditional Nationalist Outlook front.

⁵¹⁹ Ergün Yıldırım; Hüsamettin İnaç and Hayrettin Özler, “A Sociological Representation of the Justice and Development Party: Is It a Political Design or a Political Becoming?”, **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 8, No. 1, March 2007, p. 8-9

⁵²⁰ The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Turkey, **Decision 2001/2**, 22.06.2001

⁵²¹ Hakan Yavuz, “Giriş: Türkiye’de İslami Hareketin Dönüşümünde Yeni Burjuvazinin Rolü”, **Ak Parti. Toplumsal Değişimin Yeni Aktörleri (Ak Party. The New Actors of Social Change)**, İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, February 2010, p. 12

Yavuz notes that when the backgrounds of MÜSİAD members are searched carefully, it can be observed that the majority of them come from a conservative Muslim society which was reluctant to the present authority since they were excluded by the state and had a secondary role in state's trade policies while the secularist and big city oriented bourgeois was appreciated as the conveyor of modernization projects by the formal institutions of the state.⁵²² This rapidly urbanized businessmen group was in search of a political party that could pursue their interests in political platforms. In this sense, the AKP provided them with representation in political arena. In contradiction with former political Islamist groups, the Anatolian bourgeois supported Turkey's EU membership since the reforms made for the EU accession was seen as the fastest and easiest way of liberalization of trade.

The second dominant political group within the AKP is composed of the liberals who had always aligned with the parties on the center-right of the political spectrum such as the DP, AP, DYP and ANAP. This group was traditionally in favor of consolidating relations with the US, NATO and the EC/EU. Terzi marks the similarities between Özal's ANAP and the AKP in terms of the foreign policy preferences of the two parties as both tend to use diplomatic means instead of military means and promote economic relations with neighboring countries.⁵²³ The liberals were in favor of good economic ties with the EC, later the EU, as it was a potential market for Turkish product.

Many AKP members were the former supporters of Nationalist Outlook and the reformist members of the FP. However, they claimed to have an entirely fresh party identity when they founded the AKP. As a matter of fact, they opposed the AKP-National Outlook link and assumed that they were a totally new party which had no Islamist orientation. In this regard the existence of the SP eased their work since it presented all what they defined as their "other". It was composed of the traditional members of former FP with strong communitarian bonds and a political Islamist ideology. The composition of the AKP members also played role in such an explicit

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Özlem Terzi, **The Influence of the European Union on Turkish Foreign Policy**, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010, pp. 30-31

denial because unlike Erbakan's parties, the AKP included members from center-right groups with no pro-Islamist perspective, too.

The AKP defined its ideology as conservative democracy and in favor of free market economy. It emphasized on universal rights such as democracy, human rights, rule of law, minimal state, pluralism, tolerance and respect for diversity. It declared that those values were the main principles on which the party based and aimed to fulfill Copenhagen criteria and bring Turkey to those standards of the international human rights treaties like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention of Human Rights, the Paris Principles and Helsinki Final Act.⁵²⁴ All those characteristics of the party ideology evokes Christian democrat parties of Europe and makes it difficult to separate the party from a center-right party since they share a lot in common.

There has been an ideological maintenance in Turkish center-right in terms of their displaying sensitivity towards the traditional and Islamic elements of Turkish nationalism by preserving conservative social values while showing their loyalty to technological modernization and presenting themselves as devoted to serve public which is against the CHP's tutelage approach. The conservatism of center-right in Turkey is more likely to be a cultural conservatism. The ideology of the Erbakan parties was a deviation of center-right line since they radicalized and transformed conservatism into a political Islamic ideology. In this regard, the AKP can be understood as return to center-right tradition since it does not emphasize Islam as a political ideology.⁵²⁵

When the AKP is compared to the SP, significant differences are noticed. As Atacan mentions, the SP bases its identity on morality; whereas the AKP bases its identity on pluralism and citizenship consciousness. The AKP also differs from the SP by its commitment to free market economy while the SP still insists that moral and spiritual values are needed besides. Conversely, she adds that this doesn't mean that the party would automatically fill the position of the mainstream center-right parties, the

⁵²⁴ Ergün Özbudun and William Hale, **Türkiye'de İslamcılık, Demokrasi ve Liberalizm. AKP Olayı.** İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, September 2010, pp. 57-58

⁵²⁵ Ibid., p. 66

ANAP and DYP, which lost their political power after the 2002 elections.⁵²⁶ Özbudun and Hale argue that the main difference between the AKP and Islamist parties in other countries as well as the former Islamist parties in Turkey is that the electoral support for the AKP cannot be confined to merely Muslim conservatives; it also included a large portion of Turkish society both socially and geographically.⁵²⁷ Ideologically, the main reason behind the party's success of receiving the votes of those non-religious circles could be related to the fact that the party developed an inclusive perspective on secularism than the former Islamist parties in Turkey which would attract the votes of non-religious people as well.

Özbudun and Hale mention two main secularism understanding in Turkey. The first one is the coercive secularism, which aims to privatize and individualize religion by forbidding or limiting the visibility of religion in public sphere. The second one is the passive secularism which refers to the neutrality of state towards all the religions and it permits the visibility of religion in public sphere. A state adopting passive secularism does not decide what is good for its citizens regarding religion, whereas in coercive secularism tries to impose secularism as a doctrine that has to be supported. While the second one has its roots in Kemalist revolution and is embraced by the majority of judiciary and the CHP, the second one is traditionally espoused by center-right parties like the DP, AP, ANAP, and DYP. The secularism understanding of the AKP conforms to passive secularism; however, it does not aim to use the power of state for Islamization of society as Erdoğan states it.⁵²⁸ From the AKP perspective, religion is tended to be viewed as a social value that needs to be protected just like other social values rather than a tool for transforming society. However, the secularism understanding of the AKP has frequently been questioned by the proponents of the first type of secularism who believe that the AKP is an Islamist party that has a secret agenda.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁶ Fulya Atacan, "Explaining Religious Politics at the Crossroads: AKP-SP" in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry M. Rubin (Eds.) **Religion and Politics in Turkey**, New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 55

⁵²⁷ Ergün Özbudun and William Hale, **Türkiye'de İslamcılık, Demokrasi ve Liberalizm. AKP Olayı**. İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, September 2010, p. 242

⁵²⁸ Ibid., p. 61

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

Needless to say, the leadership plays a prominent role in the AKP policies and actions. Three impressive election victories have empowered the political power of Tayyip Erdoğan as a leader. Some scholars claim that he is the most powerful leader of Turkey since Atatürk. He has challenged the secularist elite and its entrenched infrastructure while gaining public support successfully. He has also taken bold steps against the decision-making power of military in order to improve the civilian dominance in politics. Since he assumed office, Turkey has undergone considerable changes, forging dynamic economy and becoming more visible in external affairs.⁵³⁰ Yavuz claims that basing on his experience as mayor of Istanbul Erdoğan realized the importance of meeting the needs of the public and bringing social service to everyone as the main source of legitimacy for the AKP. Thus, he argues that Erdoğan is the most pragmatic leader of Turkish history who has the least ideological attachment ever.⁵³¹ His methods as well as managerial style have often been subjected to criticisms for being authoritarian and close to dissension within and outside the party and depriving of diplomatic subtlety such as his vocal critique of Israel for Gaza incidents at Davos Meeting in 2009.

4.1.2. Highlights of the AKP Governments

Distinguishing itself from any party existing in Turkish political system, the party expended all its energy to prepare for the coming elections as soon as it was founded although there was little time to expect a victory from a newly established party. Nonetheless, in the 2002 elections the AKP won two-third of the seats by getting 34.3 % of the votes⁵³² and became the majority government for the first time since 1987 which gave the party the opportunity to fully and independently implement its policies.

The electoral victory of the AKP was not only the result of the party's political efforts but also a result of the electoral preferences favoring urgent regulations in the

⁵³⁰ Gerald Robbins, "Understanding Turkey's 2011 General Election Results", **Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes**, June 2011
<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/201106.robbins.turkey.pdf>
accessed on 04.08.2011

⁵³¹ Hakan Yavuz, "Giriş: Türkiye'de İslami Hareketin Dönüşümünde Yeni Burjuvazinin Rolü", **Ak Parti. Toplumsal Değişimin Yeni Aktörleri (Ak Party. The New Actors of Social Change)**, İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, February 2010, p. 26

economy because Turkey had just experienced one of the major economic crises of its history (2000-2001 crises). The crisis had resulted in a collapse of output (with negative growth of -7.4 % in 2001) which had been accompanied by rigorous IMF conditions of fiscal disciplines and regulatory reforms.⁵³³ The people were willing to vote for the party which could take appreciable steps to recover the economy. The AKP could draw the attention of voters with its economic perspectives although the past attachment of the foremost members of the party to political Islamist movement raised concerns about their social policies among the strong secularist circles. This would lead to a permanent pursuit of legitimacy inside and outside the country over the next years. Most of the decisions they took would be questioned and charged for having secret agenda.

Özbudun and Hale remark that the electoral base of the AKP is not directly the inheritor of any previous party. In the 2002 elections, it received more than half of the votes of the former Islamist FP, two center-right parties (the ANAP and the DYP), partially the MHP and some of the DSP. In that sense, they resemble the AKP to Özal era of the ANAP and state that there is much more ideological difference between the MHP and the AKP voters than the difference between the ANAP-DYP and the AKP voters.⁵³⁴ The characteristics of the AKP voters represent a mixture of the voters of all center-right and radical right parties, each having a different cost-benefit calculation to vote for the AKP.

The AKP formed the 58th government in an economically unstable environment under the leadership of Abdullah Gül since Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the most prominent figure of the party, had been found guilty by the court because of reading a pro-Islamist poem in front of public as the mayor of Istanbul in 1994 and had been banned from engaging in any political activity. Gül remained as prime minister until Erdoğan's ban was lifted.

⁵³³ Global Security, "Justice and Development Party (AKP)", <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tu-political-party-akp.htm> accessed on 04.01.2011

⁵³⁴ Ergün Özbudun and William Hale, **Türkiye'de İslamcılık, Demokrasi ve Liberalizm. AKP Olayı.** İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, September 2010, p. 84

The most critical decision that had to be taken by the short-lived 58th government was concerned to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 where Turkey had to decide what kind of foreign policy it would pursue regarding the situation of its neighbor. The AKP supported a bill which would allow the US to use Turkish territory in order to launch its troops in Iraq. The bill had also included the deployment of Turkish soldiers in Northern Iraq. Nevertheless, this bill was strongly opposed by the CHP and the AKP was heavily criticized for having a pro-American foreign policy approach.⁵³⁵ Eventually, the CHP votes with the help of some AKP deputies' votes prevented the bill to pass in the TGNA.

After a change in law with the support of the opposition party CHP was made, Erdoğan gained the right to become an MP due to repeated election in Siirt and reshuffled the government as the new prime minister so that the era of the 59th government began.

Between 2002 and 2007 the AKP undertook many structural economic reforms. Turkey has witnessed a rapid recovery after severe economic crises in 1994, 1999, 2000 and 2001. There has been a remarkable change in the real GNP (Gross National Product) reaching 7.9 % growth rate in 2002 from -9.5 %. The three-decade long hyperinflation has come to an end as well. The inflation rate, which was 68.5 %,

⁵³⁵ Hürriyet Newspaper, “Kabul: 264 Hayır: 250 ve Tezkere Ret” (Yes: 264 No: 250 and Deployment Rejected) 2 March 2003

<http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2003/03/02/255872.asp>;

accessed on 08.09.2008

BBC News, “Turkey Upsets US Military Plans”, 1 March 2003,

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2810133.stm>

accessed on 08.09.2008

Nuray Mert, “Ak Milletvekillerine” (To the AKP Deputies), **Radikal Newspaper**, 4 March 2003,

<http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalYazar&ArticleID=662623&Yazar=NURAY%20MERT&Date=22.02.2011&CategoryID=98>,

accessed on 24 February 2011

Hasan Bülent Kahraman, “Yanlış Hesap Bağdat’tan Dönüyor”, (Wrong Calculation Returns from Bagdad), **Radikal Newspaper**, 3 March 2003

<http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalYazar&ArticleID=662581&Yazar=H.B%20DCLLENT%20KAHRAMAN&Date=22.02.2011&CategoryID=99>

accessed on 04.01.2011

decreased constantly and became 7.7 % in 2005.⁵³⁶ The Turkish economy has progressed overall positive.

Although this economic success has been achieved during the AKP government, some argue that this recovery mainly owes to the IMF and EU prescriptions rather than the AKP's economic policy. According to Uğur, the AKP government has followed a policy line that had been already set by the IMF conditionality and the EU's Copenhagen criteria so that it is not possible to estimate the economic policy of the AKP independent from them. In addition he states that the policy initiatives taken by the AKP from 2005 onwards tended to be unimpressive in terms of improving the quality of Turkey's economic governance regime, associated with lower rates of return in terms of growth and disinflation and inclined to overlook the structural vulnerabilities such as high levels of current account balance and falling savings rates.⁵³⁷ Patton discusses that the AKP has been loyal to the IMF prescriptions and has no independent economic strategy from the IMF's. Nevertheless, it did not desire to give the impression that it would capitulate to IMF suzerainty. By means of a double discourse, Erdoğan attempted to balance the alarmist fears of investors and international lenders with the welfare concerns of Turkish voters.⁵³⁸ In this sense the AKP has conducted an economic policy which would fulfill the IMF and EU expectations by trying to build an honorable rather than submissive image in front of the public eye.

In the 2004 local elections the AKP consolidated its political power by winning the majority of the municipalities in Turkey and increasing its votes to 42 %.⁵³⁹ Backed

⁵³⁶ For a more detailed version of economic indicators during 2002-2007 period, see International Monetary Fund, "Turkey: 6th Review and Inflation Consultation under the Stand-by Agreement", **IMF Country Report**, No. 07/364, November 2007

International Monetary Fund, "Turkey: 6th Review and Inflation Consultation under the Stand-by Agreement", **IMF Country Report**, No. 07/364, November 2007

<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2007/cr07364.pdf>

accessed on 08.01.2011

⁵³⁷ Mehmet Uğur, Turkish Economic Policy Under AKP Government: An Assessment for 2002-2007", **MPRA**, Paper No: 18235, 29 October 2009

http://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/18235/1/MPRA_paper_18235.pdf

accessed on 02.01.2011

⁵³⁸ Marcie J. Patton, "The Economic Policies of Turkey's AKP Government: Rabbits from a Hat?", **The Middle East Journal**, 22 June 2006, Vol. 60, No. 3, p. 516

⁵³⁹ See the Table 2.1

by the success of the elections the AKP implemented its policies firmly in every policy aspect from 2004 till 2007.

The year 2007 was chaotic for both the AKP and Turkish politics after the presidential elections were brought to the agenda in the TGNA. First, a series of mass rallies which would be called “republic protests” took place all over Turkey against the possible presidential nomination for Erdoğan and later against election of presidential candidate Gül. The rallies were organized by the (Atatürkist Thought Association- Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği) and supported by masses of secularist-Kemalist people who perceived Erdoğan’s becoming president as a threat for secularist state.

In the meantime, the existing ideological clash between the military and the AKP became more visible and reached its peak when a crisis escalated amid republic protests due to an e-memorandum (e-muhtıra)⁵⁴⁰ published on the webpage of the TSK (Turkish Armed Forces-Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri) on 27 April 2007. In this way the General Staff weighed into the presidential election process insinuating that they would be the safeguard of secular tradition in case the government could not.

On top of those incidents, the CHP appealed to the Constitutional Court for the annulment of the first round of presidential voting referring to the “367 rule” which had never been implemented until then. Addressing to the rule the Constitutional Court cancelled the first round and Gül was not elected because there were less than 367 deputies in the Parliament during the voting. In the next time when the voting was supposed to be repeated, the CHP boycotted the elections. Eventually the TGNA failed to agree on a president and the government called for early elections.

Early elections were held on 22 July 2007 and the AKP came to government second time by increasing its votes to 46.6 %.⁵⁴¹ After the elections the first major step taken by the government was to hold a referendum to change the provisions of the

⁵⁴⁰ Full version of the so called e-memorandum is available at Official Website of Turkish Armed Forces, Public Information, Releases http://www.tsk.tr/10_ARSIV/10_1_Basin_Yayin_Faaliyetleri/10_1_Basin_Aciklamalari/2007/BA_08.html
accessed on 02.01. 2011

⁵⁴¹ See Table 3.1.

constitution regarding the election of the president. Accordingly, the constitutional reform package which provides changes such as electing the president by popular vote instead of by the TGNA was approved by the majority of the population and Gül was elected as the president.

In the 2009 local elections the AKP remained as the prevailing party despite a decline in the percentage of votes (from 42 % to 39 %) comparing to the 2004 local elections.⁵⁴² Worsening economic conditions have played a remarkable role in this decline since the AKP was mainly nourished by the voters whose priority concern was economic issues. The AKP also experienced a downturn of its electoral appeal in the western coastal provinces and the regions where the DTP was popular.⁵⁴³

As they promised during the 2007 election campaigns, the AKP embarked upon a new referendum in 2010 by launching a reform package comprised of 26 articles. The proposed changes would allow litigation of coup leaders and military personnel, especially those involved in the 1980 coup; and would authorize the TGNA to choose the members of the Constitutional Court beside some other reforms regarding economic and social rights and individual freedoms.⁵⁴⁴ Especially the amendments about reshuffling the organization of the high judiciary was severely criticized by the opposition parties for helping the government establish its supremacy over Turkish judiciary system violating the rule of independent judiciary. Despite the main opposition party CHP's anti-campaigns and the boycott of the BDP, the reform package was accepted by 58 % of the votes providing the AKP with another political victory.

Apart from its election victories the AKP has twice encountered the serious risk of being shut down in the last decade. The AKP was first accused of breaching law by being chaired by a leader who was banned from politics by the Supreme Court of Appeals' chief prosecutor Sabih Kanadođlu, right before the 2002 elections. However

⁵⁴² For detailed results of the 2009 local elections see Table 3.1.

⁵⁴³ Ali Çarkođlu, "Turkey's Local Elections of 2009: Winners and Losers", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2009, p. 13

⁵⁴⁴ Detailed analysis of the proposed changes in the constitutional referandum can be found in: Yılmaz Ensarođlu, "İnsan Hakları ve Demokratikleşme Bağlamında Yeni Anayasa Paketi", *SETA Analiz*, No. 27, September 2010

the case was dismissed by the verdict of the Constitutional Court in 2009.⁵⁴⁵ In March 2008 chief prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals, Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya, applied to the Constitutional Court for the closure of the AKP one more time. In his indictment Yalçınkaya accused the AKP of being “a focal point of anti-secular activities”⁵⁴⁶ The court reviewed the case and decided not to close the AKP on 30 July 2008.⁵⁴⁷

In the 2011 elections the AKP unprecedentedly confirmed its governmental position for the third time with 49.83 % of the votes becoming the first party in Turkish history which could increase its votes three times in a row.

When two election periods of the AKP rule is examined, it can be argued that during its first governmental period of 2002-2007, the AKP has been firmly committed to the reforms that had to be realized in the context of Turkey’s EU accession process. It aimed at setting a date for the opening of accession negotiations. Several reform packages were launched in order to harmonize the national law to the EU law and fulfill Copenhagen criteria. The AKP interpreted the EU integration as a method to ease and speed up the process of democratization in Turkey. Major steps were taken in terms of civil-military relations, human rights and the rule of law.

Nevertheless, the pace of reforms slowed down after the negotiations were opened. Especially in the second AKP government, the political agenda has often been full of other issues rather than the EU membership. The AKP started the 2007-2011

⁵⁴⁵ CNNTürk, “AKP Hakkında Açılan Kapatma Davası Düştü” (The Closure Case of the AKP Has Been Dismissed), 9 July 2009, <http://www.cnnturk.com/2009/turkiye/07/09/akp.hakkinda.acilan.kapatma.davasi.dustu/534361.0/index.html>

accessed on 18.04.2010

Euractiv, “Turkey mulls banning leading party before elections”, 24 October 2002

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/turkey-mulls-banning-leading-party-elections/article-111091>

accessed on 18.04.2010

⁵⁴⁶Wikikaynak, “Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin Temelli Kapatılması İstemine İlişkin Savcılık İddianamesi”,

http://tr.wikisource.org/wiki/Adalet_ve_Kalk%C4%B1nma_Partisi%27nin_Temelli_Kapat%C4%B1lmas%C4%B1_%C4%B0stemine_%C4%B0li%C5%9Fkin_Savc%C4%B1l%C4%B1k_%C4%B0ddianamesi

accessed on 22.12.2010

⁵⁴⁷Radikal Newspaper, “Gitti AKP'nin 23 milyon YTL'si”(The AKP Lost 23 Million TL), 30 July 2008, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Default.aspx?aType=Detay&ArticleID=891035&Date=31.07.2008&CategoryID=78>

accessed on 31.07.2008

period with the idea of making a new constitution which had been discussed in political platforms since the 1990s. After the 2007 elections, six academics assigned by the government began working on a new constitution. However the draft was strongly opposed by the CHP and bureaucratic elites and just in the same days the closure case of the AKP was brought before the Constitutional Court due to the outbreak of headscarf issue, that is, at the beginning of 2008, the AKP government with the support of the MHP passed an amendment bill to abolish the headscarf ban in universities and thanks to the petition given by the CHP and DSP, the Constitutional Court abrogated it for its being against the non-amendable articles of the Turkish Constitution.⁵⁴⁸ This stopped the draft constitution from ever being made public since the government's priority became surviving from the closure case.

Perhaps the most striking AKP policy has been the Democratic Opening initiated in 2009. It was basically a number of democratic reforms to solve the long-lasting Kurdish problem as well as other relatively small issues concerning the rights of non-Muslim population, Alevis and Roma population in Turkey. For the first time in Turkish history, the Kurdish problem was recognized by the high-ranking government officials and solutions including other than security approach were laid on the table. The problem was discussed in several platforms with its socio-economic, political and cultural aspects. The issue became debatable which was alone a major step when one considers that it was a taboo to mention other dimensions of the issue except the security dimension a decade ago. There were also solid steps taken such as the abolishment of martial law in the southeastern Turkey, the establishment of state channel broadcasting in Kurdish, legalizing the publications in Kurdish, opening Kurdish classes, allowing political campaigns in Kurdish, and increasing the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) investments.⁵⁴⁹ Similar attempts were made for the Alevi community and discussion platforms were created with the participation of state officials, foremost community leaders and the intellectuals.

⁵⁴⁸ Hatem Ete and Eda Bektaş, "The Political Agenda of the June 2011 Elections", *SETA Analiz*, No. 53, June 2011, p. 12

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13

Despite all those efforts to improve the democratization process in Turkey, the necessary legal changes to realize those ideas have not been fully achieved so far and the motivation of the government to launch new reforms and legislation concerning the democratic opening seemed to decrease especially after 2010. This might partly be the result of the shift of focus to the preparations for 12 September 2010 referendum and later the 2011 general elections. However, the AKP has to get back to the democratization process and finish the job it started once in order to preserve its credibility and prestige in front of the public. It has gained more significance especially by the increase in terror incidents right after the 2011 general elections which showed that the PKK ended the ceasefire. Otherwise, the democratic opening issue probably stays in minds as a dead lift like many others in the history.

The relations between the AKP and military also deserve a special attention in the analysis of the AKP governments. To understand those relations, it is important to mention the undeniable role of military in shaping political culture in Turkey and acting as the guardian of the Kemalist state since the establishment of the Republic. As Bora emphasizes, military was the main actor in the process of the construction of modern nation, national socialization and the production of nationalist ideology in Turkey.⁵⁵⁰ Bayramođlu defines the characteristics of military authority-civil authority at five points: Military 1-directly and institutionally concerns with political issues, 2-controls the decisions and practices which determine the principles of political decisions, 3-brings the political sphere under state control so that closes it to discussion and social demands, 4-differentiates politics and state, 5-equips itself with a tradition which has been politicized by a structure which is autonomous, extremely central within itself and closed to political influence.⁵⁵¹

Throughout the political history of the Republic, Turkish Armed Forces did not hesitate to interrupt civilian political authority for the sake of Kemalist principles such as secularism in case of a threat perception. The slow-growing and fragile electoral

⁵⁵⁰ Tanil Bora, "Ordu ve Milliyetçilik", **Bir Zümre, Bir Parti. Türkiye'de Ordu (A Community, A Party. Army in Turkey)**, Ahmet İnel and Ali Bayramođlu (Eds.), İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2009, p. 177

⁵⁵¹ Ali Bayramođlu, "Soldier and Politics", **Bir Zümre, Bir Parti. Türkiye'de Ordu (A Community, A Party. Army in Turkey)**, Ahmet İnel and Ali Bayramođlu, İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2009, p. 74

democracy and political parties, which lack robust institutionalization, intensified military's position as a distinct actor in Turkish political life and paved the way for frequent military interventions. It can be argued that the military has an implicit political authority in Turkey. Cizre defines Turkish military's political authority as its capability of establishing supremacy over the constitutional authority of the elected governments and he claims that this authority increased after 1980.⁵⁵² In that sense, the AKP's reforms to empower civilian authority raised concerns in military circles.

Özbudun and Hale analyze the relations between the AKP and the military in three phases:

In outline, the story of relations between the armed forces commanders and the AKP government can be divided into three phases. The first of these running from November 2002 until around the end of 2006, was one of the controlled conflict between the two sides in which the military, while continuing to press the government over such issues as the protection of secularism and the unitary state, nevertheless accepted its legitimacy and its ultimate right to determine policy, even on contentious issues. The start of 2007 and the summer of that year saw a second and far more dangerous phase when it appeared that the military commanders were openly challenging the government's authority. Subsequently, the chief of the armed forces appeared to have accepted that they would have to stay in the background, even if there were still serious tensions between them and the AKP government.⁵⁵³

There is also foreign policy as the one last point which is important to mention about the AKP governments since it differs a lot from its predecessors. The AKP has pursued an independent, pro-active and multi-dimensional foreign policy targeting to be a regional power which would be credible in global politics. In this respect, it has taken several initiatives to act as a mediator in regional conflicts and voiced its perspectives on disputed international issues in diplomatic meetings. This was often argued for being an axis-shift. Öniş describes Turkish foreign policy in the post-2007 era with its elements of continuity and rupture on the Table 3. As it is seen on the table, the AKP

⁵⁵² Ümit Cizre, "Türk Ordusunun Siyasi Özerkliği", **Muktedirlerin Siyaseti. Merkez Sağ, Ordu, İslamcılık (The Politics of the Empowered. Central Right, Army, Islamism)**, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005, p. 60, 67

⁵⁵³ Ergün Özbudun and William Hale, **Türkiye'de İslamcılık, Demokrasi ve Liberalizm. AKP Olayı.** İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, September 2010, pp. 140-141

governments show continuity with the prior governments in terms of pursuing a foreign policy which is multi-dimensional, western-oriented and impartial. It promotes the use of soft power in resolution of international conflicts and it is committed to Turkey’s EU cause. However, it has several ruptures beside these continuities. According to Öniş, the AKP tries to behave independent from the west in many key foreign policy issues although it seems fully committed to the EU membership. Furthermore, it strives for being a regional leader in the Middle East which could be seen much more ambitious comparing to the former governments which were less demanding and more in line with the perspective of the West on the region than forming their own policies.⁵⁵⁴ Below, Table 4.1 summarizes the main points of Öniş’s analysis of the AKP’s foreign policy.

Table 4.1: Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post-2007 Era: Elements of Continuity & Rupture

	Elements of Continuity	Elements of Rupture
Foreign Policy Style	Multi-dimensional foreign policy with an emphasis on soft power.	A more independent and assertive style of foreign policy. There is an unprecedented increase in the scale of diplomatic activity. In line with the underlying global shifts, notably during the global financial crisis, following the footsteps of the BRICs is seen as an increasingly attractive option.
Western Orientation and Commitment to the EU	A commitment to western orientation and EU membership, with the qualification that there is a pronounced decline in enthusiasm for EU membership, parallel to the striking decline in public support for EU membership which started between 2005 and 2007.	Continued commitment to a western orientation and EU membership in rhetoric. But, in reality, a tendency to act independently on a number of key foreign policy issues has become more visible even though this may result in direct confrontation with western powers.
Regional and Global Role	Attempts to play a more active regional and global role with particular emphasis on helping to promote cross-cultural dialogue and performing a mediating role in major regional and international conflicts.	Turkish foreign policy is more active in regions such as the Middle East where there is ample scope to play a regional leadership role. Turkish foreign policy is less active in regions such as the Balkan and the Central Asia where the scope for regional leadership is more limited and would be contested by powerful rivals. This suggests that the quest for regional

⁵⁵⁴ Ziya Öniş, “Multiples Faces of the “New” Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2011, p. 51

		<p>leadership has become a major motive underlying the new Turkish foreign policy.</p> <p>The Middle East (including North Africa) has become a focal point in Turkish foreign policy efforts suggesting that there is a strong identity dimension implicit in the new Turkish foreign policy. Similarly, Turkey has become a more active actor in peacekeeping operations and humanitarian interventions, especially in Afghanistan and in the Balkans.</p>
Style of Mediation	<p>Zero-problems with all neighbors strategy; a series of attempt to maintain neutrality/impartiality” in regional conflicts.</p>	<p>A tendency to take sides in regional conflicts such as a pro-Palestine position in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a pro-Iranian position in the conflict involving the West over the threat posed by Iran’s nuclear program. This aspect of Turkish foreign policy arguably places limits on Turkey’s role as a referee or mediator in major international conflicts.</p>
Leadership Style of Foreign Policy and Ownership	<p>Leadership is important with Abdullah Gül playing an important role as the minister for foreign affairs, complemented by Ahmet Davudoğlu as the intellectual force behind the scenes.</p>	<p>Even stronger leadership and ownership with Ahmet Davudoğlu in the driving seat Abdullah Gül as an unusually pro-active president in external affairs.</p>
Linkages between Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy	<p>Civil society involvement in foreign policy initiatives becomes increasingly important and parallel to the democratization of foreign policy; public opinion assumes greater weight in shaping key foreign policy decisions.</p>	<p>The linkages between foreign policy and domestic politics have become more striking. The government is much more willing to use foreign policy initiatives as a strategic tool for consolidating and extending its domestic coalitional base.</p>

Source: Ziya Öniş, “Multiples Faces of the “New” Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2011, p. 51

On the other hand Uzgel defines the AKP’s experience in government as the re-identification process of the dependency of Turkish foreign policy on global system despite its discourse of multidimensional foreign policy. He argues that Turkish foreign policy has only integrated more deeply to globalization process with a new coalition instead of reaching a multidimensional level so that it is not possible to interpret it as a positive development by excluding the activity required by this process and mentioning

the intersection of interests in some regions.⁵⁵⁵ Thus, he evaluates the foreign policy of the AKP by the elements of continuity which are presented in a reformist way rather than rupture.

In the post-2011 term, there are number of issues waiting for being clarified by the AKP government. During the 2011 election campaigns, Erdoğan has announced that the 2002-2007 government had been his “apprenticeship”; the 2007-2011 government had been his “experienced apprenticeship”; and when given the chance, the post-2011 AKP government would be his “mastership”.⁵⁵⁶ Since the AKP has gained almost one of the two people who voted for the 2011 elections, it has to prove its mastership especially in the issues such as the economic stability, democratic opening, the EU membership and above all, the formation of a democratic constitution as it has promised since the 2007 elections. The voter has somewhat warned the AKP in the elections by not providing it an absolute majority with 367 seats. Instead, it made the AKP remain a little below than this number so that the opinions of other parties in the Parliament can play an effective role, too.

4.2. IDEOLOGICAL AND STRUCTURAL ROOTS OF THE CHP THROUGH AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Republican People’s Party (CHP) which declares its ideology as “social democracy” is the oldest political party in Turkey. Its history can be traced back to the Congress of Sivas (4-11 September 1919) when all the resisting groups against the invasion of Turkey united under one umbrella (Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafai Hukuk Cemiyeti) during the time of Turkish National Independence War. This group was originally formed by Mustafa Kemal and his colleagues and was named as “People’s Party”. Prior to the proclamation of Republic of Turkey, on 9 September 1923, it was

⁵⁵⁵ İlhan Uzgel, “Dış Politikada AKP: Stratejik Konumdan Stratejik Modele”, İlhan Uzgel and Bülent Duru, **AKP Kitabı: Bir Dönüşümün Bilançosu (The AKP Book: An Account of a Transformation)**, Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, October 2010, p. 379

⁵⁵⁶ Today’s Zaman, “A new constitution for Turkey: Can the “Grand Master” do it?”, 15 June 2011 http://www.todayszaman.com/mobile_detailn.action?newsId=247357 accessed on 18.09.2011

officially founded with “Nine Principles” (Dokuz Umde) and Mustafa Kemal became the first leader of the party. It was named as “Republican People’s Party” in 1924.⁵⁵⁷

Being as deeply rooted as the Republic of Turkey; the CHP not only witnessed but also guided modernization in Turkey when the reforms were introduced by Mustafa Kemal during 1925-30. Since then, the party has always taken the advantage of being mentioned as Mustafa Kemal’s party. Mustafa Kemal headed the party from 1923 to his death in 1938 and getting his power from the public support as the national hero of Turkish independence war, he carried out a series of reforms to transform Turkey into a modern country. At that time the CHP was very much engaged in promoting those reforms which made it pay less attention to electorate’s preferences.

Atatürk intended the CHP not to become an ordinary party that would compete for the vote of electorate, aggregate their interests and represent them in the parliament. It would rather steer the projects of Westernization and nation building. In other words, the primary function of the new party was not to represent people, rather its function was to modernize the country and become a means of the government in founding the nation state.⁵⁵⁸

Nevertheless, those efforts of reformation usually had a top-down character and caused the party to be perceived as elitist and authoritarian. As a result it distanced the party from ordinary people. Below, Zürcher defines the character of the CHP in the early Republican era:

The political style of the CHP as the ruling party in the early Republican period is characterized as radical, interventionist, and authoritarian, involving top-down enforcement of new rules, values, and lifestyles that contradict the traditional beliefs and customs of the people.⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁷ For more information about the CHP history see
The CHP Official Website, CHP Tarihi (History of the CHP)
http://www.chp.org.tr/?page_id=67
accessed on 01.02.2012

⁵⁵⁸ Levent Önen, **The Republican People’s Party: Organization and Ideology Between 1992 and 2007**, MA Thesis in Political Science and International Relations, Boğaziçi University, 2009, p. 29

⁵⁵⁹ Erik J. Zürcher, **Modernleşen Türkiye’nin Tarihi (History of Modernizing Turkey)**, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995 in Sencer Ayata and Ayşe Güneş Ayata, “The Center-Left Parties in Turkey”, **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2007, p. 212

When the reforms decelerated, the party started to transform itself and widespread Mustafa Kemal's ideology. In 1931, the six arrows became part of the party program and were accepted as the emblem of the party. The six arrows represent the six principles of Kemalism: republicanism, nationalism, secularism, statism, populism and reformism. The party also initiated the preparations of new institutions called "people's houses" within its framework.

The CHP remained single party in Turkey during Mustafa Kemal's leadership except a short time of four months from August to December 1930 when there was the SCF (Free Republican Party-Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası). This party lived very shortly; however the excitement among the public towards that new liberal party caused the CHP to revise its policies and transform itself.

Between 1938 and 1972 the CHP was led by İsmet İnönü as the successor of Mustafa Kemal. His period of leadership encountered several problems both in internal and external affairs. İnönü era also suffered from the transition from single to multiparty system in Turkey. Many critics count İnönü's efforts for preventing Turkey from entering into the World War II as a serious diplomatic success.⁵⁶⁰ On the other hand, his period is also criticized for being undemocratic and unsuccessful in terms of economic situation of the country at the time. Especially the success of the CHP in 1946 elections was shady due to the process of open voting.⁵⁶¹ One of the highlights of the 1940s was the project of "village institutes" which was created by the CHP to close the gaps between rural and urban regions of Turkey by supporting rural areas.

The political defeat of the CHP against the DP (Democrat Party-Demokrat Parti) in 1950 elections subordinated it to the main opposition party and started the multiparty system in Turkey. For ten years the CHP could not take part in government and only after the 1960 military coup, in 1961, it could form the first coalition government of Turkey together with the AP (Justice Party-Adalet Partisi) and stayed in government till 1965. The transition from single party system to multiparty system

⁵⁶⁰ For detailed information, see John Vanderlippe, **The Politics of Turkish Democracy: İsmet İnönü and the Formation of the Multi-Party System, 1938-1950**, Albany: SUNY Press, 2005

⁵⁶¹ C. H. Dodd, The Development of Turkish Democracy, **British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies**, Vol. 19, No. 1, 1992, p. 19

brought political competition to Turkish political life. The CHP needed to redefine its ideology in order to place itself to the new political system. İnönü declared the party ideology as the “left of center” in the late 1960s which would be embraced by his successor Ecevit in the 1970s. Kili claims that the CHP’s positioning itself as left of center is a natural result of its being a statist party:

The CHP is a statist party because of its nature, thus of course the CHP has an economic understanding that is on the left of center. Just as statism was the only and unrivalled cure of development in 1923, it is also the main component of our economic life.⁵⁶²

The ideological shift of the party to a more left position was mainly stemmed from the emergence of a new left party, the TİP (Workers Party of Turkey-Türkiye İşçi Partisi). It encouraged the CHP to reform itself and define its position in the spectrum of ideologies and distinguish itself from both the AP and the TİP.⁵⁶³ Bülent Ecevit, who played active role in that ideological shift of the CHP, succeeded İnönü as the leader of the CHP from 1972 till 1980 and attained the government again in 1973 elections. The party formed a coalition with the MSP (National Salvation Party-Milli Selamet Partisi) led by Erbakan. Nevertheless this coalition collapsed in a short period of time due to the clash of entirely opposite ideologies. Despite coming first party in 1977 elections, the CHP had difficulties to form the government till 1978. This was a dark year in Turkish history with significant political, social and economic disorder. The CHP government couldn’t keep the government and Justice Party took over in 1979. Ecevit adopted left of center ideology and transformed it into democratic left by putting the emphasis on social welfare and democracy. Ayatas explain this as below:

In the 1960s and 1970s, a group of reformers in the leadership ranks of the CHP proposed a new center-left party ideology and program and criticized the party’s elitist orientation and style—without, however, discounting the importance of Atatürk’s

⁵⁶² Suna Kili, 1960-1975 Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinde Gelişmeler (The Developments in the CHP between 1960-1975), İstanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 1976, p. 186 in Levent Önen, **The Republican People’s Party: Organization and Ideology Between 1992 and 2007**, MA Thesis in Political Science and International Relations, Boğaziçi University, 2009

⁵⁶³ Ibid., p. 178

reforms.⁵⁶⁴ This new reformist group led by Bülent Ecevit, emphasized social inequality, social justice, and increased social welfare for the working population.⁵⁶⁵

Kesgin points out that when compared to the “democratic left”, the left of center ideology was indeed not a distinct ideology. Although this term was first used by İnönü, Ecevit adopted it as his discourse during the 1970s. Kesgin claims that Ecevit embraced the term in order to gain the support of İnönü in the party and it really helped. Eventually, Ecevit also accepted that he had used the left of center in replacement of the democratic left when he defended the CHP against the MHP’s denunciation after September 12, 1980.⁵⁶⁶ Bila claims that Ecevit added “agreement with public” rhetoric which brought a sociological basis and a democratic method to this ideological discourse.⁵⁶⁷ Nevertheless, all these initiatives taken by the Ecevit government in terms of refreshing party discourse and policies were to be short-lived due to the forthcoming military intervention.

4.2.1. The CHP after the 1980 Coup D’état

Like all the political parties in Turkey, the CHP was abrogated after the 1980 coup d’état and the use of its name was banned. The CHP followers established the HP (Populist Party-Halk Partisi), the SODEP (Social Democracy Party-Sosyal Demokrasi Partisi) and the DSP (Democratic Left Party-Demokratik Sol Parti) but none of them became as successful as the followers of the DP.⁵⁶⁸ The ANAP (Motherland Party-Anavatan Partisi) and the DYP (True Path Party-Doğruyol Partisi) ruled Turkey until 1998 which were both successors of the former DP.

When the CHP was re-founded on 9 September 1992 and Deniz Baykal became the party leader, the votes of the former CHP were divided because of the

⁵⁶⁴ Bülent Ecevit, **Atatürk ve Devrimcilik**, Ankara: Tekin Yayınları, 1969 and Turan Güneş, Türk **Demokrasininin Analizi**, İstanbul: Ümit Yayınları, 1996 in Sencer Ayata and Ayşe Güneş Ayata, “The Center-Left Parties in Turkey”, **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2007, p. 213

⁵⁶⁵ Bülent Ecevit, **Ortanın Solu**, İstanbul: Kim Yayınları, 1966 in Sencer and Ayşe Güneş Ayata, “The Center-Left Parties in Turkey”, **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2007, p. 213

⁵⁶⁶ Gökçen Kesgin, “Bülent Ecevit” in Ali Faik Demir, **Türk Dış Politikasında Liderler (Leaders in Turkish Foreign Policy)**, İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, May 2007, p. 261

⁵⁶⁷ Hikmet Bila, **CHP 1919-1999**, İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, October 2009, p. 445

⁵⁶⁸ Later in 1985 the SODEP and HP were united under the name “Social Democratic Populist Party” (SHP).

parties opened by the CHP followers after the closure of the party. The CHP sought for a new and dynamic discourse to be the central left party of Turkey again.

The ideological basis of the new CHP program became the “New Left” which was the title and the main idea of the book written by İsmail Cem and Deniz Baykal. The book discussed a new restructuring of state-society relations, including the secularization.⁵⁶⁹ The New Left was inspired by the “Third Way” argument which was introduced by Tony Blair, the Labor Party leader of the UK at the time. This new idea was hoping to embrace all different circles of the society.

The New Left ideology also stressed on the social state concept which included policies such as struggling poverty, providing people with free education and free healthcare, a balanced income distribution or increasing individual rights and freedoms. However it could not be a long lasting ideology as the party started to get back its secularism-oriented Kemalist roots. During the RP-DYP (Welfare Party-True Path Party) coalition, the CHP supported military against reactionary movement at the expense of its new left policy.

Even though the party tries to reshape its views on secularism in many cases of discourse, during election times it becomes the party of Atatürk that will defend the country against the Islamist fundamentalists. In both the 1995 and the 1999 elections, party propaganda basically revolved around hard-line secularism which enabled it to attract whatever has been left of Alevi and middle-class votes in the cities.⁵⁷⁰

As mentioned above, although the CHP tried to put more emphasis on democratization after the 1980 coup and based its New Left policy on the premises of social democracy, the Kemalist sensibilities of the party always dominated its actions. The CHP took a stance in favor of military in the case of February 28 although it contradicted its democracy discourse. In other words, it continued to give the priority to Kemalist principles, especially secularism, even if it sometimes caused the party to be considered as anti-democratic. Ayatas underline that even though the CHP was against military regime, they did support military when against the political Islam:

⁵⁶⁹ Ayşe Güneş Ayata, “Republican People’s Party” in Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (Eds.), **Political Parties in Turkey**, London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 2002, p. 111

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 111

The center-left has persistently blamed the military regime of the 1980–83 period for supporting extreme nationalism and for preparing the ground for the increase of Islamist activism. However, the center-left also endorsed the military’s sanctions against the Welfare Party during the political crisis in early 1997, which resulted in its ouster from power under pressure from the armed forces.⁵⁷¹

The 1994 local elections revealed the fact that the right parties and pro-Islamist Welfare Party gained the overwhelming majority whereas three left parties, altogether, could only get 27 percent of the votes.⁵⁷² This brought the union of left discussions to the agenda. Hereafter, in 1995, the SHP decided to join the CHP to cooperate against the RP-DYP coalition. Nevertheless, in the 1999 elections the CHP could not enter the Parliament as it remained below the election threshold.

Many scholars and journalists wrote on the reasons which paved the way for the CHP’s election failure in the 1999 elections despite being the deepest-rooted party of Turkey. In his evaluation of the CHP’s eighty years starting from 1919 till 1999, Bila mentions the party leadership as a problematic issue. He notes that the party was about to close the 20th century with three chairmen although it was founded and desired to be ruled by a left wing ideology.⁵⁷³ Thus, the party leadership was problematic in terms of intraparty democracy.

While the party failed to exceed the election threshold, DSP came first in the elections and formed a coalition with the MHP and ANAP. Baykal resigned taking the responsibility of the defeat and Altan Öymen became the new leader. However, Baykal returned as the chairman only one year later developing the “Anatolian left” discourse. This new policy aimed at bringing humanism and social democracy together. Ayata explains the idea of the Anatolian left as such:

⁵⁷¹ Sencer Ayata and Ayşe Güneş Ayata, “The Center-Left Parties in Turkey”, *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2007, p. 213

⁵⁷² In 1994 local elections the SHP got 13.6 %, the DSP got 8.8 % and the CHP got 4.6 % of the votes. For more information see Bekir Ağırdir, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi. Değişmek ya da Değişmemek (The Republican People’s Party. To Change or not to Change)*, KONDA Araştırma ve Danışmanlık, Radikal Newspaper, 20-22 May 2010

http://www.konda.com.tr/html/dosyalar/chp_degismek_degismemek.pdf
accessed on 08.12.2010

⁵⁷³ Hikmet Bila, *CHP 1919-1999*, İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, October 2009, p. 447

The ongoing discussion Anatolian left has only been inspired by this cultural dichotomy, trying to overcome it. Here the central concept is tolerance, which is used in two parallel senses: on the one hand it means tolerance of religious piety and, on the other hand, tolerance of the Alevi community's religious practices.⁵⁷⁴

Nevertheless, Baykal lost his enthusiasm for Anatolian Left once the CHP was elected to the Parliament as the main opposition party in the 2002 elections with a share of 19.39 % gaining 178 out of 550 seats in the Parliament because the moderate Islamist AKP government became the new focus of interest. During 2002-2007 the CHP acted as the spokesman of the state bureaucracy and the protector of secularism in Turkey underlining its Kemalist ideology in every political platform. Önen states that the post-2002 period was a period in which the CHP increasingly based its discourse only on the issues of secularism and increasing nationalist reaction to the EU reforms in the society. It turned to emphasize synthesis of social democracy and Kemalism while detaching cosmopolitanism and egalitarianism completely from its discourse and reduced social democracy to the defense of 'national interest'.⁵⁷⁵

Although the dynamics of local elections are different from the general elections, the share of votes that the CHP received in the 28 March 2004 local elections was 18.2 % which was similar to the one in the 2002 general elections with a small decrease. The CHP won only 8 big city municipalities, all in coastal provinces.

In 2007, the CHP and DSP entered the elections as one party under the CHP and were elected as main opposition party again with 20.88 % of the votes while the number of the CHP seats in the Parliament decreased from 178 to 112 as the MHP and the independents could achieve parliamentary representation. The CHP got harsh criticisms in many political platforms and in Turkish media for its low performance over the last years. According to Sencer and Ayşe Ayata's point of view there were three common and significant criticisms of the CHP at the time of the 2007 general elections. One of them is that legacy of the early Republican tradition which the CHP

⁵⁷⁴ Ayşe Güneş Ayata, "Republican People's Party" in Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (Eds.), **Political Parties in Turkey**, London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 2002, p. 111

⁵⁷⁵ Levent Önen, **The Republican People's Party: Organization and Ideology Between 1992 and 2007**, MA Thesis in Political Science and International Relations, Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2009, p. 73

associated its historical roots was not compatible with the basic principles of liberal democracy. The second criticism points out that the party suffered from ideological inconsistencies and a lack of clear programmatic principles and policy goals. Lastly, the party organization was thought to have become dysfunctional and ineffective like almost all other parties in Turkey.⁵⁷⁶ Those deficiencies not only hindered the party to receive enough votes to have a share in government but also kept it from being an effective opposition party.

The CHP was in the news mostly with its secularist discourse after the 2007 elections. It backed the anti-AKP, pro-secularist Republican Meetings, mass demonstrations held at various times over the past few years. Nevertheless, during the 2009 local election campaigns, the CHP undermined its strict secularist discourse by accepting turbaned women into the party drew reaction in the party base.⁵⁷⁷ Yet, the vigorous advocate of secularism lost credits in front of the pro-secular public.

Despite the decline in the credibility of the party, the CHP could still win 23.1 % of the votes in the 2009 local elections which was about 27% rise comparing to the local elections of 2004 that provided 10 municipalities. Çarkoğlu addresses this rise in the CHP and also the second opposition party MHP's votes to the shift in the developed western provinces which were mostly affected by the economic crisis and the ethnic identity considerations which pushed the eastern and southeastern provinces away from the mainstream politics towards the marginalized DTP.⁵⁷⁸

In the aftermath of 2009 elections, the party was shattered following a clandestinely recorded sex tape of Deniz Baykal with another CHP deputy, Nesrin Baytok, was leaked to the media. Due to this development, Baykal announced his

⁵⁷⁶ Sencer Ayata and Ayşe Güneş Ayata, "The Center-Left Parties in Turkey", **Turkish Studies**, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2007, p. 212

⁵⁷⁷ For more information visit the website: NTVMSNBC, "CHP'de Türbanlı Çarşafly Üye Devri" (The Era of Turbaned Members in the CHP), 17 November 2008,

<http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/466111.asp>

accessed on 12.10.2009

⁵⁷⁸ Ali Çarkoğlu, "Turkey's Local Elections of 2009: Winners and Losers", **Insight Turkey**, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2009, p. 17

resignation as leader of the CHP on 10 May 2010.⁵⁷⁹ This caused a lot of speculations since Baykal supporters claimed that it was a conspiracy to topple him even though those claims have not been clarified so far.

Baykal's sudden leave opened a new era in the CHP history since it was so unexpected for both the party members and the party base. Baykal had been under the lash of criticism since long time for his lust of power. During his leadership, the leftist social democratic ideology had been questioned within and outside Turkey and the party was severely criticized for being the party of status quo defending the presence of military in politics to guard the regime and having no intraparty democracy, that is, it provided no democratic platform for discussion among the party members and the party had rather been equated to Deniz Baykal and his opinions.

One of those criticisms was made by the Economist Magazine which wrote about Baykal as “a fervent backer of Turkey's meddlesome generals, who had seemed glued to his post”⁵⁸⁰. On the other hand Baykal's CHP was also criticized by European socialists for its no longer representing the social democratic interests. They even demanded the CHP to be expelled from the socialist community.⁵⁸¹ The CHP under Baykal's leadership was watched carefully by the Socialist International where Baykal served as vice-chairman during 2003-2008 and the Party of European Socialists which the CHP was an associate member. Baykal lost the vice-chair of the Socialist International to Iraqi President Jalal Talabani.⁵⁸² After these developments Baykal heralded that the CHP would soon open offices in the European capitals, “not to receive

⁵⁷⁹ BBC News, "Turkish Opposition Leader Quits over 'Sex Tape'", 10 May 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8672672.stm> accessed on 11.05.2010

⁵⁸⁰ Economist, “Turkey's Opposition. A New Kemal”, Vol. 395, No. 8684, 27 May 2010, p. 54 <http://www.economist.com/node/16219855> accessed on 16.10.2010

⁵⁸¹ Turkish Politics in Action, “Socialist International Condemns CHP Opposition to Military Courts Reform”, 25 July 2009, <http://www.turkishpoliticsinaction.com/2009/07/socialist-international-condemns-chp.html> accessed on 23.04.2012

⁵⁸² Hürriyet Daily News, “Baykal Loses Vice-Chair of the Socialist International to Talabani”, 7 February 2008, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=baykal-loses-vice-chair-of-socialist-international-to-talabani-2008-07-02> accessed on 02.03.2012

instructions from Europeans but to explain party policies and the importance of the secularism principle for Turkey.”⁵⁸³ In fact, this can also be considered as a sign of the frustration of the party since many European left oriented institutions supported the AKP policies in Turkey.⁵⁸⁴ However the dose of criticisms would be increased even after the CHP opened its Representation to the EU in Brussels in 2008. In 2009 the Socialist International condemned the CHP for its opposition to the new legislation requiring civilian courts to try military officials who pose threats to national security, constitutional violations, organizing armed groups and attempts to topple the government in peace time.⁵⁸⁵ Those criticisms of the CHP was enjoyed by the AKP government as it gave the opportunity to increase its popularity by emphasizing on its efforts to democratize the country despite the CHP’s opposition which was supposed to embrace democratization process instead of opposing it as social democrat party.

Following Baykal’s resignation, the party members urgently came together at the party convention held on 22 May 2010 to elect the new chairman. Eventually, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who was backed by the party’s “second man” Önder Sav, was appointed as the new leader of the CHP. Indeed, he had earned reputation during the 2009 local elections when he had struggled to win the mayorship of Istanbul through a populist strategy rather than focusing on secularist arguments. He revealed several corruption scandals associated with the AKP, which helped him gain public confidence. His mild-mannered image as a former civil servant combined with clean political record; which was very much resembled to former CHP leader Bülent Ecevit in the 1970s, increased hopes in the party surroundings for the next elections after the severe criticisms for Baykal and his scandalous resignation.

Nevertheless, Kılıçdaroğlu was also under attack of the media and various circles because of his passive attitude towards core political issues such as Kurdish

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴ Aydın Cingi, CHP: A Party on the Road to Social Democracy, **International Policy Analysis**, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, June 2011, <http://www.fes-tuerkei.org/media/pdf/CHP%20Aydin%20Cingi.pdf> accessed on 28.04.2012

⁵⁸⁵ Turkish Politics in Action, “Socialist International Condemns CHP Opposition to Military Courts Reform”, 25 July 2009, <http://www.turkishpoliticsinaction.com/2009/07/socialist-international-condemns-chp.html> accessed on 23.04.2012

problem, rights of alevi despite his having a Kurdish and alevi origin or foreign policy matters. Instead he set up his discourse on social democratic values mainly social equality and welfare which was interpreted as “appropriating the role of champion of the underdog from the AKP, so eating into its traditional base in the shanty towns that encircle the big cities”.⁵⁸⁶ On the other side, it was obvious that Baykal’s legacy could not manage to understand the needs of changing Turkish society and had failed to produce problem-solving policies. Kılıçdaroğlu tried to base the CHP policies on a more economic level to attract more voters. That was actually a special effort to expand the party base from a small group of elites to low and middle-class masses and to make the party “people’s party” again. However it wouldn’t be easy since there was even opposition from his colleagues in the party such as Önder Sav who were strictly loyal to the traditional order and policy approaches of the party rejecting novelties. It opposed to the Kurdish Opening of the AKP and said “No” to the 12 September 2010 referendum along with the MHP. On the other hand, the party could not develop a solid, clearly defined and original policy on its own in terms of Kurdish question as well as other policy matters such as the EU issue.

The CHP has prepared for the 2011 general elections under those circumstances. It received 25.98 % of the national votes minimally improving its performance in 2007 and became the main opposition party again. In these elections the CHP lost even its strongholds along the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts. Several arguments have been enumerated to explain the CHP’s election defeat, ranging from archaic programs to Kılıçdaroğlu’s weak leadership.

Given that there are noticeable fissures within the hierarchy of the CHP regarding its post-election strategy, further marginalization is possible without reaching a compromise in the party.⁵⁸⁷ However, Kılıçdaroğlu and his team seem as if they could pass the first test by receiving more than 20 % of the votes. If not rapidly, the CHP

⁵⁸⁶ Economist, “Turkey’s Opposition. A New Kemal”, Vol. 395, No. 8684, 27 May 2010, p. 54
<http://www.economist.com/node/16219855>
accessed on 16.10.2010

⁵⁸⁷ Gerald Robbins, “Understanding Turkey’s 2011 General Election Results”, **Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes**, June 2011
<http://www.fpri.org/enotes/201106.robbins.turkey.pdf>
accessed on 04.08.2011

could still take some steps to reform its policies regarding the EU accession, Kurdish problem and civil-military relations under its new cadre although those steps were interpreted as baby steps by many commentators.⁵⁸⁸ Therefore, in the new governmental term the CHP can perform a more effective opposition by taking part in solutions of the vital conflicts in Turkish politics.

4.2.2. Highlights of the CHP's Opposition Policy during the AKP Governments

As the main opposition party against the strongest government of the last decades, the CHP has shouldered a serious task in Turkish politics. That is the reason why it was often blamed for being too weak as an opposition party that could only oppose no matter what the government proposed. It could not develop independent policies embracing masses during Baykal's term. However this attitude started to change with Kılıçdaroğlu administration as it slowly shifted to seek for productive policy alternatives by stressing the party's social democratic orientation instead of secularist-statist one.

During 2002-2007 the CHP mainly focused on secularism while announcing itself as the guardian of secularist order of Turkey and attacked the AKP from the secularist perspective although the electorate was more concerned with daily life matters such as pocketbook issue which are solid and need to be treated urgently. As a natural prolongation of its secularist policy, it boycotted the AKP's candidate for presidency, Abdullah Gül in the 2007 presidential elections for not being consulted on Gül's selection as the AKP's candidate.⁵⁸⁹ The party announced that it would not attend the activities in Çankaya if Gül was elected president.⁵⁹⁰ It formulated the formerly unprecedented 367 rule which requires the presence of two third of the majority in the

⁵⁸⁸ Mahmut Övür, "12 Eylül'den 12 Haziran'a Siyasi Partiler. Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi" (Turkish Political Parties from September 12 till June 12. The Republican People's Party), *SETA Analiz*, No. 40, May 2011, p. 18

⁵⁸⁹ BBC News, "Turkish President Vote Challenged", 27 April 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6598067.stm> accessed on 21.03.2012

⁵⁹⁰ Hürriyet Daily News, "CHP to Boycott Çankaya if Gül is Elected President", 16 August 2007, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=chp-to-boycott-cankaya-if-gul-is-elected-president-2007-08-16> accessed on 02.03.2012

Parliament during the presidential voting. This rule was accepted to the Constitutional Court which decided to cancel the first round of presidential elections with a 9-2 opinion.⁵⁹¹ In the meantime it supported the e-memorandum of Turkish Armed Forces which was a soft military intervention to politics in the name of protecting secular order although this contradicted with social democratic philosophy. Furthermore, the CHP joined the republic protests organized by the Atatürkist Thought Association to prevent the election of a president who had an Islamist background such as Erdoğan and Gül. Nevertheless, all these developments could not change a lot in the course of politics than the delay of Gül's nomination for a while and caused the AKP to call for early elections.

Another important incident which the CHP strongly opposed was the efforts of the AKP and the MHP to pass a bill that includes constitutional amendments to lift the headscarf ban in universities in January 2008. The bill was rejected due to the decision of the Constitutional Court which found it against the non-amendable articles of the constitution. However, in October 2010 the Higher Education Board (YÖK) issued a notification to the universities ordering them that “students should not be kicked out of the classroom for any reason.” which, de facto, allowed turbaned students to enter the classrooms. The issue was not brought back to the Constitutional Court by the CHP once the new leader Kılıçdaroğlu took a more moderate approach than Baykal concerning the secularism issues.⁵⁹²

A major opposition led by the CHP was its “No” campaign for the 12 September 2010 referendum to amend the 1982 constitution. The party especially challenged the amendments related to the judiciary with a concern of threat to the secular regime. Kılıçdaroğlu interpreted the referendum as an attempt to politicize judiciary which would favor the incumbent AKP government. He also claimed that in case constitutional amendments entered into force, it would transform Turkey into an authoritarian regime ruled by the AKP.⁵⁹³ On the other hand, Kılıçdaroğlu was

⁵⁹¹ Hatem Ete and Eda Bektaş, “The Political Agenda of the June 2011 Elections”, *SETA Analiz*, No. 53, June 2011, p. 19

⁵⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 20

⁵⁹³ Euractiv, “The Opposition Steps Up Referendum Campaign”, 2 October 2010, <http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/turkish-opposition-steps-referendum-campaign-news-497394>

criticized for “turning the referendum into a test of the prime minister’s popularity in anticipation of a general election which must be held by the middle of next year.”⁵⁹⁴ Thus, they associated the motive behind the CHP’s campaign against the constitutional referendum with preparations of the party to compete with the AKP in the upcoming elections. Despite its intensive efforts, the referendum proposal was approved with a narrow margin.

Finally, the CHP has appeared to take a skeptical approach for the Ergenekon case which was attributed an overriding importance by the AKP. The case has definitely been a turning point of civil-military relations in Turkish history. In the context of Ergenekon many members of chief general staff were investigated and even sent into prison for taking part in the plotting of coup against the AKP government in 2003-2004. The CHP approached the issue suspiciously as it had built good relations with the military especially during Baykal’s leadership and it was inclined to see the issue as the AKP’s effort to suppress the power of military. Nevertheless, the AKP interpreted the case as an act against the general will of Turkish nation and democracy and justified its attitude towards the issue with the protection of democratic regime. The nomination of two Ergenekon suspects as candidates from the CHP lists in the 2011 general elections confirmed this clash between the AKP and the CHP overtly. This issue seems to carry on occupying the political agenda for the new governmental term as long as well-known figures appear before the court and the media keeps its interest in the case.

4.3. IDEOLOGICAL AND STRUCTURAL ROOTS OF THE MHP THROUGH AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Since its establishment, the MHP represents the nationalist far-right of Turkish political spectrum. The party was derived from the CKMP (Conservative-rural Republican Peasants Nation Party-Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi) in a congress in 1969 under the leadership of Alparslan Türkeş, who came into power in 1965.⁵⁹⁵ Three

02.03.2012

⁵⁹⁴ Jonathan Head, “Why Turkey’s Constitutional Referendum Matters”, **BBC News**, 11 September 2010,

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11263302>

31.01.2012

⁵⁹⁵ For further information concerning the historical development of MHP, see:

white crescents on a red background were agreed on being the emblem of the party and the grey wolf figure became the party symbol.

Until 1977, the MHP could gain no significant success in parliamentary elections and remained around 3 %. However, in the 1977 elections the party was finally visible in Turkish political arena with a share of 6.42 % of the total votes. When the terror activities stemming from the conflict between the left and right wings escalated all over Turkey in the 1970s, the MHP appeared as an active player on the right side, taking part in the incidents headed by the “Hearths of Ideal” (Ülkü Ocakları) or the ”Association of Idealist Youth” (after 1979).

In the 1980 coup d'état, the MHP was closed down by the military government along with all other legal political parties of the time in Turkey and many of its members were put into prison. Some of the members, who could escape from imprisonment, pursued their political careers in the newly established ANAP or alternative Islamist currents. The party was reopened in 1983 under the name of the “MP” (Conservative Party-Muhafazakar Parti) and was renamed to the MÇP (Nationalist Task Party-Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi) in 1985. It would get back its former name the “MHP” in 1992. However, it took the party more than two decades to recover and become one of the major political parties in Turkish politics. The MHP welcomed the 1990s as a party having no considerable role in policy-making process due to rising tensions within the party itself.

Ideologically, the party always supported “strong nation-state” concept avoiding extreme political perspectives. Radicalism was perceived as a threat towards the existence and perpetuity of the nation-state. Therefore, state authority was seen as unquestionable, state would know the best for its citizens. Landau defines the objectives and ideological values of the MHP as below:

“The party's main goal is defined as 'creating a nationalist and powerful Turkey'. Key slogans were “A national state - a strong government”. There followed an emphasis on

the democratic regime, industrialization, the establishment of national trade unions, social security and insurance, improvement of agriculture and development of the villages, exploitation of natural resources, encouragement of foreign trade, adopting nationalist stands but opposing both socialism and fascism, the betterment of education, and opposition to birth-control ('Long live the ideal of a 100-million strong Turkey!').⁵⁹⁶

The ideological basis of the party was developed on two grounds: Turkism and Islamism. Even though the economic aspect of the party was never emphasized as much as its political aspect, the party represented itself as anti-communist and anti-capitalist in the sense that it conceptualized both ways as “extremes” which was against its “strong state” approach. Landau defines the party ideology of the MHP as anti-communist and anti-capitalist at the same time so that it tries to benefit from nationalism as a balancer. In this respect, the party is romantically oriented towards early Turkish history and culture and stresses on “Turkishness” as a third way for those who are against both communism and capitalism. However it takes a modern approach in its attitudes toward society and economics. The party envisages a powerful Turkish state putting emphasis upon strong personal leadership, discipline and sacrifices although it asserts its commitment to parliamentary democracy. Those principles are modified by the General Executive Board from time to time on points of emphasis. However it preserves its basics as the same since T rkeş’s leadership takeover.⁵⁹⁷

Another point to mention about the MHP’s ideology is the doctrines of its idealized leader Alparslan T rkeş. The MHP has differed from other political parties in terms of the value attributed to its departed leader, Alparslan T rkeş. He remained in office until his death and he was called as “Başbuğ” (leader of Turks) around the party circles. He was more than a leader for the party base for his contribution to the constitution of the party ideology by his ideas and directly affected the policy-making in the party. Akdağ underlines that T rkeş’s discourse on Turkish nationalism sometimes showed differences than the formally accepted nationalism understanding of the state although T rkeş frequently stated that his nationalism perspective corresponded with

⁵⁹⁶ Jacob M. Landau , “The Nationalist Action Party in Turkey”, **Journal of Contemporary History**, Vol. 17, No. 4, Sage Publications, October 1982, p. 601

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid, pp. 600-601

the official nationalism understanding of the state. On the other hand Türkeş kept his distance from Islam because of the concept of “ümme” which could dissolve Turkish nationalism within Islam.⁵⁹⁸ Türkeş’s publications contained mostly his speeches and articles dealing with the party ideology. His pamphlet “Nine Lights Doctrine” (Dokuz Işık Doktrini) which was published in 1965 formed the basis of the party ideology and became the guideline of the party policies together with the party program.

“...Türkeş primarily constituted an elaboration of his first exposition of the party's doctrine, Nine Lights. This sixteen-page booklet became the guiding light for party seminars and debates and served as the textbook for the study of its ideology. The nine 'lights' or principles are as follows: (1) Nationalism (which not coincidentally comes first), defined as the sentiment feeding the Turkish nation with a desire to raise Turkey to the peak of civilization - safe, prosperous, happy and modernized. (2) Idealism, characterized as the wish to serve one's nation and secure its independence, liberty and well-being. (3) Morality, the basis of society, which ought to conform to local Turkish traditions and beliefs. (4) Social-mindedness, said to comprise the protection and encouragement of free enterprise; the provision of economic incentives to holders of small capital; and state-wide organization of social welfare. (5) A Scientific Mentality, encouraging well-planned study and research. (6) Liberalism, guaranteeing all conceivable freedoms, political and otherwise, to every single Turk. (7) Peasant Care, which is, according special significance to rural development in schooling, medicine and the modernization of agriculture. (8) Populism intended to channel all progress and development for the benefit of the nation's overwhelming majority. (9) Industrialization, emphasizing technology and preparing for the nuclear and space era. Briefly stated, it was a typical 'best for everyone' ideology, with obvious emphasis on nationalism, idealism and morals, in a populist vein. These elements, along with the other 'lights', recur in the party's presentations of its ideological tenets.”⁵⁹⁹

Hence, it is important to mention the relation between the leader, organization and doctrine in the MHP to analyze its policy-making process. During the years which Türkeş led the party, the leader played a serious role in the absorption of the party doctrine by the party organization since the leader himself was the creator of the doctrine. After Türkeş, the role of the leader would become barely perceptible.

⁵⁹⁸ Gül Arıkan Akdağ, “Alparslan Türkeş” in Ali Faik Demir, **Türk Dış Politikasında Liderler (Leaders in Turkish Foreign Policy)**, İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, May 2007, pp. 458-459

⁵⁹⁹ Jacob M. Landau, “The Nationalist Action Party in Turkey”, **Journal of Contemporary History**, Vol. 17, No. 4, Sage Publications, October 1982, pp. 601-602

4.3.1. The MHP in the 1990s: Towards a New Ideology

20 October 1991 general elections became a turning point in the MHP's history since the party succeeded in getting 19 members into the parliament through its alliance with the RP and IDP (Reformist Democracy Party-Islahatçı Demokrasi Partisi). Alparslan Türkeş was the net benefiter of this success. The foremost publications of the party celebrated this success with slogans such as "Leaving Ergenekon Second Time" and the "Revival of Grey Wolves".⁶⁰⁰

However, this success would be overshadowed by the separatist wave within the party in 1992 since the new strategy adopted by Türkeş in order to legitimize and consolidate the position of the party in the parliament encountered a strong reaction from the extreme nationalist-Islamist group in the party. To the new strategy, the MÇP would display a moderate and "tolerant" approach towards the SHP-DYP coalition.

It was not easy to legitimize this new approach to party members and party base from the ideological aspect. Although the DYP was a conservative right party, it had supported the SHP and built a coalition government with the social democrat SHP. Retrospectively, the MÇP/MHP always had a tendency to perceive the left wing in one, single, compact way as "communists" rather than classifying it into different groups such as social democrats or socialists. Therefore, even the idea of rapprochement with the SHP was unacceptable for the radical Islamist-nationalist front in the party.⁶⁰¹ Furthermore, at that time the SHP included some of the former HEP deputies such as Leyla Zana who were well known proponents of Kurdish nationalism by public opinion.

The opposition within the party resulted in the split of nationalist-Islamist body from the MÇP in 1993. It was the biggest split in the party's history, too. This time the party was not only being divided politically but also ideologically. From 1993 on, the MÇP/MHP would have been criticized for being "soft" nationalist by this group. In the meantime, Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu and five prominent deputies resigned and founded a new

⁶⁰⁰ Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, **Devlet ve Kuzgun. 1990'lardan 2000'lere MHP (State and Raven. The MHP from the 1990s till 2000s)**, Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 3. Edition, 2007, pp. 15-22

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., p. 26

party called the “Great Union Party” and they adopted an ultra-nationalist and ultra-Islamist ideology.

The party had another painful process short after the split of radical Islamist-nationalists in 1993. When the law concerning the reopening of the parties banned in the 1980 coup d'état was passed in the Parliament in 1992, there was a growing motivation in the MÇP to merge with the former MHP. However, all the members of the former MHP were not supporting the MÇP anymore. In the end, it could manage to become one party under the name of the MHP again despite the loss of some important figures of the MHP before 1980 such as Sadi Somuncuoğlu.

Those turbulences within the party led it to a more dynamic policy search in the next years. Indeed, in the last years of the 1980s the threat perception of Turkish nationalism had relaxed due to a couple of changes. Turkey had started to be seen as a growing economic power. It had applied for the full membership to the EU in 1987. The collapse of East Block in parallel with the Soviet Union had taken away the archenemy in military and political spheres. This also had increased expectations in Turkey to become a regional power among the newly established Turkic republics. Nationalist circles were in search of an “other” to stimulate the “self”. The breaking out of the PKK activities and the Gulf War had provided that platform for them. The Kurdish issue constituted the main element of the party discourse in revitalization process of the party.⁶⁰² The developments in the Southeast Anatolia also paved the way for this at that time while the number of soldiers dying in the battles with Kurdish guerrillas was increasing each day. This caused growing hatred all over the country as well as among the families and relatives of the dead soldiers and instigated the Turkish nationalism, therefore helped the MHP gain more support.

The MHP reshaped its ideological structure comprehensively in the mid-1990s by re-emphasizing on Turkish nationalism and embracing Kemalist-secularist approach which conflicts with the Islamist front in Turkey. The subordination of Islam as the main element of Turkish nationalism was very much related to the political rivalry with the RP at the time. Being not very assertive, it adopted an economic approach which

⁶⁰² Ibid., p. 85

was in between neoliberal hegemony and anti-liberal opposition. Especially during the discussions on having a customs union with the EU, the MHP opposed the official policy of the government. It claimed that Turkey was not ready for a customs union and a possible customs union decision should have been subjected to a referendum. Instead, it suggested the idea of forming a Turkish Common Market. However this was not an opposition to a customs union with the EU in principle, the MHP took the idea positively as long as the Turkish Common Market had been formed.⁶⁰³

Those changes in the party policy, however, could not help it break through in the December 1995 general elections. The MHP had remained below the 10 % election threshold by getting 8.18 % of the votes. The defeat in the elections was followed by the death of Türkeş in 1997 which would end an era in the MHP's history. The party for the first time witnessed the competition for leadership. Until that time, the leadership of Türkeş had been taken as a given. Even the separatist group within the party hadn't questioned his position as the leader of the party although they had criticized Türkeş and his policies. By his death, there were two prominent figures rivaling for the party leadership: Alparslan Türkeş's son Tuğrul Türkeş and Devlet Bahçeli. Bahçeli won the competition and became the new leader of the MHP. This had an effect on the "leader-organization-doctrine" relation in the party since Bahçeli had no strong leader image like Türkeş. The role of the leader in the MHP lost ground with Bahçeli's taking office.⁶⁰⁴ He was barely known by the party base although he had served the party in different positions such as being the vice president and secretary general.

In the 1999 national elections, the MHP got the highest percentage of votes (18 %) in its history and took part in the coalition government along with the DSP (Democratic Left Party-Demokratik Sol Partisi) and the ANAP (Motherland Party-Anavatan Partisi). Nevertheless the success gained in the elections could not be maintained in the following elections in 2002 because the dramatic increase in the amount of support mostly stemmed from the conjuncture at the time. There was already a growing nationalist wave in Turkey in the 1990s. Having the PKK leader Öcalan captured in the Greek Consulate of Kenya in 1998 carried the nationalist sentiment to its

⁶⁰³ Ibid., p. 197; See also **AB, GB ve Türkiye**, MHP Head Office Publishing, 1995

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 396

peak. On the other side, the RP government could not satisfy the expectations of its electorate especially in issues such as headscarf problem and February 28 Process⁶⁰⁵ had a negative reflection on the party's image. This entailed a shift in the votes of conservative regions from the RP to the MHP.

4.3.2. The MHP during the AKP Governments

The MHP could enjoy being in the government only up until 2002 when the coalition government ended by the outbreak of economic crisis and early elections were held in November in the same year. The MHP lost all of its 129 seats in the TGNA, remained below the election threshold by gaining only 8.34% of the votes and was excluded from the Parliament. In fact this was the punishment of the coalition government by the electorate for its economic failure which culminated in 2000-2001 crises.

Two years after the election defeat of 2002, in March 2004 local elections the MHP could enter the Parliament again. It received 10.45 % of the votes with an increase of about 25% compared to the 2002 general election results. The reason of the rise in the MHP votes can be estimated as the MHP superseded the GP votes which started to shrink after the 2002 elections. Nevertheless, the party bases of the GP and the MHP were totally unlike, one predominantly effective in central Anatolia and the other in western coastal provinces. Furthermore, their voter profiles did not share too much in common. There was also the fact that the AKP was able to attract voters from the centrist and far right parties, including the MHP. Hence, the MHP's success in the 2004 local elections was more likely to be an indication of the organizational ability of the MHP to mobilize and attract voters. Additionally, the uneasiness among the electorate concerning the developments regarding the Cyprus conflict and the AKP's attitude

⁶⁰⁵ For a detailed information about February 28 Process see Wikipedia, "1997 Military Memorandum (Turkey)", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1997_military_memorandum_%28Turkey%29 accessed on 25.10.2011

towards the issue could be a reason for the reactive votes favoring the nationalist MHP.⁶⁰⁶

When the 2007 general elections were held, the MHP received 14.29 % of the national vote, regaining a considerable representation in the Parliament with 71 seats as the second largest opposition party following the CHP. The success of the MHP in these elections overlaps with the rise in PKK-related terror that has fueled the MHP's organization and mobilized its constituency.⁶⁰⁷ As a matter of fact the MHP could also receive votes of the western provinces which were not traditionally the MHP bases.

In the 2009 local elections the MHP has displayed a quite impressive picture by 16.07 % in its share of votes. This was a 53% increase compared to 2004. The MHP continued to hold on to its long-term stronghold in the central Anatolian provinces that are covered by the regions of West Anatolia (23.3% for the MHP) and Central Anatolia (23.1% for the MHP).⁶⁰⁸ One might say that the polarization between the political-Islamist groups and the military which was more visible after the February 28 Process peaked by the Ergenekon case in 2008. This was not welcomed in the circles which are in favor of strong military in politics as the guardian of secularist state and those circles supported the MHP as well as the CHP against the AKP government.

According to Çarkoğlu, the MHP's considerable success in the 2009 elections is related to the fact that it could convince larger segments of Turkish voters that it has moderated its ultra-nationalist stance concerning issues such as international relations and EU membership as well as its hawkish stance on the ethnic Kurdish minority in the country. It might also be added that the AKP's relative success in appealing to ethnic Kurdish groups both in the eastern and southeastern region could encourage the reactionary and increasingly nationalist electorate of the western provinces to vote for

⁶⁰⁶ Ali Çarkoğlu, **Turkish Local Elections of March 28, 2004: A Prospective Evaluation**, TÜSİAD, 9 April 2004, p. 4
<http://www.tusiad.us/Content/uploaded/TURKISH-LOCAL-ELECTIONS-OF-MARCH-28--ALI%20CARKOGLU%202-FINALFINAL.PDF>
accessed on 14.02.2011

⁶⁰⁷ Ali Çarkoğlu, "Ideology or Economic Pragmatism: Determinants of Party Choice in Turkey for the July 2007 Elections", **Studies in Public Policy**, No. 439, 2008, p. 4

⁶⁰⁸ Ali Çarkoğlu, "Turkey's Local Elections of 2009: Winners and Losers", **Insight Turkey**, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2009, p. 6

the MHP.⁶⁰⁹ As it is discussed in Chapter 2, Turkey's two political trends over the last years, Islamism and nationalism, seem to replace each other in case of a negative move in the economy. In the 2009 elections, the relatively negative economic indicators to the earlier elections of 2007, 2004 and 2002 engendered a partial shift of votes from the Islamist AKP to the nationalist MHP; however the electorate still remained in between the center-right and far-right.

During 2007-2011 the MHP compromised with the AKP government in some critical issues which led it play a problem-solving role. For instance the presidential crisis could only be surpassed with the support of the MHP in the Parliament. The MHP also got on well with the AKP government in headscarf issue. However the party could not be constructive in terms of the Kurdish issue and presented an indifferent attitude towards the developments in Turkey regarding the issue. It pursued a dual strategy which, on the one hand, advocated the idea that Kurdish issue shouldn't have caused an ethnic conflict between the Kurds and Turks; whereas on the other hand, it created new topics to escalate tensions in order to gain electoral support. This showed the party as if it were not in favor of the solution of Kurdish problem. Furthermore, its attitude towards the Referendum of 12 September 2010 could also be interpreted as a strategic decision to oppose the government. Saying "No" to the referendum despite being a party which suffered a lot from the 1980 coup caused disappointment in the party base.⁶¹⁰ In summary, the way the MHP conducted its policies in this period can mostly be characterized as reactionary rather than constructive. The party highly concentrated on opposing the AKP policies; however this kept it away from contributing the search for solutions to Turkey's major problems such as Kurdish question or the EU issue and prevented it from being a decision-maker in Turkey's major political issues.

Addressing to mostly male (69 % of its votes) and high school graduate (42 % of its votes) voters from Mediterranean, western and central Anatolia⁶¹¹, in the 2011

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 14-15

⁶¹⁰ Hüseyin Kocabıyık, "12 Eylül'den 12 Haziran'a Siyasi Partiler, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi" (Political Parties from September 12 till June 12. The Nationalist Action Party), **SETA Analiz**, No. 32, May 2011, p. 6

⁶¹¹ KONDA Araştırma ve Danışmanlık (KONDA Research and Consultancy), **KONDA Barometresi Bulgu Serisi, 12 Haziran 2011 Genel Seçim Açıklaması**
<http://www.konda.com.tr/tr/raporlar.php>

general elections the MHP became the third major party which could earn 53 seats in the Parliament due to a share of 13.01 % of the national votes. This was 4 % less amount of votes than 2007. However, considering the speculations about the possibility of the MHP's remaining below the election threshold preceding the elections, the party can be seen as successful. Those speculations stemmed from the negative effect of the sex scandal right before the elections. Six MHP deputies had resigned after their secretly filmed images had been posted online at a website by a group calling itself "Different Nationalists" who had demanded the entire MHP leadership to step down.⁶¹² On the other hand, the revitalization of the CHP under the leadership of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu attracted some of the CHP voters which voted for the MHP as a reaction to its leader Deniz Baykal back to the CHP so that the MHP lost those voters.

Under these circumstances, the MHP's ability to get into the Parliament could be explained by its loyal party base and its capitalization of the failure of Kurdish opening of the AKP by evoking the nationalist sentiments which, in turn, helped it gain the nationalist voters.

4.4. IDEOLOGICAL AND STRUCTURAL ROOTS OF THE DTP/BDP THROUGH AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

As being founded on 2 May 2008, the BDP is the newest political party among the parties examined in this dissertation. Despite its relatively new emergence, the party deserves a special attention on the grounds that it represents the pro-Kurdish political movement developed within the Turkish political system over the last two decades. Likewise pro-Islamist parties, pro-Kurdish parties have suffered from closure throughout Turkish political history, latter due to the perceived threat to territorial integrity by the state so that the party is indeed the continuation of a series of parties which were established and closed down since 1990.

accessed on 24.03.2011

⁶¹² BBC News Europe, "Turkey Opposition Politicians Quit in Sex Video Scandal", 21 May 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13484990>;

accessed on 17.06.2011

Voice of America, "Turkish Elections Marred by Sex Scandal", 2 June 2011, <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/europe/Turkish-Elections-Marred-by-Sex-Scandal-123043223.html>

accessed on 17.06.2011

4.4.1. An Overview of the Predecessors of the DTP

To understand the historical and ideological roots of the DTP/BDP, it is useful to have an overview about its predecessors. The first political party which carried the pro-Kurdish political tradition to Turkish political stage, the HEP (People's Labor Party-Halkın Emek Partisi) was founded on 7 June 1990 in the TGNA by 22 deputies who were aligned with the SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party-Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti) in order to be able to exceed the 10 % election threshold of the Turkish election law. Once they got into the TGNA, they separated from the SHP and founded the HEP under the leadership of Ahmet Fehmi Işıklar. When it was prosecuted due to its constant promotion of Kurdish political and cultural rights, another party called the ÖZDEP was founded on June 1992 but merged with the HEP very soon on July 1992. Eventually, the HEP and ÖZDEP were outlawed one by one by the Constitutional Court in 1993.⁶¹³

In the same year, the DEP (Democracy Party-Demokrasi Partisi) succeeded the HEP with Yaşar Kaya as the chairman. However, as soon as the party held its first general congress, seven people from the administrative staff of the headquarters of the party were put into detention and short after that, Yaşar Kaya was arrested by Ankara State Security Court (DGM). Just like the former ones, the Constitutional Court decided to close the DEP, on the grounds that it was violating the principle of Turkey's territorial integrity with its nation and indivisibility due to Yaşar Kaya and party members' some speeches.⁶¹⁴ In the meantime Hatip Dicle was elected as chairman at the first extraordinary congress of the party.

During the closure case of the DEP, the speeches of Hatip Dicle which gave the impression that the party was advocating the existence and actions of the PKK triggered anti-DEP propaganda by other political parties providing them with auspicious

⁶¹³ The Constitutional Court of Turkey, **Decision No: 1993/1**, 14 July 1993 For detailed information about the closure case of the HEP see Dicle Koğacıoğlu, "Dissolution of Political Parties by the Constitutional Court in Turkey. Judicial Delimitation of the Political Domain", **International Sociology**, Vol. 18, No. 1, March 2003, pp. 258-276

⁶¹⁴ The Constitutional Court of Turkey, **Decision No: 1994/2**, 16 June 1994

material for their election campaigns on the eve of the 1994 elections.⁶¹⁵ By a decision taken in the TGNA, the parliamentary immunities of 6 DEP deputies were lifted and they got arrested.

In May 1994, another party, the HADEP (People's Democracy Party-Halkın Demokrasi Partisi) was established and it survived until June 1996 without serious problem under the leadership of Murat Bozlak. When the Turkish flag was pulled down and replaced with a PKK flag during the HADEP's annual general meeting, 50 party members including Murat Bozlak were detained and all party archives were seized by the police. The following days, Bozlak and others were convicted by Ankara State Security Court and were arrested. After those incidents, the party was subjected to the police raids and seizure of its documents several times and many party members including the party representatives of towns were arrested from time to time.

In January 1999, the Chief prosecutor brought proceedings before the Constitutional Court which claimed that the party had been engaged in illegal activities and requested for the HADEP to be dissolved. Despite the ongoing trial, the party continued its activities and it showed up in political arena. It put efforts on consolidating its youth and women branches. Furthermore, it became a member of the Socialist International in 2002. On the other side some party members became victims of unsolved murder and some were missed after being put into police detention.⁶¹⁶ In 2003 the Constitutional Court decided to dissolve the HADEP, concluding that it had become a centre of illegal activities which included aiding and abetting the PKK.⁶¹⁷ The Court further banned a number of party members from becoming founders or members of any other political party for five years. Nevertheless, seven years after the closure decision of the Constitutional Court, The European Court of Human Rights would convict Turkey of violating the Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights in its

⁶¹⁵ Hatem Ete, "22 Temmuz'dan 29 Mart'a Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler. Örgüt ile Parti olma Geriliminde DTP." (Turkish Political Parties from July 22 till March 29. The DTP Tensed by Being a Party with an Organization), *Seta Analiz*, Vol. 7, March 2009, p. 5

⁶¹⁶ Bianet Bağımsız İletişim Ağı (Bianet Free Communication Network), "1990'dan Bugüne, HEP'ten DTP'ye Kürtlerin Zorlu Siyaset Mücadelesi" (1990 Onwards, Formidable Political Struggle of Kurdish from the HEP till the DTP), 12 December 2009, <http://bianet.org/bianet/bianet/117387-1990dan-bugune-hepten-dtpye-kurtlerin-zorlu-siyaset-mucadelesi> accessed on 18.12.2009

⁶¹⁷ The Constitutional Court of Turkey, **Decision No: 2003/1**, 13 March 2003

decision to dissolve the party and would charge the Turkish state to pay former HADEP Secretary-General Turan Demir 24,000 € plus 2,200 € for legal expenses.⁶¹⁸

Following the closure of the HADEP, the DEHAP sustained the political cause of pro-Kurdish movement. The DEHAP had been already established in 1997 and Veysi Aydın had become the chairman. When his membership was dismissed by the Supreme Court of Appeals, Mehmet Abbasoğlu took over the chairmanship. Although the Chief Public Prosecutor Sabih Kanadoğlu applied for the prevention of the party to join the elections, it was not accepted. Thus, the DEHAP could enter the 2002 elections and received 6.23 % of the votes but could not be represented in the TGNA due to the 10% election threshold.⁶¹⁹ Sabih Kanadoğlu prosecuted the party with two different indictments in 2003. In the same year the Free Party which was in line with the DEHAP was founded. Both parties decided to merge with the SHP, the ÖDP, the EMEP and the SDP and declared that they would go for the 2004 elections together in order to pass over the election barrier. The DEHAP dissolved itself in a party congress in 2005 followed by the Free Party in 2007.

4.4.2. The Democratic Society Movement and the DTP

In such a chaotic political environment, in 2004 four former DEP deputies, Leyla Zana, Orhan Doğan, Hatip Dicle and Selim Sadak declared with a press conference that they founded Democratic Society Movement. The movement was supported by the former leaders of the HEP, the HADEP and the DEHAP and it provided the transitional process of a new party's formation. It attributed primary importance to "the supra-identity of belonging to the Turkish nation", "the democratic and peaceful solution of the Kurdish problem", "concern for all problems of the

⁶¹⁸ European Court of Human Rights, **Judgment of the Case of HADEP and Demir v. Turkey**, Application No. 28003/03, Strasbourg, 14 December 2010
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4d5bc9982.pdf>
accessed on 02.08.2011

⁶¹⁹ Bianet Bağımsız İletişim Ağı (Bianet Free Communication Network), "1990'dan Bugüne, HEP'ten DTP'ye Kürtlerin Zorlu Siyaset Mücadelesi" (1990 Onwards, Formidable Political Struggle of Kurdish from the HEP till the DTP), 12 December 2009,
<http://bianet.org/bianet/bianet/117387-1990dan-bugune-hepten-dtpye-kurtlerin-zorlu-siyaset-mucadelesi>
accessed on 18.12.2009

country” and “inclusiveness”.⁶²⁰ In 2005, the DTP (Democratic Society Party-Demokratik Toplum Partisi) was established as a political outcome of the Movement and based its political stance and organizational structure on those of the movement. Due to the restriction of law, the party was de jure chaired by Ahmet Türk although Ahmet Türk and Aysel Tuğluk were declared as co-presidents.

Given the existence of 10% electoral threshold, the party participated in the 2007 General Elections with independent candidates and formed its group in the TGNA with the elected deputies. In November 2007 as its predecessors, the Supreme Court Prosecutor Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya applied to the Constitutional Court for the prohibition of the party due to perceived link between the party and the PKK. In December 2009, the Court decided on the dissolution of the party for its being “a focal point for terrorism against the indivisible integrity of the state”⁶²¹ and some of the members of the party including the founding members were banned from joining any political party for five years.

4.4.3. The Emergence of the BDP and the 2011 Elections

The BDP was an already functioning party by the time the DTP was closed. Being established in 2008, the party had completed its organizational framework and had entered the 2009 local elections in which it won a negligible amount of the votes.⁶²² Therefore the political perspective of the DTP has been carried out by the BDP. It was solely the title and logo of the party which was indeed changed, yet the ideology remained constant. This can be considered as the failure and futility of the repeatedly exercised closure cases in the history of pro-Kurdish political movement in terms of changing its political direction.

The DTP and later the BDP defined itself as a left leaning mass party that perceived libertarian, egalitarian, peaceful pluralist and multi-cultural society as

⁶²⁰ Erol Çevikçe, “DTH-CHP”, **Vatan Newspaper**, 30 October 2004
<http://haber.gazetevatan.com/0/39108/4/Haber>
accessed on 12.11.2011

⁶²¹ The Constitutional Court of Turkey, **Decision No: 2007/1**, 11 December 2009

⁶²² Secim.Haberler.Com, 2009 Yerel Seçim Sonuçları (2009 Local Election Results),
<http://secim.haberler.com/2009/>
accessed on 02.02.2010

richness. It adopted democratic-local and horizontal style of politics in place of centralist and hierarchical politics; rejecting all forms of discrimination and racism. It declared that it favored the liberation of the humankind in the establishment of the free, democratic and ecological society.⁶²³ It conducted a political struggle to establish social peace in the country urgently and marked the necessity of an effort to restructure the legal, administrative, political, social, economic and cultural arenas through comprehensive democratic reforms.

For both the BDP and its predecessors the main concern is attributed to the Kurdish question in Turkey. The party perceives the solution to the Kurdish problem and the peaceful future of people in the establishment of the “Democratic Republic” and in the principle of “free co-existence in the common homeland”. That is to say, the party is a staunch supporter of organized civil society and a social structure within which people can build their own identities and of the making of a new constitution in conformity with universal law; one that promotes a peaceful, libertarian, egalitarian and participatory society.⁶²⁴ The party strives for the provision of the right to education in mother tongue for everyone without discrimination and for the establishment of a democratic conception concerning the press, intellectual reflections, culture and arts.

The party can also be considered as active in European platforms comparing to its relatively small vote share. It holds an observer member status in the Socialist International. Meanwhile, the party is aligned with the Party of European Socialists as a member. In terms of De Winter and Cachafeiro’s conceptualization, the BDP fairly suits the definitions of ethno-regionalist parties. They claim that this type of party has been deprived of ideological affinity and constantly had demands for political autonomy. However, they differed from traditional ideological orientations so that jeopardized the collective action and political cooperation. They claim that Europeanization led “the creation of a new structure of political opportunities for nationalist parties, changes in party behavior at the European level, the definition of a new European internationalism and a common political European agenda based on the principle of the lowest common

⁶²³ Unpublished presentation on the DTP obtained from the BDP Head Office, December 2010

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

denominator.”⁶²⁵ Departing from those ethno-regional party discussions, as Terzi remarks, it can be argued that the BDP is an active party in Europe in order to gain legitimacy and make its claims more visible.⁶²⁶

In terms of its view on the issue of secularism, the BDP favors a neutral role of state towards all religions which are allowed to freely express themselves that is in line with the principle of democratic and libertarian secularism. In addition, the party defends gender equality and the principle of positive discrimination as a requirement of democracy. It places major importance to the representation of women in the political arena. In this regard, the DTP used to present a progressive approach compared to other parties in Turkey. The party established “Women Assembly” which had an autonomous structure and shared its advice with the Party Center via its spokesperson. It constituted the first party in Turkish political history that implemented the system of “Co-Presidency” in order to achieve gender equality at the utmost level and it had the highest percentage of female representation in the parliament and local government. As a result of the fact that the DTP implemented positive discrimination principle by a 40 % gender quota for determining candidates for local and general elections, out of 18 female mayors in Turkey, 9 of them were members of the DTP.⁶²⁷

The party also emphasized the need for the development of local democracy and local governance in Turkey, replacing the centralist structure of the state. To this end, it stated that it would undertake the comprehensive effort oriented toward the implementation of urgent reforms for the effectuation of local democracy.⁶²⁸ In this context the party shares common aspects with the AKP. It is also related to the fact that both parties include members who come from local governance background in specific regions.

⁶²⁵ Lieven De Winter and Margarita Gomez-Reino Cachafeiro, “European Integration and Ethno-regionalist Parties”, *Party Politics*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 2002, p. 483
<http://ppq.sagepub.com/content/8/4/483.abstract>
accessed on 30.04.2012

⁶²⁶ Özlem Terzi, *The Influence of the European Union on Turkish Foreign Policy*, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010, p. 39

⁶²⁷ Unpublished presentation on the DTP obtained from the BDP Head Office, December 2010

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*

In the 2011 elections, the BDP has run its candidates once more as independents due to the 10 % election restriction. Thirty six independent candidates backed by the BDP were elected and have formed the BDP group in the Parliament although six of those candidates were in jail at the time of the elections. However Hatip Dicle's deputyship as being one of those six deputies was cancelled right after the elections by the Supreme Election Board because of the alleged link between Dicle and the PKK.⁶²⁹ The election results of the BDP were successful anyway when it was compared with the former elections. The party delegation could double its legislative presence which would pose a formidable challenge for Ankara to negotiate an overall solution with the Kurdish question and it will likely be more forceful in demanding greater autonomy. A recent surge of Kurdish unrest throughout Turkey will likely intensify if the Erdoğan government mishandles its dealings with the BDP.⁶³⁰ On the other side, if the BDP is willing to maintain its presence as a powerful actor in the solution of Kurdish problem, it has to produce more effective policies and avoid its name to be mentioned together with the PKK. The party has to appeal votes from regions other than the ones mostly populated by Kurdish people in order to get rid of the image of being the party of a specific region and become a party of Turkey.

4.5. THE ROLE OF INTRAPARTY DYNAMICS AND PARTY IDENTITY IN SHAPING THE EU STANCES OF THE TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES

The previous sections of this chapter have attempted to give an overview of the general characteristics of each of the four parties in terms of party history, ideology, political groups forming the party and some highlights of their policies. This section basically combines that information with the findings of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 and

⁶²⁹ NTVMSNBC, "Hatip Dicle'nin Millevekilliği Düştü" (Hatip Dicle's Deputyship Has Been Abolished), 22 June 2011, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25225443/> accessed on 21.08.2011

⁶³⁰ Gerald Robbins, "Understanding Turkey's 2011 General Election Results", **Foreign Policy Research Institute E-Notes**, June 2011 <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/201106.robbins.turkey.pdf> accessed on 04.08.2011

analyzes the role of intraparty dynamics and party identity as other factors beside electoral behavior in determination of the parties' EU stances.

Table 4.2 illustrates those factors affecting the shift in the EU stances of the Turkish political parties according to the three cases for each party. As shown in the table, the level of impact of intraparty dynamics and party identity on the EU stances of the AKP, CHP and MHP was not always the same; whereas it was constantly effective in the case of the DTP/BDP.

Table 4.2: The Role of Intraparty Dynamics and Party Identity in the Change of Turkish Political Parties' EU Attitudes during 2002-2011

	First Parliamentary Term of the AKP Government (2002-2007)		Second Parliamentary Term of the AKP Government (2002-2007)
	Case 1 2002-2004	Case 2 2004-2006	Case 3 2006-2011
AKP	2 and 3	2 and 3	3
CHP	3	2 and 3	2 and 3
MHP	-	2 and 3	3
DTP/BDP	2 and 3	2 and 3	2 and 3

2= intraparty dynamics/political groups

3= party identity (mainly ideology, history)

The underlying reason for this result is that the DTP/BDP is distinguished from other parties as an ethno-regional party whose party base is mostly concerned about the party's stance regarding the Kurdish question rather than other issues. Chapter 2, which analyzes the EU stances of the parties by focusing on party publications and speeches, emphasizes the fact that there is no publication about the DTP/BDP's EU policy and the pro-EU approach of the party can only be inferred from reading between the lines of the statements and group speeches of the party members or interviewing with them. Chapter 3, which focuses on the impact of electoral behavior, also confirms that there is no

proved connection between the high EU support of the DTP/BDP constituencies and the EU policy decisions of the party.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that the political groups within the party and its identity have a significant role in the determination of the EU stance of the DTP/BDP. In that sense, the dominant intraparty group playing role is the DTP/BDP municipalities of eastern and southeastern provinces since they would take several advantages of a pro-EU stance. The EU accession would give them the opportunity of benefiting from the EU structural funds in order to cope with regional disparities within the Union, which would, in turn, increase the budgets of those municipalities and give them more political power in the country. On the other hand, the party elite comprised of people from different social classes with a common goal of improving minority rights within the context of democratization also supported the EU accession as it was considered to help the acceleration of this process.

The party identity was the other important factor in the pro-EU stance of the DTP/BDP as it favored democratization in Turkey. The official party ideology was aligned with western value and norm system represented by the EU and was in favor of strengthening liberal rights and freedoms to have better expression of ethnic identification through the internalization of common European values. On the other hand, as an ethno-regionalist party, the DTP/BDP had no ideological hesitations with regard to the national interests like other parties. It did not tend to perceive the EU conditionality as a threat to Turkey's national interests. Even when some of the EU Council decisions were highly criticized by other parties for being unfair and harmful for the national interests, the DTP did not show any sign of disappointment and carried on its enthusiastic pro-EU stance. Instead, the party ideology justified the required conditions as necessary reforms for the development of the country. In addition, the EU membership could provide the party with more legitimacy in domestic politics.

The effect of intraparty groups and identity was apparently more unstable on the EU approaches of the other three parties comparing to the DTP/BDP. The intraparty groups played a major role in the enthusiastic pro-EU stance of the AKP during 2002-2004. This period was also the first years of the AKP government so that it had to prove

its loyalty to its main support groups which were the Anatolian Muslim businessmen class on the one side and the liberals on the other. Those groups were both in favor of the EU accession for the liberalization of economy so that a pro-EU policy could enable internal harmony of the intraparty groups which have different ideological backgrounds. The party identity was also effective on its pro-EU approach. The AKP had defined its ideological orientation as conservative in social terms and liberal in economic terms when it was established by the reformist wing of the FP. However, it was not accepted by the secularist circles, in particular, the military which was based on Kemalist ideology. Thus, there was an ideological conflict between the party and those circles. No matter how the AKP identified itself, the Kemalist elite and military tended to view it as a party which was in fact against the secular understanding of the Kemalist regime having a secret agenda. In this regard, the commitment of the party to realize reforms can also be considered as an attempt to legitimize its identity as a party which had no connection with the Nationalist Outlook Movement or the political Islamist groups and parties in Turkey.

During the period of 2004-2006, the intraparty groups and party identity were once more effective on the AKP's taking a pro-EU stance contrary to the CHP and MHP which were increasingly becoming skeptical. The party was aware of the fact that it could consolidate the support of its intraparty groups if it could start the accession talks with the EU since no party could have made such progress until then. It would also help the party enhance its support groups by attracting the other business circles like TÜSİAD which were traditionally much closer to the secularist Kemalist ideology than conservative Anatolian bourgeois. Additionally, the party would gain the support of media owned by rich businessmen so that it could take the advantage of mass communication tools to pull votes. The ideological factor was also important in this period because the party would be able to use the success of being the initiator of the accession negotiations with the EU against military tutelage. The EU accession was perceived as a national goal by the military which was considered as the continuation of the process of westernization started by Mustafa Kemal. By achieving that goal when the military was skeptical about the presence of a hidden anti-regime agenda of the party, the AKP would have the chance to justify itself against military in the public eye

as the civil authority working for national interests of the country despite the military's suspicion. Thus, the party put more emphasis on its success of starting negotiations instead of scrutinizing the negative aspects of the 17 December 2004 EU Council decisions on Turkey's accession or the customs union problem with Cyprus.

Nevertheless, after the freezing of eight negotiation chapters, the party could not completely deny the negative developments in the course of relations and adopted a less active EU policy. Carrying on its pro-EU approach in principle, the party shifted to a more stable mode in practice regarding the EU issue. It concentrated on other issues in domestic politics and the pace of integration slowed down. This change in the EU stance of the party was not affected by the intraparty groups in this period since those groups were in favor of finalizing the negotiations as fast as possible. However, it can be argued that the party acted in line with the conservative elements of its ideology coming from political Islamist background which tend to see the EU as a Christian club discriminating against Turkey for its religion.

After the 2002 EU Council, the CHP had an overall positive EU stance and supported the reform process ardently. In this sense, during 2002-2004 there was no considerable effect of intraparty groups in its motivated pro-EU stance because although those groups sometimes struggled for party leadership, they were relatively homogeneous in terms of their perception of Turkey's EU cause. The group of Kemalist intelligentsia and the group of secularist big city based capital owners in the CHP were traditionally pro-EU. Moreover, they used to be the pioneers of western oriented modernization in Turkey so that they had no conflicting past with the common values of western civilization like the AKP. On the other side, it is possible to mention the effect of the party identity in terms of its ideology because the party acted in accordance with its ideological principles. The CHP always interpreted the EU accession as a social change project which could help the development of Turkey as a modern country and place it among strong western states. Hence, the pro-EU stance of the party overlapped with its ideological interests.

However, after the December 2004 EU Council, the intraparty dynamics and party identity affected the party to take a more skeptical EU stance as a result of the

changing circumstances in the EU-Turkey relations. As explained in detail in Chapter 2, Cyprus conflict became a potential threat in the EU-Turkey relations since it was accepted as a new member of the EU. Additionally, the declared negotiation structure had several derogations indicating an erratic negotiation process which could eventually end up with the disapproval of Turkey's full membership unless it was ratified in the parliaments of the member states. It caused the rise of nationalist sentiments among the party groups perceiving those developments as a threat to national interests in Cyprus issue and concerned about the reluctant attitude of the EU towards Turkey's accession especially after the leaders of right wing parties opposing Turkey's full membership came to power. The party identity was also effective on the skeptical turn of the CHP's EU approach since those circumstances provoked the nationalist and statist components of Kemalist ideology which brought the national interests to the foreground rather than the issues of low politics.

After the December 2006 EU Council, the CHP's degree of motivation concerning the EU issue decreased rapidly and the party took a tougher tone in its criticisms of the EU's attitude and the AKP's EU policy in return. The party cadres which took a nationalist approach as a response to the deadlock in relations became less optimistic about Turkey's membership. Their interest was diverted away from the EU-Turkey relations since they focused on domestic politics as the AKP and the EU issue was more likely to be a tool for competition with the government. Particularly until 2010, the party had a highly skeptical EU approach under the leadership of Deniz Baykal because his staff was comprised of more nationalist and statist wing of the party. The dominance of nationalist views was so prominent that the party experienced some problems with its membership to the Socialist International as well as the Party of European Socialists. There was a little stimulation after Kılıçdaroğlu assumed office as the elements of social democracy became more prominent. The party revised its EU discourse during the 2011 election campaigns and took a motivated EU stance in theory. However, no real policy achievement in practice was observed until the end of 2011 since no new negotiation chapter was opened after June 2010. From the ideological perspective, the nationalist and statist ones out of the CHP's six arrows representing Kemalist principles were quite effective on the party's EU approach.

As a nationalist party which had ideological motives rooted in the doctrine of Turkish-Islamic synthesis, the MHP's relatively pro-EU stance during 2002-2004 was quite irrelevant to the intraparty dynamics and party identity. Neither the groups within the party nor its self-identification with nationalist values is sufficient to explain its soft-skeptical pro-EU approach because strong nationalism and supra-nationalism represented by the EU were difficult to reconcile in essence. The only premise of the party for its pro-EU stance was its understanding of strong state since the EU accession was accepted as a state policy by the party and it should have been supported for this reason. Thus, as mentioned in Chapter 3, electoral behavior can be accounted for the only driving force of the party's EU stance at that time.

The intraparty dynamics and party identity caused a shift towards a more skeptical EU approach with the help of the developments in relations after the 17 December 2004 EU Council which put forward Turkey's national interests, especially in the context of Cyprus issue. The intraparty groups which allowed a pro-EU attitude to the extent that it would not risk the national interests took a critical approach that had an effect on the negative shift of the party. The party ideology was always critical to the EU and more inclined to cooperate with the Turkic republics in Central Asia for such a union as it saw them one nation. In that sense, party identity also had an impact of the change in the party's EU stance.

Due to the deadlock in the negotiation process after the freezing of chapters in the EU Council of December 2006, the MHP became even more critical regarding the EU accession. This time intraparty dynamics did not affect its EU policy stance because they were in consensus with the party's already critical EU approach. However, the party identity can be considered as an effective factor in its shift towards a highly skeptical EU approach because such an approach would consolidate its coherence with its ideology and legitimize it to its party base. As mentioned in Chapter 2, in the period of 2006-2011 the party defined Turkey's EU accession cause as "imaginary" and resembled the EU conditionality to "resurrection of Sevres". Those statements were entirely compatible with the party ideology which is based on the protection of national interests.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has investigated the attitudes of Turkish political parties towards Turkey's accession to the European Union after the 2002 parliamentary elections. Thus, the structure of the study has been based on two research questions. The first question has asked whether the major political parties in Turkey had a consistent EU policy. In conjunction with the answer of the first question, the second question has asked why political parties changed their EU policy stances unless they had coherent EU policies. Accordingly, the EU policies of the four major political parties, which received the largest number of votes since the 2002 elections, have been analyzed.

The research design set out with the goal of answering the research questions one after the other as they had a cause and effect relation. In order to achieve this goal, the thesis went through two main stages. The first stage explored the EU approaches of the four political parties during 2002-2011 by integrating multiple sources. Having the first question answered by the findings of this research which revealed that the EU policies of those parties did not follow a consistent line regarding the time period in question, the turning points in the EU-Turkey relations leading to a policy change in the EU approaches of the parties were depicted as the cases for analysis made in the second stage.

Furthermore, the thesis switched to the second stage which aimed at answering the second question asking the reasons of change in the attitudes of the Turkish political parties towards the EU. To proceed in this stage, the analytical tools of rational choice theory and the feasibility of its application to different political settings were utilized. Yet, the change in the EU stances of the parties was explained with the change in their cost-benefit calculation while making their policy decisions. Put another way, the factors having the biggest impact on the interest perceptions of the parties which would cause a shift in their EU stances were attempted to be distinguished. Thus, the thesis was organized into four chapters, each serving for a different function in order to go through the above mentioned two stages.

The first chapter set the theoretical grounds and formulated the entire research in accordance. It made an overview of the various subjects of the political party studies by making an introduction to the basic definitions, terms and concepts of parties such as their types, functions, leaders, voters, and organizations. Then, it referred to the evolution of political party studies over the last decades and put forward the methodological complication of studying parties as a result of their changing nature and complex structures as well as the lack of well-established party theories which could cope with those problems.

Hence, the second half of the chapter suggested rational choice theory as the theoretical basis to handle the research subject of the thesis. Due to this cause, the economic roots of the theory and its transfer to political science by political scientists after the mid-20th century, its core elements and assumptions were explained. The chapter proceeded with the implications of rational choice theory in international relations and political science disciplines. It touched upon some of the main application areas of the theory in political science. However, the application of rational choice theory to voting behavior was not examined in this chapter since the second chapter dealt with it while analyzing electoral behavior. Moreover, the chapter looked into the strengths and weaknesses of rational choice theory. Lastly, the chapter justified the application of rational choice in this thesis in three steps: First, it explored the methods of other studies in the literature which attempted to combine the research on the EU with research on political parties. Second, it examined the implication of the theory to political parties, and finally, it articulated the application of the theory to the analysis of the attitudes of Turkish political parties towards the EU issue.

The second chapter concentrated on the disclosure of the EU stances of the four parties in 2002-2011. The main research of the thesis was done in this chapter. Data collection took place in five phases. The first phase dealt with scholarly work on the EU perspectives of the parties. The second phase went through the party programs and evaluated their references to the EU and Turkey's EU accession. Third phase scrutinized the self-positioning of each party regarding the EU issue by skimming through the party publications, election bulletins, press conferences, public meetings

and party group speeches in the parliament which provided a comprehensive database of primary sources. In the fourth phase, in depth interviews were held with one of the deputies of each party who was prominent in his party's EU affairs. They were used as complementary data sources to party publications for analyzing the EU discourse of the parties. In the fifth phase, another complementary data source was obtained by conducting a survey in the TGNA with the deputies of the parliamentary term of 2007-2011. All data collected in those five phases contributed to the objectivity of the thesis as it offered diverse source of information to analyze the parties' EU stances.

In the light of acquired findings, the chapter answered the first research question of the thesis. In this regard, it found out that the AKP, CHP and MHP were not consistent in their EU stances; whereas the DTP/BDP followed a stable EU policy during the given time interval. It also identified the cases when those three parties changed their EU approaches which were required to analyze the driving forces behind the making of the parties' EU policies. Thus, the chapter detected three cases of policy change: The periods of 2002-2004, 2004-2006 and 2006-2011.

Once the first question was answered, the thesis made an interest-based assumption by employing rational choice to answer the second question. It investigated the factors affecting the cost-benefit analysis of the parties in the rest of the thesis in order to analyze the change in their EU stances.

Consequently, the third chapter was dedicated to the investigation of the interaction between the electoral behavior and the EU stances of the political parties. To understand the effect of electoral choice on the party behavior, first the chapter scrutinized the implication of rational choice to the party-electorate relation. For this reason, it explained the rational voter concept to look at the decision making of an individual while voting for a party. Then, it showed the motives behind collective action in terms of voting process. Furthermore, aggregation of preferences was illustrated by spatial voting and median voter models to show the method of rational choice to deal with voter-party and voter-politician relations. Additionally, the role of information in party-voter relations was mentioned. In the second part of the chapter, the partisan affiliations of Turkish voters were briefly examined to give an overview about the

factors affecting their electoral policy preferences. The third part of the chapter gave an overall picture of the elections in Turkey by assessing the 2002, 2007 and 2011 general elections as well as the 2004 and 2009 local elections and drew some conclusions from the results of the 2011 elections by determining the main issues which would remain on Turkish political agenda in the medium-run. Finally, the chapter made a comparative analysis of the attitudes of Turkish electorate and political parties towards the EU after the 2002 elections to analyze the effect of electoral behavior as a significant factor on the EU approaches of political parties in Turkey.

After the party-voter relation was strongly highlighted in the context of the parties' making their EU policy decisions in the third chapter, the fourth chapter discussed the impact of intraparty dynamics which mainly referred to the interests of the political groups within the party and the party identity which referred to the ideological interests and the party history as the other independent variables which caused a change in the EU stances of the parties. Those factors played an important role as well by determining the limits of the party in policy-making because they were aware of the fact that voters chose them for their identity. Thus, they had to be accountable to their electoral base in order to survive in the next elections while doing as much as they could to pull more votes by taking the electoral sensibilities into consideration. Therefore, the chapter explained the ideological and structural roots of each party through an historical overview. Eventually, the chapter analyzed how intraparty dynamics and party identity contributed shaping the EU stances of those political parties by going through each case for each party.

After giving an overview of the aim and structure, it is possible to discuss the conclusions of the thesis. Departing from the research questions asked at the beginning, the thesis used rational choice method and developed the hypothesis which assumed that Turkish political parties acted rationally, that is, they shaped their EU policies by making cost-benefit calculations during 2002-2011. The following table summarizes all the findings of this research so that it is going to be explained in detail to draw the conclusions of the study.

Table 4.3 assumes a correlation between the cost-benefit calculations of the political parties and change in their EU approaches. In order to find out how cost-benefit calculation affects the party behavior, three factors are determined. Each of the numbers 1, 2 and 3 in the table represents one of the most significant factors affecting the cost-benefit calculations of the parties which cause them act in that certain way. It shows which factor/factors is/are determinative for the policy change in each of the three cases.

Table 4.3: Factors Affecting the Attitudes of the Political Parties towards the EU during 2002-2011

	CASES		AKP	CHP	MHP	DTP/ BDP
First Governmental Term of the AKP (2002-2007)	Case 1	Period of 2002-2004	1, 2, 3	1, 3	1	2, 3
	Case 2	Period of 2004-2006	1, 2, 3	2, 3	1, 2, 3	2, 3
Second Governmental Term of the AKP (2007-2011)	Case 3	Period of 2006-2011	1, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 3	2, 3

1 = electoral behavior

2 = intraparty dynamics/political groups

3 = party identity (mostly ideology and party history)

As rational choice theory puts forward, the margins of a party's policy are designated by the electorate in a democracy because a party cannot survive within its political system if it does not, at least to a certain extent, achieve to get the electoral support. Thus, the impact of electoral support is shown with "1" in the table.

Nevertheless, parties have also other limits while making their policy decisions. In this regard, the number "2" in the table represents party dynamics mainly

concerning the political groups which play role in the founding and maintenance of the party in various ways ranging from helping the party organization or party propaganda to funding it.

The number “3” in the table represents the party identity which includes other significant factors that might also have an effect on the policy stances of the parties. The party ideology could be considered as the main element forming the party identity. Although the electoral support and party dynamics affect the party positioning regarding certain issues, parties cannot move beyond the limits of their party identity because they have to keep the party differential which was mentioned while explaining the use of rational choice theory in political party studies. Accordingly, a party loses its electoral support, which, in turn, risks its survival in the system when its policies become indifferent from another party. Then, a party convergence or dissolution might be expected. In this sense, ideology determines the boundaries within which a party acts without losing its authenticity for the voters.

The selection of the incidents forming the cases shown in Table 4.3 to examine the EU policies of the parties was made by questioning whether there was a policy change in the attitudes of parties towards the EU after that incident or not. All the party documents including election campaigns, party manifestos, and group meetings in the parliament indicate that those cases constituted some kind of shift in the EU policy discourses of the parties. Taking the period of 2002-2011 into account, three major events are observed that caused parties to re-make their cost-benefit calculations, thus, led changes in the EU discourses of the parties. Below, these cases are concisely explained. The rest of the time, there were some minor incidents which can be neglected since they did not cause a distinctive change in the EU policies of the parties. After the freezing of negotiation chapters (case 3), the parties mostly preserved the positions they took towards the EU accession. Therefore, it can be said that the 2007-2011 election period is relatively stable in terms of the EU policies of the parties as a result of no change in the balance of their cost-benefit calculations.

12-13 December 2002 EU Council’s decisions on Turkey were taken as the first case of the thesis since a change in the EU stances of the parties was observed in

the aftermath of this meeting. After acquiring the candidate status in Helsinki Summit in 1999, Turkey was very much hoping to start the accession talks with the EU just as every former candidate country did. Nevertheless, it did not happen in the Copenhagen Summit of 2002 even three years after Helsinki. In this Summit, although the EU appreciated Turkey for its progress, it did not find the country sufficient to start the accession talks stressing the need for the fulfillment of all political criteria of 1993 Copenhagen Summit. The Council, however, stated that the EU would start the accession talks *without delay* on the basis of a report and a recommendation from the Commission if Turkey could fulfill the political criteria until the EU Council in December 2004. On the other hand, in this Summit the EU declared that it would include Cyprus by May 1, 2004 together with other candidates which concluded the accession talks although it stated its wish for the peaceful solution of Cyprus conflict before its accession to the Union.⁶³¹ Those developments had repercussions in the EU policies of Turkish political parties.

Turkey has gone through rapid reforms during 2002-2004 in terms of its adjustment with the EU *acquis communautaire*. The success of this accelerated reform process can be addressed to the political parties, in particular, the cooperation of the incumbent AKP government and the main opposition party, the CHP, which operated in harmony to launch the necessary legislative reform packages one by one. The carrot of starting the accession negotiations was perceived as the main reason behind the motivation of political parties to increase the pace of integration. In addition, efforts were made for the settlement of the Cyprus dispute with the mediation of the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

After the party documents and other EU-related sources of the parties were scrutinized for this research, it was noticed that the period of 2002-2004 is the only time when all of the four parties agreed on making reforms in order to speed up the

⁶³¹ Council of the European Union, **Copenhagen European Council 12-13 December 2002 Presidency Conclusions**, 15917/02, Brussels, 29 January 2003, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/73842.pdf accessed on 30.03.2012

integration process with the EU.⁶³² Even the MHP, being the most nationalist party among those four parties, was motivated with the goal of the EU accession comparing to later years. Hence, Table 4.3 takes the December 2002 EU Council as the starting point of the Case 1 which led to a positive policy change towards the EU and analyzes the factors behind each party's motivation to support the EU accession.

The second case of change in the parties' attitudes towards the EU occurred after the 17 December 2004 EU Council. The European Council of 17 December 2004 decided to open accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005. That was one of the turning points in the EU-Turkey relations because Turkey could finally receive a date for negotiations, a decision Turkey was awaiting since it gained the candidate status in 1999. Nevertheless, this decision was not an unconditional one, either. When read carefully, it had many implications regarding Turkey's national interests, which would have an impact on Turkish public so as the EU policies of Turkish political parties.

17 December 2004 Council was taken as the end of Case 1 and the start of Case 2 for analyzing the EU policies of the parties because a visible policy shift was observed in political parties after this Council due to the change in cost-benefit perceptions of the parties. The carrot of EU membership has become more costly after this Summit despite getting a date for the negotiations was a milestone in Turkey-EU relations.

Evaluating the 2004 Progress Report of the Commission on Turkey, the European Council appreciated Turkey's decisive progress on the way to EU membership. Beside this positive development, however, the Union also imposed several conditions on Turkey's accession regarding some issues of legislation about the New Penal Code and Law on Associations or issues such as zero-tolerance for torture and ill-treatment.⁶³³ However, there were more critical conditions which raised concerns

⁶³² An analysis of the EU approaches of these four political parties between 2002 and 2004 can also be seen in Onur Bilge Kula, **Türkiye'deki Siyasi Partilerin Avrupa Politikaları**, İstanbul: SODEV Yayınları, October 2004

⁶³³ Annabelle Littoz-Monnet and Beatriz Villanueva Penas, **Turkey and the European Union: The Implications of a Specific Enlargement**
<http://aei.pitt.edu/9307/1/050404Turquie-ALM-BVP.pdf>

both in Turkish public and political parties. The decision declared that negotiation process could involve long transition periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safeguard measures for areas such as freedom of movement of persons, structural policies or agriculture. Moreover, it reserved the right for the Union to suspend the negotiations by a qualified majority vote in the case of a violation of its founding principles such as democracy and human rights. On top of this, the EU defined negotiations as “open-ended” in terms of the guarantee of membership.⁶³⁴ There was also the problem of Turkey’s de facto recognition of Cyprus since Turkey would be expected to extend the Additional Protocol to new members.

These developments caused the parties reconsider their EU stances since supporting the negotiation process became more costly. There was a possibility that Turkey could have struggled for the adoption and implementation of tones of reforms in exchange for no full membership at the end. On the other side, Cyprus had already become a member without any settlement to the conflict between Turkish and Greek Cypriots. As a matter of fact, a common dissatisfaction with the December 2004 EU Council decisions started to dominate general political atmosphere.

The third and the final case of change in the EU approaches of the political parties was the period which started after 11 December 2006 EU Council. In December 2006, despite welcoming the progress made, the Council stated its regrets for the decrease in pace of reforms and stressed the requirement of further significant efforts to strengthen freedom of expression, freedom of religion, women's rights, minority rights, trade union rights and civilian control of the military. In terms of good neighborly relations, it emphasized on the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter suggesting the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, if necessary.⁶³⁵ Furthermore, the Council decided to freeze eight negotiation chapters associated with customs union such as free movement of goods, transport policy,

accessed on 30.03.2012

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ Council of the European Union, Press Release, 2770th Council Meeting, General Affairs and External Relations, General Affairs, 16289/06 (Presse 352), Brussels, 11 December 2006, p. 2 and pp. 9-10 http://ec.europa.eu/echo/civil_protection/civil/prote/pdfdocs/gaerc_11_december.pdf accessed on 30.03.2012

customs union and external relations due to the Turkish failure to apply the Additional Protocol to Cyprus and not to close other chapters until Turkey has fulfilled its commitment. Those outcomes of the Council were challenging the national interests.

Thus, the December 2006 Council undermined the process of accession talks by the suspension of those chapters making it harder to go on for Turkey. This caused more skepticism in Turkish public and among political parties for Turkey's expected membership. It let dominate the idea that Turkey would not become a member in the near future. In this respect, the parties once more had to calculate their costs and benefits in the EU issue.

Since the determination of cases have been explained, it is possible to elaborate on which factors determined the shift in the EU approaches of the parties in those three cases. After the December 2002 EU Council, an overall positive attitude was taken by the political parties towards the EU accession. The parties explicitly supported the reforms for the adoption of *acquis* and expressed their desire to realize all the required reforms in order to join the EU. Eight legislative reform packages were launched during that period which made it the most intensive reform process regarding Turkey's EU cause. This positive policy shift was an outcome of a different cost-benefit calculation for each party.

The AKP, being the incumbent government, was the most enthusiastic party in terms of speeding up the reforms. It can be argued that all three factors affected the AKP for its enthusiasm in its EU policy that helped accelerate the reforms. Given that the support of Turkish public for the EU was at its peak, the party aimed at increasing its vote share by putting effort on the harmonization with the *acquis*. Second, the AKP did not have a homogenous structure in terms of the political groups forming it. It had to sustain its internal cohesion by gaining the support of different political groups within the party, in particular, the liberal ones who are not associated with Islamist background, deputies like Erkan Mumcu, Ertuğrul Günay. Third factor also played role in the AKP's EU policy during 2002-2004 because it was the time the party was blamed by some parts of the society and some political actors for having a secret Islamist agenda especially referring to the Nationalist Outlook background of some foremost

AKP deputies although the party consistently denied any connection with Nationalist Outlook community. There was an ideological clash between the party and military since the AKP was against military tutelage. It tried to legitimize its party image as conservative in societal terms and liberal in economic terms in the eyes of Kemalist surroundings.

The CHP was very motivated for making reforms required to fulfill the Copenhagen political criteria, too. In the CHP's case, the driving forces of its pro-EU approach were the factors 1 and 3. It aimed to increase its vote share due to the high public support for the EU accession. Furthermore, taking a pro-EU approach was in accordance with its ideology since the CHP always identified itself with the western values as well as initiator of the EU accession process. However, the party dynamics was not so relevant for the CHP's motivation because nearly every group within the party had a similar western oriented mind-set. In that sense, it might be argued that the CHP had a relatively homogenous structure in terms of the EU approaches of the political groups forming the party.

The MHP was no exception to the overall positive atmosphere regarding the EU. The party supported the EU membership and required reforms even at the expense of its ideology. It aimed at increasing its vote share just as the AKP and CHP did due to the fact that the public support for the EU was at its peak. On the other hand, intraparty dynamics and ideology (2 and 3) were irrelevant for the EU policy of the MHP since such pro-EU approach contradicted with political groups within the party and clashed with its ideology. Creating a union of Turks rather than joining a union of European countries was much more appreciated by the political groups supporting the MHP. Nevertheless, the benefit of increasing its vote share overcame the cost of making concessions from its political groups and ideology.

The DTP's positive EU approach during that time is more likely to be explained by the intraparty dynamics and ideological interests rather than gaining electoral support because as an ethnically-oriented party whose electoral base's voting motivation mainly rests on the solution of the Kurdish question, its voters, to a large extent, would not be affected by its approach towards the EU. Apart from this, its pro-

EU stance was very much in accord with the political groups supporting the party because the significant share of those groups were consisted of the municipalities in East and Southeast Anatolia which would gain the opportunity to receive EU funds when Turkey entered the EU. The DTP's pro-EU stance entirely fit its ideological interests, too. Since the party's main ideological concern was the minority rights issue, particularly the solution of Kurdish problem, Turkey's EU cause was parallel to its demand for democratization in Turkey. The reforms made for the EU accession were expected to improve the democratic rights and freedoms in Turkey including minority rights.

After the December 2004 EU Council, the AKP still had an enthusiastic EU policy although the Council included several problematic points for Turkey together with its decision to open negotiations in 2005. The party acted rationally since three driving forces were effective in its policy stance. First, it attempted increase its vote share by taking the advantage of initiating the negotiation process. That also explains its exaggerated celebration of the opening of negotiations with fireworks in the daytime which was firmly criticized by opposition parties. Second, such progress in the EU accession process caused great satisfaction among the business circles. The liberal businessmen groups such as TÜSİAD; the conservative Anatolian bourgeois such as MÜSİAD and the media trusts were all in favor of Turkey's EU membership because it would lift the trade barriers with European countries and liberalize the economy. Moreover, the AKP was ideologically motivated for its pro-EU approach since it helped gain an advantageous position against military tutelage.

The CHP, however, took a more critical approach after the December 2004 Council and espoused the concept of "honorable membership". In its policy shift, gaining electoral support did not play a significant role because it could not take the advantage of being the initiator of the negotiation process although it played considerable role during the reform period of 2002-2004. On the other side, the failure of solving Cyprus problem and the inclusion of Cyprus into the Union regardless of this fact created a nationalist orientation in the groups within the party so that it motivated the CHP for a more skeptical attitude towards the EU. Ideologically, this policy shift

was also favorable. Nationalist and statist elements of the Kemalist ideology became dominant over the social democratic approach to the EU as a response to the Cyprus dispute and the party was concentrated more on the protection of national interests, in other words, the costs of accession than benefits of accession like improving liberal rights and freedoms and other democratic values.

Likewise, the MHP also took a more critical approach in terms of its EU policy. In its policy shift, all the three factors were effective. The first factor was relevant because it aimed to increase its vote share by taking the advantage of the frustration in Turkish public regarding the Cyprus issue. The second was relevant because the political groups which support the MHP have always been euro-skeptic. Some, even if not all, would be more pleased to join a possible union of Turkic origin states (Turan) rather than joining the EU. When it is considered that those groups are relatively homogenous in terms of their agreement on the supremacy of the Turkish state and the national interests over all other interests, the conditions imposed by the Union in December 2004 Council tended to be perceived as a threat against national interests among those groups. The third factor was also relevant because the MHP's ideology had always taken a critical approach to the EU accession.

The DTP was still enthusiastic in terms of its EU policy and it was the only party in which no considerable policy shift was observed after the 2004 Council because there had been no change in its cost-benefit calculations. The party was pleased with the fact that Turkey started the accession negotiations and since it had never supported the traditional state policy in Cyprus issue, it did not view the developments related Cyprus as negative. Hence, second and third factors being its driving forces, the party maintained its EU policy constantly. Although the whole available party documents covering post-December 2004 Council era were thoroughly examined in this research, no significant reference to the EU issue was detected.

The AKP started to lose its motivation after the December 2006 EU Council because the decision of freezing eight negotiation chapters meant a serious interruption in the accession process causing a disappointment and loss of membership hopes in Turkish public. This was reflected on the AKP's EU policy by changing it from

enthusiastically motivated to less motivated. The party distanced its stance from the EU on the basis of the decline of support in electorate towards the EU. The role of political groups within the party in this policy shift was irrelevant because there was no pressure from any group to alter its EU approach negatively. Ideological factor can be counted as a relevant factor since its low motivation concerning the EU was in accord with its conservative ideology.

The CHP increased the dose of its skepticism after the EU blocked those negotiation chapters. The rise of nationalist sentiments in electorate oriented the CHP towards a more critical EU approach to increase its vote share especially in the upcoming elections. The ruling cadres of the party became already nationalistic after the accession of Cyprus which positioned the party in an anti-EU stance. Thus, the December 2006 Council only strengthened their anti-EU approach that made them effective on directing the party towards a more critical EU stance. Moreover, both ideology and party leadership were relevant factors affecting the critical stance of the party. The nationalist and statist elements of Kemalist ideology came to foreground which were strongly emphasized by the party chairman Deniz Baykal in his speeches.

The MHP turned into an almost entirely anti-EU party after the December 2006 Council due to the shifting attitude of the electorate towards the EU from positive to a negative one. The MHP intensified its skepticism. This skeptical stance was very much in accordance with the ideology of the party so that it offered the party a policy which could be easily legitimized. The second factor was irrelevant to determine the new policy stance because all political groups within the party have been traditionally skeptical towards the EU.

The BDP preserved its policy position concerning the EU issue because no significant change occurred in its cost-benefit calculation. It sustained its pro-EU stance mainly because of the second and third factors.

When the EU policies of the four political parties during the post-December 2006 period are investigated, no important change has been observed. By the year 2012, the parties sustain their EU stances as they were when the negotiations were suspended.

That is mostly related to the status quo in their interest perception as rational choice theory assumes. Put another way, those parties reached a policy equilibrium concerning the EU accession and no policy shift is expected until their interest perceptions change which, in turn, shift the equilibrium to a new point on the political spectrum.

This dissertation has reached the conclusion that the political parties in Turkey do not have consistent EU policies because their attitudes towards the EU were determined by their interest perceptions and electoral behavior, intraparty dynamics and party identity are the main factors affecting those interest perceptions. The parties act rationally by taking the appropriate stance which would maximize their benefits and minimize their costs so that they can survive and gain power within the political system.

The findings from this dissertation make several contributions to the current literature. First of all, it represents an original work with a comprehensive analysis of primary sources regarding political parties and the EU. Over seven hundred group meeting speeches given in the Turkish Parliament between the years 2002 and 2011 were examined thoroughly. Then the passages relevant to the topic of the EU were extracted and placed in the main text of the dissertation through either quotations or citations.

Another type of primary source enjoyed was the party publications. All printed party documents including the election bulletins and public meeting speeches published in the 2002-2011 period were scanned for their references to the EU issue. In this respect the study provides a unique source of materials for those who are willing to do further research on the same or a similar topic.

The empirical findings through a survey conducted in the Parliament and the in depth interviews with some deputies provide a new source of data for the researchers from both disciplines of EU studies and political science. These findings enhance our understanding of EU approaches of the political parties from their own perspective rather than the perceptions of their EU perspectives by others.

In reviewing the literature, no data was found on the association between rational choice theory and the EU policies of political parties. In this respect, this

research will serve as a base for future studies which employ rational choice theory for studying the EU stances of political parties. Although the importance of the EU-Turkey relations increases each day as an area of interest among political science scholars over the last decades parallel to the deepening of the integration, there is still little work in the literature which reviews the EU policies of the political parties in Turkey profoundly. There are a few recently published articles on the positions of Turkish political parties towards the EU. However those works either concentrate on the EU perspective of single party or they employ the theories of euro-skepticism and Europeanization in their articles to analyze the EU positioning of the parties. In contrary, this dissertation can be counted as an attempt to approach the subject from the perspective of political parties. Therefore, it does not concern with defining how parties interpret Turkey's EU process by employing concepts like euro-skepticism which deal with the identification of the party positions towards the EU. This study is rather concerned with understanding why Turkish parties choose those policy stances.

Apart from these, the current findings add to a growing body of literature on the political parties' self-positioning of their EU perspectives. This study suggests a research opportunity for a comparative study of Turkish political parties with parties of other countries. It also makes a noteworthy contribution to the literature by applying rational choice model to the study of EU policies of political parties. Yet, this research will serve as a base for future studies.

Some limitations to this dissertation need to be acknowledged as well. The most important limitation lies in the fact that this study handles the party publications to analyze the EU discourses of parties on paper and in the words of party members. However, it does not cover the entire work done in practice by the parties regarding their EU perspectives. In this context, further research might explore the policy practices, initiatives and projects conducted by parties in terms of the EU issue.

Another limitation is that due to the constraint of time and scope, the study does not compare the findings of the research with other countries and other policy areas than the EU which would proof-check the findings of Turkish case and would provide us with a more general opinion on the issue. A comparative study of two or

more countries can help confirm whether the findings can change in another country and if it is so, it can give us the possibility to analyze which factors affect the results. In the meantime, a comparative study of other policy areas can show us the difference of the EU policy-making process from other policy-making processes.

Finally, the theoretical framework of the current study was limited by the rational choice model. However, just like every theory in social sciences, rational choice theory has its own limitations although it is chosen for it is considered to explain the subject better than others. Those limitations have been mentioned in the first chapter with the critiques of the theory. There are other theories which might also be applied to this subject such as the institutional approach although it is thought to be less suitable for the case of Turkey.

This dissertation was an initial attempt to view the EU issue in political party studies instead of vice versa. The findings of this study have a number of important implications for future practice so that future studies on the current topic are highly recommended. A further study with more focus on other countries as well as other policies is therefore suggested for researchers who are interested in working on this subject.

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Akın Birdal, The BDP Diyarbakır Deputy, Turkish Grand National Assembly, 15 December 2011

Mithat Melen, The MHP İstanbul Deputy, Turkish Grand National Assembly, 15 December 2011

Onur Öymen, The CHP Bursa Deputy, Turkish Grand National Assembly, 16 December 2011

Taha Aksoy, The AKP İzmir Deputy, Turkish Grand National Assembly, 16 December 2011

Yaşar Yakış, The AKP Düzce Deputy, Turkish Grand National Assembly, 17 December 2011

ANNEX I: Original Version of the Questionnaire

Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları seçmek istediğiniz şıkkı yuvarlak içine alarak cevaplayınız.

Hangi partiden milletvekilisiniz?					
a- AKP	b- BDP	c- CHP	d- MHP	e- DSP	f- Bağımsız
Cinsiyetiniz nedir?					
a- Erkek	b- Kadın				
Eğitim durumunuz nedir?					
a- İlkokul mezunu	b- Ortaokul mezunu		c- Lise mezunu		
d- Üniversite mezunu	e- Yüksek lisans		f- Doktora mezunu		

1- Size göre partinizin AB ile ilgili genel politikasını aşağıdaki yaklaşımlardan hangisi en iyi anlatıyor?

- a- Tamamen AB yanlısı
c- Büyük ölçüde AB yanlısı
b- Büyük ölçüde AB'ye karşı
d- Tamamen AB'ye karşı

2-Türkiye'nin AB süreci için siz kendinizi aşağıdaki yaklaşımlardan hangisine yakın hissediyorsunuz?

- a- Tamamen AB yanlısı
c- Büyük ölçüde AB yanlısı
b- Büyük ölçüde AB'ye karşı
d- Tamamen AB'ye karşı

3-Sizce 2002 seçimlerinden bu yana Türkiye AB yolunda ne kadar ilerledi?

- a- Hiç ilerlemedi.
c- Yeteri kadar ilerledi.
b- Biraz ilerledi.
d- Beklentinin üstünde ilerledi.

4-Sizce partinizin ideolojisi ile uyguladığı AB politikası örtüşüyor mu?

- a-Hiç örtüşmüyor.
c-Büyük ölçüde örtüşüyor.
b- Biraz örtüşüyor.
d- Tamamen örtüşüyor.

5- Özellikle Gümrük Birliği açısından bakılınca sizce Türkiye'nin AB üyelik süreci Türkiye'nin ekonomik durumunu nasıl etkilemiştir?

- a- Tamamen olumsuz etkilemiştir.
b- Olumlu olmakla beraber daha çok olumsuz etkilemiştir.
c- Olumsuz olmakla beraber daha çok olumlu etkilemiştir.
d- Olumlu etkilemiştir.

6- AB yolunda yapılan reformlar Türkiye'de demokratikleşme sürecini nasıl etkilemiştir?

a- Katkıda bulunmuştur. b-Katkıda bulunmamıştır. c- İlgisi yoktur..

7- Türkiye'nin Cumhuriyetin yüzüncü yılı 2023'e kadar AB'ye gireceğine inanıyor musunuz?

a- Evet. b- Hayır. c- Kararsızım.

ANNEX II: English Version of the Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions by putting a mark on your choice.

Which one is your party?					
a- AKP	b- BDP	c- CHP	d- MHP	e- DSP	f- Independent
What is your gender?					
a- Male	b- Female				
What is your educational status?					
a- Finished primary school	b- Finished secondary school	c- Finished high school			
d- Bachelor	e- Master	f- Ph.D			

1- Which one of the followings explains your party's EU approach?

- a- Totally pro-EU
b- Mostly against the EU
c- Mostly pro-EU
d- Totally against the EU

2- Which one of the followings explains your opinion on Turkey's EU process?

- a- Totally pro-EU
b- Mostly against the EU
c- Mostly pro-EU
d- Totally against the EU

3- In your opinion, how much progress did Turkey make on the way of EU accession since 2002?

- a- No progress was made.
b- Little progress was made.
c- Sufficient progress was made.
d- Progress beyond the expectations was made.

4- Do you think that your party's ideology corresponds to its EU policy?

- a- It doesn't correspond.
b- It corresponds little.
c- To a large extent corresponds.
d- Fully corresponds.

5- How do you think Turkey's EU process affected Turkish economy particularly in conjunction with the Customs Union?

- a- It affected negatively.
b- Despite some positive sides, it affected mostly in a negative way.
c- Despite some negative sides, it affected mostly in a positive way.
d- It affected positively.

6- How did the reforms made during the EU process affect Turkey's democratization process?

- a- They contributed democratization.
- b- They didn't contribute democratization.
- c- There is no correlation between the reforms and democratization.

7- Do you believe that Turkey will be a member of the EU by the year 2023, the centenary of the Republic?

b- Yes.

b- No.

c- I am not sure.

ANNEX III: Audio Transcriptions of the Interviews Held in the TGNA

1- Interview with the AKP Deputy Taha Aksoy

H. Alagöz: Öncelikle eğitim durumunuzdan başlamak istiyorum. Eğitim durumunuz nedir?

T. Aksoy: Ben inşaat yüksek mühendisiyim. Yani yüksek lisansım var. Doktoraya başladım ancak bitiremedim, iş hayatına atıldığım için kısmet olmadı.

H. Alagöz: Benim doktora tezimin konusu Türkiye'deki siyasi partilerin AB'ye bakışı. Dolayısıyla özellikle sizi ziyaret ediyorum çünkü komisyon üyesisiniz, bu konuda çok daha bilgilisiniz. Ayrıca AKP milletvekilisiniz. Dolayısıyla sizin hem kişisel hem de parti düzeyinde görüşlerinizi almak istiyorum.

T. Aksoy: Şimdi AKP ve benim görüşlerim arasında uyum olduğu için zaten ben AKP'deyim. Ama ayrıntıya girdiğimde söyleyeceğim şeyler tamamen bana ait, onu bilmenizi istiyorum. Tabi partinin içinde olmak kişiliğini, kimliğini her şeyini dışarıda bırakmak manasına gelmiyor. Şimdi burada dinamik bir politika izlemek gerekiyor. Tamamen AB yanlısı olmak için şartların koşulların hiç değişmiyor olması, statik olması lazım. Böyle bir şey söz konusu değil. Ama bugün görebildiğimiz kadarıyla Türkiye kendisine çizdiği çizgi üzerinde kendini AB'de görüyor. Bu nedir? Bunu iki şeyle izah ediyorum ben. Birincisi, cumhuriyetin kuruluşunda Atatürk'ün söylediği muhasır medeniyetler seviyesi. Aksi düşünülemez. Yani sizin çağınız belli bir medeniyet ortalamasına veya o medeniyeti tanımlayan bir yaşam tarzına kavuşmuş ve siz kendinize vizyon olarak bunun gerisinde bir şey seçemezsiniz. Dolayısı ile bizim çağın getirdiği medeniyet standartları nelerse kendi değerlerimizden kendi inançlarımızdan fedakârlık etmeden ama uyumlaştırarak bununla barışık olmamız lazım. Ama oraya da gitmemiz lazım. Şimdi AB'ye baktığımızda AB'nin teorik algılamasında en önemli şeylerden biri barış. Yani AB sonradan ekonomik topluluk boyutunu aldı. Ama AB'nin çıkışı dünyada en fazla cinayetin işlendiği yer. İki dünya savaşına da ev sahipliği yapmış. Böyle garip bir şey. Onun için, Avrupalılar bunun daha fazla böyle gidemeyeceğine kanaat verdikleri için ekonomik toplum vesaire yoluyla buraya kadar geldiler. Dolayısı ile yine cumhuriyetin kurucusunun söylediği gibi yurttan

sulh, cihanda sulh ilkesini de gerekleřtirmek iin AB gzel bir Őey. Yani bunda rtyyoruz. İnsan haklarına saygılı, zel hayatın benimsendiėi, Őeffaflıėın saėlandıėı, adaletin stn tutulduėu bir topluluk. O halde biz onlarla beraber olmalıyız Őeklinde dřnlmesi bana gayet normal grnyor. Zaman zaman fikirlerimizde kaymalar meydana gelebilir ama temelde eėer AB kendi iinde ve kendi dıřında dnyada barıřı arzuluyorsa bunlar bizim hem bugnk hem de tarihten gelen deėerlerimiz ile uyuyuyor. Biz bunların bir blmn onlar kadar iyi gerekleřtiremediėimizin de farkındayız. Yani insan hakları bizim inancımızın gereėi olarak var olmalı. Ama biliyoruz ki on sene ncesine kadar faili mehuller, iřkenceler vesaire. Bunlardan kendi i dinamiklerimiz ile kurtulabiliyor muyuz? Hayır. Gemiřte yařadıėımız yanlıř olayların elimizi baėladıėı bir gerek. Dolayısı ile biz bunları yapamıyoruz. Ama bir ıkarımız olduėunda bunları gerekleřtirebiliyoruz. Bunu da grdk. Dolayısı ile AB projesi bizim iin son derece medeni bir projedir. Ve gerekleřtirilmesi gerekli bir projedir. Biz AB vizyonu ile mi dnyaya bakıyoruz? Hayır. Biz diyoruz ki Trkiye Cumhuriyeti hr ve baėımsız olsun. İindeki insanlar geleceėe gvenle baksın. Hepsi iyi de bunları gerekleřtirmede AB bize yardımcı olacak mı? Olacak. Bunu grdėmz anda biz Avrupa Birliėi'nin koridoruna girdik. Ama bu altmıř senedir byle. Burada tamamen AB yanlısı mıyım? AB kendi iinde deėiřim gsteriyor. AB'nin deėerlere dayalı olduėu syleniyor. Peki, o deėeler nerede? Bir cumhurbaşkanı ıkıyor diyor ki; Trkiye Avrupa'da deėil, onlar bizim yemiz olamazlar. Madem yle Kıbrıs nasıl AB'ye girebiliyor? Bu nasıl bir tarif? AB zaman zaman siyasi baskılarla deėerlerinden sapabiliyor. Bu yzden ben tamamen AB'den yanayım deyip orada kalmak olamaz.

H. Alagz: O zaman sonu olarak byk lde AB yanlısı diyebilir miyiz? Sizin kendi grřnzle de uyuyuyor.

T. Aksoy: Gayet tabii.

H. Alagz: 2002 seimlerinden bu yana sizce Trkiye AB yolunda ne kadar ilerledi?

“Hi ilerlemedi”, “biraz ilerledi”, “yeteri kadar ilerledi”, “beklentinin stnde ilerledi”?

T. Aksoy: Őimdi burada hibiri benim sylediėimi karřılamıyor. Ben size farklı bir Őey syleyeyim, nasıl not edersiniz bilmiyorum. Trkiye AB'nin beklentilerinin tesinde ilerledi. Sorun da o. Yani AB bazı nedenlerle Trkiye'nin yeliėini geciktirmek istiyor. Trkiye'nin mzakere srecindeki performansı ok iyi. CHP ve AKP'nin mřterek abası var. Hkmetin inanılmaz bir abası var. Trkiye bazı sorunlardan dolayı sıkıntı

yaşadı. AKP'nin kapatılma davası falan ama Türkiye öyle bir yüklendi ki bu işe AB Kıbrıs'tan dolayı fren koymak zorunda kaldı. Güney Kıbrıs Rum Kesiminin bazı fasılları engellemesine göz yumdu. AB istese göz yummazdı. Mesela bazı fasıllarda tarama raporu sonuçlarını vermiyorlar.

H. Alagöz: Şu dondurulmuş fasıllar için mi söylüyorsunuz?

T. Aksoy: Şimdi AB tarafından bizim engellenmemiz birkaç türlü oluyor. Bir tanesi Fransa'nın doğrudan doğruya bazı fasılların müzakeresine izin vermemesi. Böyle saçma sapan bir şey var. AB üyelerinin buna susmasını hayretle karşılıyoruz ve hayret ediyoruz. Susmamaları lazım.

H. Alagöz: Geçende bir açıklama vardı, İsveç ve birkaç ülkenin Türkiye'nin AB'ye üye olmasını desteklediğine dair.

T. Aksoy: Şimdi tamam ama o yanlı ülkelerden böyle bir blokaj geldiğinde destekleyen ülkeler, bizden yana olduğunu söyleyen ülkeler "Hayır, biz bunu imzalamıyoruz." deseler o durur. Yani Fransa'nın baskısı onları itiraz ettirmiyor. Biz bunu kabul edemiyoruz. Sonra Kıbrıs konusu falan diyorlar. Siz Kıbrıs sorununun diğer tarafı olan Kıbrıs'ı ve Yunanistan'ı aldınız, sorun bize gelince mi oluyor? Dolayısı ile bizim önümüzde açılacak yanılmıyorsam üç tane fasıl var.

H. Alagöz: Bir de bizi bu konuda sürekli Hırvatistan ile kıyaslıyorlar.

T. Aksoy: Hırvatistan'la kıyaslanamaz. Eş zamanlı olarak başladık ama kıyaslanamaz. Türkiye'nin ağırlığı, hem de AB'ye tam üye olduğunda oynayacağı rol çok farklı. Hırvatistan sıradan bir ülke olacak; biz girsek egemen güçlerden biri olacağız. Bizim üyeliğimiz ancak Almanya'nın ve Fransa'nın üyeliği ile karşılaştırılabilir. 70 milyonun AB içinde dolaşması ile Hırvatistan karşılaştırılmaz. Benim kısaca söylemek istediğim şu: Türkiye engellenmeseydi çok daha fazla ilerleyebilirdi. Ama yine de bu beni yeteri kadar tatmin etmiyor. 18 tane fasılımız açılmamış.

H. Alagöz: Sizce partinizin ideolojisi ile uyguladığı politika örtüşüyor mu?

T. Aksoy: Şimdi bizim partimize ideoloji partisi demek biraz yanlış olur. Partinin bir programı var, o program çerçevesinde bu işler yürüyor. Ama bizim hayata bakışımızla örtüşüyor. İnsanların daha özgür olduğu, siyasetin prangalarının olmadığı, insan haklarına saygılı bir toplumu biz istiyoruz. Ayrıca biz liberal demokrasiye inanıyoruz. Ayrıca bizim "sıfır sorun" diye barış politikamız var. AB onunla da oldukça örtüşüyor. O yüzden büyük ölçüde örtüşüyor.

H. Alagöz: Bir de Türkiye'nin Ortadoğu ile ilişkileri de AB'nin çekinceleri arasında. Yani bir kesim çekince olarak görüyor, bir kesim avantaj olarak görüyor. Siz nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

T. Aksoy: Şimdi AB'de de iki görüş var. Onlar diyorlar ki siz üye olursanız biz dünyanın en sorunlu bölgeleri olan Kafkaslar ve Ortadoğu ile komşu oluruz, bu kötüdür. Bir kısmı da diyor ki; sizin sayenizde biz de o bölgelerde etkin olabiliriz. Bu iki görüşte de haklılık payı olabilir ama biz diyoruz ki; size etkili bir ortak lazım. Siz ne yapacaksınız pısrık bir Türkiye'yi? Türkiye dünyanın her bölgesi ile ilişkilerini canlandıran bir ülke, bunu anlamaları lazım. Eninde sonunda da anlayacaklar. Böyle bir Türkiye sizin içinizde olsa size de faydası olacak. Ama şu an bizim bölgedeki barış politikamız AB'nin dış politikası ile örtüşüyor. Enerji politikamız örtüşüyor. Bir tek İran konusunda sıkıntı var, onu da anlattığımız zaman biz hiç böyle düşünmemiştik diyorlar. Yani İran'ı ite kaka nereye varacaksınız? İran sıradan bir ülke değil ki. İran ile konuşmayı deneyin, o kanalı da biz açık tutalım diyoruz. Biz İran'a nükleer tesis satan ülkelerin içinde değiliz. AB içinde bunu yapan birçok ülke var. Bunların hepsi biliniyor. Biz bu işten zarar göreceğimizin başında geliyoruz. Biz daha yakınız, bir sorun olursa kabak bizim başımıza patlayacak. Siz İran'a saldırırsanız o kabak da bizim başımıza patlayacak. Yani AB kimseye saldıramaz da eğer ABD saldırırsa Irak'taki gibi o kabak da bizim başımıza patlayacak. Bir daha patlasın istemiyoruz. Onun için de uğraşyoruz. O zaman İran'ı biz uluslararası toplumdan dışlamayalım, oturup konuşalım, müzakere edelim, bazı yaptırımlar ya da teşvikler uygulayalım. Ama çocuğunun ilacını alamayacak hale getirirsen halk o diktatörlere destek veriyor. İran halkı inanılmaz onurlu bir halktır.

H. Alagöz: Gümrük Birliği açısından baktığımızda Türkiye'nin AB'ye üyelik süreci Türkiye'nin ekonomik durumunu nasıl etkilemiştir?

T. Aksoy: Şimdi Gümrük Birliği Türkiye açısından son derece ödüllü bir anlaşmadır. Bazen insanlar buna sadece Türkiye'ye getirdiği yükümlülükler açısından bakıyorlar. O yanıltıcı oluyor. Ama Türkiye uluslararası piyasada rekabet gücüne Gümrük Birliği ile ulaşmıştır. Bu inkar edilemez bir gerçek. Ama bu anlaşma yapılırken ihmal edilen ya da gözden kaçan bazı yanlışlıklar var. Bunlardan en önemlisi serbest ticaret anlaşmalarıdır. Biz Gümrük Birliği ile Avrupa ülkelerinden gelebilecek üçüncü ülke mallarına

pazarımızı açıyoruz. Ama o üçüncü ülkeler pazarlarını bize açmıyorlar. Bu çok haksız bir uygulama.

H. Alagöz: Gümrük Birliği Anlaşması bunu da kapsamıyor mu?

T. Aksoy: Hayır. Üçüncü ülkelerle yapılan anlaşmalara Türkiye otomatikman giremiyor. Bizim benzerimiz yok. Yani AB'ye üye olmadan Gümrük Birliği'ne giren ülke olmadığı için örnek yok bizden başka. Uluslararası ilişkilerde karşılıklılık ilkesi var. Yani AB gidiyor bir yerle serbest ticaret anlaşması yapıyor. Gümrük Birliği dolayısı ile bizimle de serbest ticareti var. Bu sayede üçüncü ülkelerden AB üzerinden mallar bize giriyor ama bizim mallarımız anlaşma olmadığı için gidemiyor. Bunu komisyon çalışmalarında devamlı gündeme getiriyoruz. Ama bir otomatik geçiş hala yok.

H. Alagöz: Siz teknik açıdan yeterince baskı yapabildiğimizi düşünüyor musunuz?

T. Aksoy: Teknik açıdan Türkiye bu müzakere sürecinde çok iyi yapılandı. Uzmanları, kadroları güçlü. Türkiye bu konuda sıkıntı çekmiyor. Asıl sıkıntı karşıdaki siyasi kanatın kararsızlığı.

H. Alagöz: Peki AB yolunda yapılan reformlar Türkiye'de demokratikleşme sürecini nasıl etkilemiştir?

T. Aksoy: Katkıda bulunmuştur. Zaten konuşmanın başlangıcında demiştim, AB'nin kurulma amacı yok. Uyum sürecinin adı işte bu reformdur. Kısacası çok önemli katkıda bulunmuştur.

H. Alagöz: Son soruda da "2023'e kadar AB'ye gireceğimizi düşünüyor musunuz" diye soruluyor.

T. Aksoy: Girecek ama o zaman biz karar vereceğiz girip girmeyeceğimize. Çünkü Norveç girmede. Öyle örnekler var. Ama ben şuna inanıyorum; hem Türkiye demokratikleşme, insan haklarına saygı gibi konularda ciddi yol almış olacak, hem de AB'nin Türkiye'ye ihtiyacı artmış olacak.

H. Alagöz: Peki özel statü konusunda ne diyeceksiniz?

T. Aksoy: Bunlar tamamen anlamsız. Hiçbir anlamı yok. Biz şu anda zaten özel statüde bir ortağız. Gümrük Birliği dolayısıyla. Biz zaten ekonomik açıdan entegrasyonu tamamlamışız. Ama siyasi konularda karar yetkisi vermiyorsa nasıl olacak?

H. Alagöz: Peki Türkiye böyle bir yol ayrımına getirilirse bu durumda nasıl bir siyaset izlenmeli?

T. Aksoy: Türkiye sanıldığından çok daha güçlü bir ülke. Bu hem ekonomik güç hem de diğer güçler anlamında. Dolayısıyla Türkiye alternatifsiz olamaz. Türkiye'yi alternatifsiz bırakmak kimsenin haddine değildir. Biz AB'de imtiyazlı ortaklığı kabul edecek kıvama geleceğiz. Böyle bir şey asla olmaz. Ben hiç böyle bir şey öngörmüyorum Türkiye için. Benim görüşüm AB bizi üye yapmak zorunda kalacak. Zaten girişin anahtarı da budur. Bizim onlara ne kadar ihtiyaç duyduğumuz hiç önemli değil, önemli olan onların bize ne kadar ihtiyaç duydukları.

H. Alagöz: Çok teşekkür ederim.

T. Aksoy: Ben teşekkür ederim.

2- Interview with the AKP Deputy Yaşar Yakış

H. Alagöz: Şimdi size sorular soracağım, o şekilde gidelim isterseniz. Size göre partinizin AB ile ilgili genel politikası daha çok aşağıdakilerden hangisine uyar? “Tamamen AB’yi destekler”, “büyük ölçüde AB’yi destekler”, “büyük ölçüde AB karşıtıdır”, “tamamen AB’ye karşıdır”?

Y. Yakış: Büyük ölçüde AB’yi destekler.

H. Alagöz: Şimdi ikinci soru da yine aynı soru ancak bu sefer partinize göre değil, size göre soruyorum.

Y. Yakış: Yine deminki cevap, büyük ölçüde.

H. Alagöz: Sizce 2002 seçimlerinden bu yana Türkiye AB yolunda ne kadar ilerledi?

Y. Yakış: Şimdi çok kritik bir eşik aşıldı, müzakereler başlatıldı. Müzakerelerin başlatılması böyle stereotipleştirilecek bir şey değil. Müzakerelere başlanması başlı başına çok önemli bir adım. İki nedenle: Bir, hiçbir hükümet döneminde o noktaya gelinememiştir. İkincisi de AB’de müzakerelere başlayıp da bitiremeyen ülke yok. Dolayısıyla AKP Türkiye’yi dönüşü olmayan bir yola oturtmuş bir parti oluyor. Şimdi reform sürecinin eski 2002-2005 arasındaki hızı kaybetmiş olması birçok insanın zihnini kurcalayabilir. Bunun birden fazla nedeni var. Yani bir raya inşaat etmek mümkün değil. Onun için AKP hükümetini bu konuda eleştirmek doğru değildir.

H. Alagöz: Diğer partilerin söylemlerine de baktığımızda 2002-2007 arasını yapıcı bulurken, bu dönemden sonrasını pek samimi bulmayan partiler var, AB içinde de benzer düşünceye sahip olanlar var. Buna nasıl bakıyorsunuz?

Y. Yakış: Bunu da tek sebebe indirme taraftarı değilim. Şimdi 2005’e kadar biz critical mass’e erişmek amacı içindeydik. Bize 2002 yılında Türkiye 2004 yılındaki zirveye kadar Kopenhag siyasi kriterlerini gerçekleştirdiği takdirde müzakereler gecikmeksizin başlayacak denmişti. Bu yüzden biz bu iki yılda o critical mass’i yakalamak için büyük çaba sarf ettik. Bu şuna benzer; bir geminin bir fırtınaya yakalandığını düşünün. En yakın limana nasıl ulaşırım diye düşünürsünüz. İçindeki bir takım işleri ertelersiniz amacınız limana bir an önce ulaşmaktır. Limana bir defa ulaştıktan sonra o ertelediğiniz işleri sakın sakın yaparsınız. Türkiye o limana ulaşmaya çalışıyordu 2004 yılına kadar. Onun için o süre içinde yapılan işleri, limana ulaştıktan sonra aynı şekilde devam ettirmesini beklemek doğru değil. Bu işin bir yönü. İkinci yönü ise müzakereler 2005’te

başladıktan sonra AB içinde birtakım gelişmeler oldu. Fransada ve Hollanda'da AB anayasasına referandumlarda hayır çıkmasından sonra, AB kendisine bir düşünme dönemi tanıdı. O periyot ile Türkiye'deki bazı iç gelişmeler aynı döneme yansdı. Yani AKP'nin kapatılma davası, anayasa referandumu gibi. Dolayısıyla onlar o periyodu doldururken, Türkiye de bunlarla uğraştı. Sonuçta kapatılmamak için, ayakta kalmak için uğraşan bir partinin AB ile yeterince ilgilenmesi beklenemezdi. Bunun öyle bir izahı var yani. Ondan sonraki dönemlerde ise AB'de çatlak seslerin çıkması, Türkiye'nin AB'ye tam üyeliğini değil, imtiyazlı ortaklığını savunan bir partinin Almanya'da iktidara gelmesi, Fransa'da Türkiye'yi en azından verdiği demeçlerle destekleyen Chirac yerine Sarkozy'nin gelmesi etkenler. Chirac 2004 Aralığı'nda TV'ye verdiği bir röportajda şöyle diyordu: Eğer AB bir serbest ticaret bölgesi olarak kalmak istiyorsa bunu Türkiye olmadan da yapabilir. Ancak eğer küresel sorumluluklar yüklenmek istiyorsa onu Türkiye olmadan yapamaz. Bunu söyleyen Fransa'nın cumhurbaşkanı. Aynı ülkenin diğer cumhurbaşkanı Sarkozy ise Türkiye'nin AB'de yeri yoktur diyor. Şimdi tüm bu söylemler bir AB içindeki mekanizmayı yavaşlattı, iki Türkiye'de AB'yi destekleyen kamuoyunun desteğini azalttı. Yüzde 70 civarındaki destek soruyu nasıl sorduğunuza da bağlı olarak yüzde 30-40 civarına geriledi. Bu unsurları da işin içine katmak lazım.

H. Alagöz: O zaman şıklardan ilerlerlersek “yeteri kadar ilerledi” mi daha doğru olur?

Y. Yakış: Onun cevabı farklı. Onun cevabı bu konuda eğitimli olan insanların anlayabileceği boyutları var bu işin. Türkiye kendi makamlarının AB sürecinde görevlerinin neler olduğunu ve bunları hangi zaman dilimi içinde yerine getirebileceğini içeren bir belge yayınladı 2007 yılında. Buna göre 2013 yılının sonunda Türkiye'nin AB müktesebatı ile yüzde yüz uyumlu hale gelmesi öngörülüyor. Peki fasıllar açılmıyor nasıl olacak bu iş diye bir soru geliyor insanın aklına ama o bir sorun değil. Teknik olarak sorun değil. Çünkü Türkiye AB komisyonu ile gayet iyi bir işbirliği içerisinde. Fasıllar açılmasa bile Türkiye o fasıllar açılsaydı nasıl davranması gerekiyorsa o şekilde davranabilir. Ona engel yok. Yol haritası dediğimiz o 412 sayfalık belgede de hangi tarihte ne yapılacak yazıyor orada. Yani Türkiye Merkel, Sarkozy'nin ne dediğine bakmaksızın o yol haritasına uyarsa 2013 yılının sonunda AB uygulaması ile yüzde yüz uyumlu hale gelecek. Bu süreç yürüyor yani.

H. Alagöz: Bu nokta önemli çünkü birçok insan fasıllar açılmadığı için artık Türkiye ne yapsa da AB'ye alınmayacak diye düşünüyor. Siz ise biz zaten yol haritamızı çizdik, fasıllar açılmasa bile ilerliyoruz diyorsunuz.

Y. Yakış: Evet. Mesela şöyle bir örnek vereyim. Kamu alımları fasılı var. Türkiye'de bu konuda başka ülkelerde olduğu gibi birçok istisna var. Mesela 300 milyon dolara kadarki kamu alımlarının uluslararası ihaleye açılma mecburiyeti yoktur. Eğer yukarı olursa açılır ve yabancı şirketler de girebilirler. Şimdi buna teklif sunan kişiler var ve bunlar bütün dünyada olduğu gibi güçlü bir lobi teşkil ediyorlar Türkiye'de. Ve bu lobiler şu soruyu ortaya atıyorlar: Henüz girip girmeyeceğimiz belli olmayan bir AB'ye biz pazarımızı bugünden niçin açıyoruz? Açmayalım ya da onu 500 milyon dolara çıkaralım diyorlar. Böyle mantıklı bir öneri karşısında hükümet "Evet, doğru söylüyorsunuz." mu diyecek ya da "Biz söz verdik, yapamayız." mı diyecek? Burada orta yol nasıl bulunabilir? Biz o yol haritasında tünelin ucunda ışık gördüğümüzde yaparız diyoruz. Eğer biz onların piyasasına giremiyorsak onlar niye bizim piyasamıza girsin? Filanca fasıl neden açılmıyor? Biz şimdi o fasılları açsak ve 40 yıl AB'ye giremezsek niye piyasamızı açalım? Kibarca diyoruz ki eğer AB'ye girmeyeceksek bu işin acelesi yok. Biz temel hak ve hürriyetlerin alanını genişletmişsek, şeffaf bir pazar ekonomisi kurmuşsak ve işliyorsak, demokratik mekanizmalar iyi çalışıyorsa asıl odur batılılaşmanın kriteri. Bu da şeffaf ekonominin bir parçasıdır. Çünkü siz yabancı ekonomilere açılmazsanız, işte Türkiye'nin 1920'lerden 1980'lere kadarki hali gibi içine kapanık, dışarı ile rekabet edemeyen, bir ekonomi haline gelirsiniz. Siz dışarıya da açılacaksınız ki yabancı tedarikçi size daha iyi hizmet sunabiliyorsa Türk tedarikçi de ona göre kendini düzeltecek. Ve tüketici de bundan yararlanacak. Ama lobi gerçeği var. Çıkar grupları var. Tabi bunlar meşru çıkar grupları. Bazen batı ülkelerinde soruyoruz siz şu işi uygun olduğu halde neden yapmıyorsunuz diye. Onlar da lobiden dolayı yapamadıklarını söylüyorlar. Onlarda olduğu zaman meşru oluyor da bizde neden olmasın?

H. Alagöz: Sizce partinizin ideolojisi ile uyguladığı AB politikası örtüşüyor mu?

Y. Yakış: Şimdi partinin ideolojisi pek tabii ki yöneticilerin zihnindeki şemadır. Partinin kurulduğu zamanki programı kaleme alan altı kişiden biri olduğum için söylüyorum bunu. O zaman yazdığımız ideoloji tamamen uyuyordu. Ama bu ideoloji Tanrı kelamıdır diye baktığınız zaman o da yanlıştır. Mesela biz Türkiye'nin AB'ye

katılım sürecini cumhuriyetin ilanından sonraki en büyük çağdaşlaşma, modernleşme projesi olarak görüyorduk. Halen de görüyoruz. Ama mesela son bir senedir benim içime tereddüt düştü. Avrupa'daki sağcı hareketlere baktığınız zaman İslam fobisi, bunlara baktığınız zaman insanın aklına zaman zaman şu soru geliyor: Biz Allah aşkına bu standartlara ulaşmak için mi uğraşıyoruz. Ben Avrupa'nın bir sınav geçirmekte olduğu kanısındayım. Gerek Türkiye'ye karşı, gerek İslamla özdeşleştirdikleri Türkiye'ye karşı. Bir de müslümanlıktan ayrı yabancı düşmanlığı da var. Yani Hintli, budiste de karşı. Biz diyorduk ki Türkiye'nin benimsediği evrensel değerler AB tarafından da benimsenmiştir. Ancak şu an AB içinde yapılan hareketler bu şekilde değil. Evet partimizin ideolojisi hala AB'yi destekliyor ancak bizden değil onlardan kaynaklanan bir kayma var.

H. Alagöz: Peki sizce Gümrük Birliği açısından bakıldığında Türkiye'nin AB'ye üyelik süreci Türkiye'nin ekonomik durumunu nasıl etkilemiştir?

Y. Yakış: Şimdi Türkiye ekonomisini olumlu etkilemiştir. Bizim hep endişemiz Türk sanayisinin AB sanayisi ile rekabet etmesinin mümkün olmadığı yönündeydi. Onun için bizim sanayimiz hep koruma istiyordu. Ancak Özal o tarihte biz bunu açacağız dedi ve gümrükleri kaldırdı. Bu sayede şu an otomotiv sanayi, elektronik sanayi Avrupa ile rekabet ettiği gibi mesela Renault'un dünyada sıfır hatayla otomobil ürettiği tek yer dünyada Bursa. Fransa'da sıfır hatalı üretmiyorlar. Dolayısıyla biz sadece onunla rekabet etmemiş önüne de geçmişiz bu sayede. Şimdi dış ticaretimizin yüzde 40'tan fazlasını AB ülkeleri ile yapıyoruz. Dolayısıyla AB'nin yüksek standartlarını yakalamış durumdayız. Bu işin iyi tarafı. Peki bu dikensiz bir gül bahçesi mi? Hayır değil. Özellikle AB'nin üçüncü ülkelerle imzaladığı serbest ticaret anlaşmalarından kaynaklanan bir sıkıntı var. AB bize vaktiyle Ankara Anlaşması'nda verdiği bir sözü ve Gümrük Birliği ile verdiği bir sözü tutmuyor. Bu söz havada kalıyor daha doğrusu. O zaman ne oluyor o ülkenin malı? AB vasıtası ile Türkiye'ye gümrüksüz geliyor, biz o ülkeye satmaya kalktığımız zaman gümrüklü gidiyor. Bu ticaret sapmasına sebep veriyor. Şimdi bu ticaret sapmalarından dolayı Türkiye'nin kaybı ne kadar oluyor? Bu konuda rakamsal bir araştırma yok. Şimdi Kore ile anlaşma yaptılar. Buna göre onların malları bize gümrüksüz gelecek, bizim mallarımız ise gümrüğe tabi olacak. Bu konuda yapılması gereken şey bilimsel bir araştırma yapıp kar mı ediyoruz, zarar mı ediyoruz, bunu ortaya çıkarmamız gerek. Bundan sonra bizim devam mı edelim bu işe yoksa

telafi edici şeyler mi yapalım ona karar vermemiz lazım. Mesela Kore malı Avrupa yoluyla bize geliyorsa o zaman telafi edici önlem alınabilir.

H. Alagöz: Bir de demokratikleşme ile ilgili bir sorum olacaktı. AB yolunda yapılan reformlar Türkiye'nin demokratikleşme sürecini nasıl etkilemiştir?

Y. Yakış: Çok olumlu etkilemiştir. Ben zaten hep bu kadar uğraşıyoruz ama sonunda bir şey olmayacak diyenlere hep şunu söylüyorum. Bu işe iki açıdan bakmak lazım. Birincisi şu an Fransa'da Sarkozy, Almanya'da Merkel başta. Ve bunlar çok katı bir tutum içerisindedir. Onların sözüne takılıp kalarak her şeyi sermektense, onların bu işte geçici olduğunu düşünüp, Türkiye'nin AB'nin eşiğine geldiği zaman Sarkozy'nin hala bugünkü konumunda olup olmayacağını bilmiyoruz. Sayın Chirac gibi Türkiye'nin vazgeçilmezliğini dile getiren bir başka cumhurbaşkanı gelebilir oraya. Almanya'da başka bir siyasi parti gelebilir. Dolayısıyla biz ilerde dünya konjonktürünün nasıl olacağını bilmiyoruz. AB'nin çıkarlarının olduğu bölgelerde AB'nin çıkarlarını korumak için Türkiye'nin rolü nasıl olacak? Balkanlar'da, Kafkaslar'da, Ortadoğu'da bunları bilmiyoruz. O tarihte Türk kamuoyu AB'ye girmek isteyecek mi onu da bilmiyoruz. Dolayısıyla bunları bilmediğimize göre Merkel ne diyor, Sarkozy ne diyor bunlara takılıp kalmamıza gerek yok. En önemlisi Türkiye AB sürecini kendi evine çeki düzen verme aracı olarak kullanmak zorundadır. Yani bu sayede Türkiye'yi temel hak ve hürriyetlerin yaygın bir şekilde kullanıldığı bir ülke haline getirmek durumundadır. Türk ekonomisini daha şeffaf bir pazar ekonomisi haline getirmektir. Yolsuzlukları asgari seviyeye getirmiş bir ülke haline getirmektir. Bunlar için AB'de süzgeçten geçmiş mekanizmalar var. Orada işleyip, başarılı olduğu kanıtlanmış mekanizmalar var. Bu mekanizmalar şimdi kriter olarak önümüze getiriliyor. İşte biz de o kriterleri yerine getirmek suretiyle o işleyen mekanizmaları ülkemize getiriyoruz. Sonuç olarak şimdiye kadar yapmış olduklarımız demokratikleşmeye katkı sağlamıştır ancak hala eksiklikler vardır. O kalan eksikleri de bu süreci devam ettirirken giderme fırsatımız olacaktır.

H. Alagöz: Peki 2023'e kadar AB'ye girebileceğimize inanıyor musunuz?

Y. Yakış: Ben hiç böyle şeylere odaklanmıyorum. Cumhuriyetimizin 100. yılı tabii bizim için önemli bir tarihtir. Ama o tarihe odaklaşmak yerine bizim bu süreci demin söylediğim amaçlar için daha da ilerletip, Türkiye'yi Türk insanının daha fazla yararlanabileceği bir ülke haline getirmemiz lazım. Daha önceden söylediğim gibi acaba o tarihte Türk kamuoyu isteyecek midir? Bizim 2013 yılının ortalarında, yaptığımız

hesaplara göre, Türk kamuoyu AB'ne katılmamanın daha iyi olacağını düşünecek çünkü orada bütün ekonomiler tek tek batarken Türk ekonomisi almış başını gidiyor olacak. Sonuçta dediğim gibi rakamlara odaklanmamalı. Türkiye için Türk insanı için neler yapabiliriz ona odaklanmamız daha doğru olacaktır.

H. Alagöz: Son bir sorum olacak. Türkiye'de siyaset yapılırken, politikalar üretilirken AB politikası hakkında karar verme nasıl oluyor? Türkiye'de AB politika yapım sürecini, diğer politika yapım süreçlerinden nasıl ayırırsınız?

Y. Yakış: Bir kere Türkiye'deki bütün kurumlar bu işin içinde. Başka hiçbir politika yapım süreci yok ki, Türkiye'deki bütün kurumlar katılsın. Sadece AB'de var bu. AB ile ilgili burada ismi görülen bütün kurumların hepsi kendisine düşeni programa dökmüş. Bunun dışında Türkiye'de sivil toplum kuruluşları, halk, meslek kuruluşları gibi yürütme organının içinde olmayan kuruluşlar da kendi AB çabalarını yürütüyorlar. Dolayısıyla bu bir topyekûn hareket. Günümüzdeki diplomasinin de ulaştığı nokta zaten sadece bakanlıkların değil, sivil toplum kuruluşlarının da içinde bulunduğu bir hareket haline geldi. Bizim siyasi partiler arasından AB'yi istemeyen belki olursa Komünist Parti olabilir. Onun dışında hepsi biz AB'yi istiyoruz diyecektir. Ancak bunu isterken şartların ne olduğu önemli. O açıdan farklılıklar olacaktır.

H. Alagöz: Peki dış politikadaki çeşitlenmenin, örneğin AB dışında İran'la olan, Ortadoğu'daki çeşitli devletlerle kurulan yakın temasların AB ile olan ilişkilere nasıl yansıdığını düşünüyorsunuz?

Y. Yakış: Ben olumlu yansıdığı düşüncesindeyim. Çünkü Türkiye'nin etkili olabileceği dört bölgede, Balkanlar'da, Kafkaslar'da, Ortadoğu'da ve Ortaasya'da, etkili olabilmesi için AB sürecinin iyi işliyor olması lazım. Bunun için de Türkiye'nin bu bölgelerde hakikaten etkili olduğunu ortaya koyması lazım. Yani Türkiye'nin bu bölgelerde etkin olması AB sürecine bir alternatif değil. Aksine onu güçlendiren bir şey. Türkiye bu bölgelerde güçlü olursa AB daha fazla ciddiye alacaktır Türkiye'yi. Aynı şekilde bu süreç etkili işlerse bu saydığım dört bölgedeki ülkeler de Türkiye'yi daha fazla ciddiye alacaklardır. Onun için bu bir alternatif ya da aleyhte olan bir süreç değil, bunu daha da güçlendiren bir süreçtir.

H. Alagöz: Çok teşekkür ederim, sayenizde gerçekten de çok şey öğrendim.

Y. Yakış: Ben teşekkür ederim. İyi günler.

3- Interview with the CHP Deputy Onur Öymen

H. Alagöz: Size göre partinizin AB yaklaşımını aşağıdakilerden hangisi en iyi anlatıyor? “Tamamen AB yanlısı”, “tamamen AB karşıtı”, “büyük ölçüde AB karşıtı”, “büyük ölçüde AB yanlısı”?

O. Öymen: Şimdi AB üyeliğine taraftarlık anlamındaysa gayet tabi taraftarız. Ama AB’de yapılan bazı haksızlıklara, çifte standartlara ses çıkarmamak, onları sineye çekmekse değiliz. Yani biz AB’ye diğer ülkeler gibi girmek istiyoruz. Bu koşullar oluşursa biz AB’ye tamamen taraftarız.

H. Alagöz: Aynı soru ancak bu sefer partinize göre değil size göre nasıl onu soracağım.

O. Öymen: Aynı şekilde.

H. Alagöz: Peki 2002 seçimlerinden bu yana sizce Türkiye AB yolunda ne kadar ilerledi?

O. Öymen: Şimdi mevzuat açısından bakarsanız; AB’nin getirdiği yasa değişikliklerini, anayasa değişikliklerini yaptık. Ancak uygulama açısından bakarsanız maalesef birçok alanda geriye gittik.

H. Alagöz: Önceki sorunun cevaplarında “hiç ilerlemedi”, “biraz ilerledi”, “yeteri kadar ilerledi” ve “beklentinin üstünde ilerledi” var.

O. Öymen: Yani şimdi soruları sorarken tabi bunlar kısıtlayıcı oluyor. “Çok ilerledi” mevzuat açısından, “hiç ilerlemedi”, “geri gitti” uygulama açısından. Yani orda mevzuatta ilerledi, uygulamada geri gitti. Mesela nedir uygulama? Avrupa Birliği değerleri. Kopenhag kriterleri, kadın erkek eşitliği, basın hürriyeti, yargı bağımsızlığı, demokrasi. Bütün bu alanlarda uygulama anlamında geriye gittik.

H. Alagöz: Peki sizce partinizin ideolojisi ile uyguladığı AB politikası örtüşüyor mu?

O. Öymen: Gayet tabi. Bizim partimiz sosyal demokrat bir parti. Atatürk ilkelerine dayalı bir parti. Bizim değerler sistemimiz ile AB değerler sistemi örtüşüyor. Bu bakımdan burada bizi rahatsız eden bir unsur yok. Zaten tam üyeliği hedefleyen Ankara Antlaşması’nı imzalayan İsmet İnönü. Bizim o zamanki genel başkanımız.

H. Alagöz: Zaten CHP’nin AB konuşmalarının hepsinde buna değiniliyor. Peki özellikle Gümrük Birliği açısından bakılınca sizce Türkiye’nin AB süreci Türkiye’nin ekonomik durumunu nasıl etkilemiştir?

O. Öymen: Şimdi Gümrük Birliği açısından bakılınca birkaç tane boyutu var. Bir kere biz bu Gümrük Birliği'ni tam üyelik yolunda bir ara istasyon olarak gördük. Ama Gümrük Birliği'nden sonra tam üyelik sürecimizde beklediğimiz ilerleme olmadı. Onun için Gümrük Birliği'nin hedefe tam ulaştığını söyleyemeyiz. Buna karşılık sanayi sektöründe bizim sanayimize katkısı oldu. Rekabet gücümüzü arttırdı, Avrupa'ya sanayi ihracatımızı arttırdı. Ancak bizim ısrarlı taleplerimize rağmen AB hizmetler sektörünü sokmadı Gümrük Birliği'ne. Tarım zaten yok. O bakımdan böyle eksiklikler oldu. İkincisi serbest ticaret anlaşmaları. Biz Gümrük Birliği'ne girerken AB bize dedi ki; bizimle serbest ticaret anlaşması yapmamış olan ülkelerle siz serbest ticaret anlaşması yapamazsınız. Niye? Çünkü o zaman Türkiye üzerinden onların malları gümrüksüz Avrupa'ya girer. Peki yapmış olan ülkelerle yapabilir miyiz? Tabi falan. Ama bakıyoruz AB'ye serbest ticaret anlaşması yapmış olan ülkelerle Türkiye kolay kolay serbest ticaret anlaşması yapamıyor. Her biri engelliyor. AB kendisi yaparken bu anlaşmaları, Türkiye de kapsamın içinde olacak diye bir madde koymuyor.

H. Alagöz: Böyle bir otomatik geçiş yok yani?

O. Öymen: Yok, hayır.

H. Alagöz: Peki Komisyon bu konuda ne gibi çalışmalar yapıyor? Siz de üyesisiniz.

O. Öymen: İşte biz sürekli olarak AB Parlamentosu'nda temas ediyoruz. Karma Parlamento Komisyonu'nda eş başkan yardımcısıyım ben. Ve orda bütün bunları dile getirip anlatıyoruz. Ama sonucu almak tabi Konsey'in kararına bağlı. Konsey'in kararını da hükümetler etkiliyor.

H. Alagöz: Peki o zaman "olumsuz olmakla beraber daha çok olumlu etkilemiştir." diyebilir miyiz?

O. Öymen: İşte şimdi böyle test sorusu cevaplarsanız cevabını alamazsınız. Yani bu sorunun tam cevabı değil benim söylediklerim.

H. Alagöz: O yüzden sizinle konuşmaya geldim zaten. Yani genel olarak Türkiye'nin ekonomik durumunu nasıl etkilemiştir, genel göstergelerde?

O. Öymen: Genel gösterge olarak tabi bir taraftan bizim ihracatımızı arttırmasına yardımcı oldu, bir taraftan da ithalatın artmasına sebep oldu. Dış ticaret açığımızın büyümesine neden oldu. Çünkü onların malları da gümrüksüz Türkiye'ye giriyor. Bunu dengeleyecek unsur neydi? Serbest Ticaret anlaşmalarıydı. Gümrük birliğinin hizmetler

sektörüne de taşınmasıydı. Bunlar olmadı. Yani sonuç olarak böyle olumlu tarafları da olan ancak beklediğimiz tüm sonuçları vermeyen bir durum.

H. Alagöz: AB yolunda yapılan reformlar Türkiye'nin demokratikleşme sürecini nasıl etkilemiştir? Katkıda bulunmuş mudur bulunmamış mıdır?

O. Öymen: Bulunmamıştır. Çünkü Türkiye bir taraftan AB'ye reform sürecini yasal düzeyde yerine getirirken bir taraftan da uygulamada AB normlarına hiç bağdaşmayan adımlar atmıştır. Basın ve yargı üzerine baskılar gibi. Gençliğe yapılan baskılar gibi. Bütün bunları alt alta yazarsanız yani neticede tavuk bir altın yumurta yumurtlamadı. Çünkü siz AB'nin değerler sistemini içinize sindirmezseniz, sadece mevzuat değişikliği ile Avrupalı olmuyorsunuz.

H. Alagöz: Peki Türkiye'nin cumhuriyetin 100. yılı olan 2023'e kadar AB'ye gireceğine inanıyor musunuz?

O. Öymen: Bize bağlı değil. Sadece Türkiye'ye bağlı değil bunlar. Yani Avrupa'da esen hava şu an için Türkiye'nin üyeliğini kolaylaştıracak bir hava değil. Avrupa ülkeleri Fransa başta olmak üzere üyelik mevzuatını zorlaştırdılar. Referandum koşulunu getirdiler. Türkiye'yi üyeliğe götürecek 5 maddeye veto koydular. AB'nin bu politikaları değişmediği sürece 2023'te de 2033'te de giremezsiniz. Yani Türkiye'nin üye olması için AB'nin politikalarını değiştirmesi lazım.

H. Alagöz: Özel statü konusunda ne diyorsunuz?

O. Öymen: Kesinlikle karşıyız.

H. Alagöz: Peki böyle bir duruma getirilmeye çalışılıyor mu sizce Türkiye?

O. Öymen: Bu konuda Almanlar ve Fransızlar baskı yapıyorlar. Bugünkü ortamda bu ülkelerin tam üyeliği açıkça desteklediklerini görmüyoruz.

H. Alagöz: CHP ve AB diye baktığımız zaman CHP'nin bundan sonraki AB politikası nedir?

O. Öymen: Bizim politikamızın değişeceğini zannetmiyorum. Ancak haksızlıklara ve çifte standartlara karşı çıkıyoruz. Türkiye'nin AB yolunun Kıbrıs gibi alakasız konularla ilişkilendirilmesine karşı çıkıyoruz. Onun dışında ilke olarak gayet tabii üyeliği destekliyoruz. Yani asıl karşı tarafın tavrının değişmesi lazım bizim tavrımızın değişmesi ile ulaşılabilecek bir sonuç yok.

H. Alagöz: Peki bu konuda ne tür çalışmalar yürütülmelidir?

O. Öymen: Karşı tarafı ikna etmeye çalışıyoruz. Her Allahın günü Avrupa'dan gelen heyetlerle konuşuyoruz. İkna etmeye çalışıyoruz, başka yolu yok. Sabır aklın yarısıdır derler.

H. Alagöz: Çok teşekkür ederim.

O. Öymen: Rica ederim. Başarılar dilerim.

4- Interview with the MHP Deputy Mithat Melen

H. Alagöz: Size göre partinizin AB politikası şu yaklaşımlardan hangisine daha yakındır? Tamamen AB yanlısı, tamamen AB'ye karşı, büyük ölçüde AB yanlısı ve büyük ölçüde AB'ye karşı.

M. Melen: Bu saçma ama niye saçma, 1999'da Avrupa'ya tam üyelik müracaatı yapan hükümetin içinde MHP de var. MHP'nin bütün programında AB ile birlikte olma meselesi var. Nasıl yani karşı?

H. Alagöz: Bu durumda karşı değil yani? O zaman tamamen AB yanlısı diyebilir misiniz?

M. Melen: AB yanlısı tabii ama tamamen AB yanlısı mı? Yani orda koşullar var. Hatta alay ediyorlar işte onurlu lafını kullanıyorsunuz falan diye. Canım Türkiye o kadar ufak bir ülke mi de ikide bir ayak sürüyorsunuz? Bizim iddiamız şu: Siz alacakmış gibi yapıyorsunuz biz de girecekmiş gibi yapıyoruz. Yani biz buna karşıyız özetle. Tamam büyük ölçüde AB yanlısı de o zaman.

H. Alagöz: Peki siz kendi düşünceniz olarak farklı bir şey düşünüyor musunuz?

M. Melen: Yok, aynen düşünüyorum ama demin dediğim gibi bir kere yeni giren 15 ülkeden her bakımdan daha ilerdeyiz. Aşağı yukarı da bütün koşulları Türkiye yerine getirmiş durumdadır. Hele o Slovenyalar, Estonyalar, Kestonyalar yani alakası yok. Onun için Türkiye'ye bu siyasal bir engel. Bu oyunu oynamaya devam ediyorlar. Karşı olduğumuz bu yani, bu oyunu açık oynayın diyoruz.

H. Alagöz: Sizce 2002 seçimlerinden bu yana Türkiye AB yolunda ne kadar ilerledi?

M. Melen: Türkiye AB yolunda çok ilerledi. AB Türkiye yolunda hiç ilerlemedi.

H. Alagöz: Burada seçenek olarak "hiç ilerlemedi", "biraz ilerledi", "beklentinin üzerinde ilerledi" var.

M. Melen: Bence beklentinin üstünde ilerledi.

H. Alagöz: Sizce partinizin ideolojisi ile uyguladığı AB politikası örtüşüyor mu?

M. Melen: Tabii örtüşüyor, yani bizim partimizin ideolojisi 1930'lardaki Alman Nasyonal Sosyalistleri değil ki. Bizim partimiz demokratik bir parti. Bizim partimizin ideolojisindeki milliyetçilik tanımını bugün ne bileyim Bush'dan ya da Angela Merkel'den daha fazla değil. Onun için niye örtüşmesin. Biz Avrupa yelpazesinde hiç farkı olmayan bir partiyiz. Tamamen örtüşüyor bence, niye örtüşmesin.

M. Melen: Soruyorlar AB ye karşı mısınız? Tam üyelik başvurusu yapan parti nasıl karşı olur? Politika yani bu, yarın başka bir şey düşünürsün bugün başka bir şey düşünürsün ama biz 99 yılından beri aynı şeyi düşünüyoruz. Ayrıca bu işlerle de ben meşgul olduğuma göre 2002’de de 2007’de de İstanbul’da birinci sıradaydım. Tabi doktorası AB olan bir adamı birinci sıraya koymazdı genel başkan. Beni bu işle uğraştırmazdı yani, bu kadar basit. Neydi o Hollandalı kadın raportör, Reutenn miydi? Ben ona söyledim bir kere bunu, bana dedi sen MHP’lisin, karşısın falan. Ben sende bir cehalet görüyorum dedim. Ben dedim ki, akademik yapım gereği sen gelmeden senin kim olduğunu inceledim. Bir de ben yazarım dedim, yazılar yazıyorum, hiçbirini okumamışsın dedim.

H. Alagöz: Hocam, özellikle Gümrük Birliği açısından baktığımızda sizce Türkiye’nin AB süreci Türkiye’nin ekonomik durumunu nasıl etkilemiştir?

M. Melen: Şimdi bu çok tartışmalı bir şey. AB’ye üye olacaksın Gümrük Birliğine zaten gireceksin, buna önceden girmenin çok önemli bir sıkıntısı yok ama AB’ye üye olmayacaksın ve onun içine girmişsen zarar ediyorsun demektir. Eh sen girmek için Gümrük Birliğini kabul etmişsin. Ayrıca Gümrük Birliğinin hiç kanuni bir şeyi yok. Bir Ortaklık Konseyi kararıdır.

H. Alagöz: Hocam, bu soru daha çok şöyle: Bu karar 96 yılında alındı, 2010’a geldiğimizde bu arada Türkiye ekonomisini nasıl etkilemiştir?

M. Melen: Şimdi bir iddiaya göre bütün şeyimizi oraya çevirmiştir. Bundan Türk sanayisi zarar görmüştür. Türk Kobileri zarar görmüştür. Bunu bir ölçüde mantıklı kabul edebilirim. Ama Türk ekonomisinin yapı olarak % 50’sinin batıya, Avrupa’ya dönük olduğunun da altını çizmek gerek. Yani Türkiye Gümrük Birliği olduğu için batıya dönmedi. Batıya döndüğü için Gümrük Birliği geldi. Bazı sektörlere de kolaylık getirdi. Mesela otomotiv gibi. Ama Türkiye’de bazı sanayiler battı. Ama peki Çin ne oluyor şimdi? Çok faktör var yani. Eğer AB ile ortaksak ben ortağımınla ekonomi konuşurum ama biz konuşamıyoruz çünkü bütün o chapterlar bloke. Niye? Kıbrıs falan var. O zaman samimiyetsizlik var. Bazen bu konuda bizim başbakanın delikanlı çıkışları var. Hoşuma gidiyor yani, çünkü ben sıkıldım. Eh artık yeter, bizi kapıda sürümeysin. Her seferinde ben seminerlerde, AB Parlamentosu’nda söylüyorum bunu. Yeter. Çünkü niye, benim de bir oy verdim var, muhalefetim var. Kamuoyunda AB desteği düşüyor.

Eh karar verin artık yani. Sonuç olarak sorunuzun cevabı “olumlu olmakla beraber daha çok olumsuz”.

H. Alagöz: AB yolunda yapılan reformlar Türkiye’de demokratikleşme sürecini nasıl etkilemiştir?

M. Melen: Şimdi bir kere Türkiye AB’ye üye olmak için demokratik reform yapıyorsa buna karşıyım. Biz meselelerimizi parlamentoda çözeceğiz. Çözüm yeri burası. O yüzden demokratikleşme Türkiye’nin AB’ye girmesi için değil, tam anlamda demokratikleşmesi içindir.

H. Alagöz: Demokratikleşme deyince tabi birtakım reform paketleri var bu süreçte. Bunların katkıda bulunduğunu düşünüyor musunuz, yoksa hiç ilgisinin olmadığını mı düşünüyorsunuz?

M. Melen: Tabi canım, bunlar demokratikleşme yolunda katkısı olan şeyler, onlara bir şey demiyorum. Ama AB’ye girmek için demokratikleşme bir araç. Yani ben bunları yapayım da beni AB ye alsınlar buna hayır. Zaten belki de yarın Türkiye AB’ye girmeyecek. Hatta belki de AB bu yapıda kalmayacak. İyi ki euro varmış, euro olmasaymış İkinci Dünya Harbine benzer bir kriz patlarmış. Bir de geçmiş 50 yıla gelecek 50 yıl aynı olmayacak, çünkü gelişim çok daha hızlı.

H. Alagöz: Türkiye’nin Cumhuriyetin 100. yılı olan 2023’e kadar AB ye gireceğine inanıyor musunuz?

M. Melen: Hayır. AB oyalıyor bizi, hayır. Ayrıca AB bu şeyde kalmayacak. Yani bu tonda bu renkte kalmayacaktır.

H. Alagöz: Peki hocam, ben size sorayım anket sorularının dışında ama ilerde bir gün AB’ye üye olacağımızı düşünüyor musunuz?

M. Melen: Şimdi konjonktür ve dünya ne hale gelecek çok emin değiliz yani. Sonra bu son olaylar “wikileaks”ler falan bunlar yeni bir yapılanma gösteriyor bana. Yani Türkiye bu yeni yapılanma içerisinde nerede yer alır, bunu çok bilemiyorum ama benim konumum itibarıyla ben Avrupa’ya daha yakınım coğrafi olarak, yıllarca bağlarım var. Fakat sekiz tane komşum var ve bu sekiz tane komşumla da ilişkilerimi geliştiriyorum. Ayrıca mevcut ekonomik sistemlerin dünyada sorunları çözmediği de görülüyor. Bir küreselleşmenin bir Amerikan modelinin de çok işe yaramadığı görüldü. Bir sürü kriz. Yani şimdi mutlaka yerine yenileri kurulacak. İşte yeni düzenler kurulduğunda Türkiye

cup diye bunların üstüne atlamamalı. Türkiye kendi yerini bundan sonra nasıl bulacak tüm bunlar tartışma konusu.

H. Alagöz: Hocam, bir de şeyi merak ediyorum, 2002 seçimleri ve 2007 seçimleri olmak üzere iki dönemdir AKP iktidarı vardı. Bu seçim dönemleri sırasında partinizin AB politikasında bir değişiklik oldu mu?

M. Melen: Hiçbir değişiklik yok.

H. Alagöz: Daha az destekleyen ya da daha çok destekleyen?

M. Melen: Hiçbir değişiklik yok. Ben de değişiklik yok işte.

H. Alagöz: Hocam, ben parti yayınlarına bakıyorum, çok şanslıyım, MHP den çok kaynak aldım. Hakikaten bir sürü kaynak çıkarmışsınız. Ama mesela 2004'teki 17 Aralık Zirvesi çok eleştirilmiş. İşte bu müzakere başlıklarının Kıbrıs dolayısı ile durdurulması ile ilgili olarak. Yani 2004 sonrası biraz daha eleştirel bakış açısı var.

M. Melen: Var tabi. Niye, toplumda var çünkü. Biz tam üye olmayalım demiyoruz ki, biz bizi oyalamayın diyoruz. 35 tane fasılın neredeyse 30'unu ya müzakere etmemişsin ya bloke etmişsin. Efendim bize diyorlar ki normal süreç böyledir. Ne normal süreci? Ben sürece yeni girmedim ki? 1963'ten beri sürecin içindeyim. O da diyor ki dört tane ihtilal oldu bilmem ne. Sen Sovyetlerden sonra bir sabah ne kadar anti demokratik devlet varsa içine aldın. Yani ben fazla böyle antipatik bakmaya çalışmıyorum ama çok fazla da sempati duymuyorum. Ama bir şey eleştirilebilir, Türkiye meselelerinin çok fazla dışarı ile ilişkilendirilmesi eleştirilebilir. Bizi daha fazla oyalamasınlar.

5- Interview with the BDP Deputy Akın Birdal

H. Alagöz: Eğitim durumunuzu sorarak başlayayım.

A. Birdal: Mühendis. Yüksek lisansım var.

H. Alagöz: Size göre partinizin AB ile ilgili genel politikasını aşağıdaki yaklaşımlardan hangisi en iyi anlatıyor? “Tamamen AB yanlısı”, “tamamen AB karşıtı”, “büyük ölçüde AB karşıtı”, “büyük ölçüde AB yanlısı”.

A. Birdal: Büyük ölçüde AB yanlısı.

H. Alagöz: Türkiye'nin AB süreci için siz kendinizi aşağıdaki yaklaşımlardan hangisine yakın hissediyorsunuz? “Tamamen AB yanlısı”, “tamamen AB karşıtı”, “büyük ölçüde AB karşıtı”, “büyük ölçüde AB yanlısı”. Ama bu sizin görüşünüz olmalı, partinizin değil.

A. Birdal: AB yanlısı.

H. Alagöz: Büyük ölçüde AB yanlısı mı? Tamamen AB yanlısı mı?

A. Birdal: Tamamen değil, büyük ölçüde. Yani muhakkak rezervlerimiz var.

H. Alagöz: Sizce 2002 seçimlerinden bu yana Türkiye AB yolunda ne kadar ilerledi? “Hiç ilerlemedi”, “biraz ilerledi”, “yeteri kadar ilerledi”, “beklentimin üzerinde ilerledi”?

A. Birdal: Yeterince ilerlemedi.

H. Alagöz: O zaman biraz ilerledi.

A. Birdal: Evet, biraz ilerledi.

H. Alagöz: Sizce partinizin ideolojisi ile uyguladığı AB politikası örtüşüyor mu? “Büyük ölçüde örtüşüyor”, “biraz örtüşüyor”, “tamamen örtüşüyor”, “hiç örtüşmüyor”?

A. Birdal: Büyük ölçüde örtüşüyor.

H. Alagöz: Özellikle Gümrük Birliği açısından bakılınca sizce Türkiye'nin AB'ye üyelik süreci Türkiye'nin ekonomik durumunu nasıl etkilemiştir? Burda yani 1996'dan 2010'a kadarki süreçte ekonomimizi nasıl etkilemiştir anlamında soruluyor.

A. Birdal: Kuşkusuz olumlu etkilemiştir.

H. Alagöz: “Tamamen olumsuz etkilemiştir”, “olumlu olmakla beraber daha çok olumsuz etkilemiştir”, “olumsuz olmakla beraber daha çok olumlu etkilemiştir”, “olumlu etkilemiştir”?

A. Birdal: Yani olumlu etkilemiş olduğunu söyleyebiliriz, çünkü fonlardan yararlanılıyor, birçok Avrupa sermayesi buraya akıyor, o nedenle olumlu diyebiliriz.

H. Alagöz: O zaman olumlu etkilemiştir diyorum. Genel olarak.

A. Birdal: Yani olumlu etkilemiştir diyelim. Tam sorular bence bizim şeyimizi tam olarak karşılamıyor diyebilirim yani daha fazla seçenek olabilirdi, neyse.

H. Alagöz: Ne olabilir peki size sorayım?

A. Birdal: Yani onun şeyi olmalı mesela a,b,c olarak şu, şu, şu ya da hangi alanda olabilirdi.

H. Alagöz: Onu röportajımızda çıkarırız.

H. Alagöz: AB yolunda yapılan reformlar Türkiye’de demokratikleşme sürecini nasıl etkilemiştir? “Katkıda bulunmuştur”, “katkıda bulunmamıştır”, “ilgisi yoktur”?

A. Birdal: Yani reform konusunda da örneğin son 5–6 yıldır bence eksen kayması denen şeyde AB hedeflerinden uzaklaşmaktadır. Yani bazı düzenlemeler yapıyorlar ama müktesebatına uydurmak ona göre düzenlemek ve fonlardan yararlanmak.

H. Alagöz: Göç politikası mesela, azınlıklar mesela.

A. Birdal: Azınlıklar mesela. Ben de her birine ayrı ayrı değindim. Mesela Hrant Dink yani azınlıkların korunması, Kopenhag siyasi kriterlerinin başlığı, ben daha çok bir insan hakları savunucusu olarak oradan yaklaştım. Kopenhag siyasi kriterleri, azınlıkların korunması, hukukun üstünlüğü ve şimdi azınlıklar. Hrant Dink’in failerini biliyor bu hükümet ama bir türlü çıkarmıyor. Çıkarmadığı gibi Avrupa İnsan Hakları Mahkemesi’ne yaptığı savunma da ırkçı ve faşizan bir savunma. Dün genel kurulda bunu da söyledim. Çünkü Nazi subaylarının katledilmesini onların ırkçı olduğundan meşruiyet kazandırıyorlar. Örneğin Hrant için de ırkçıydı diyorlar. Böyle bir hukuk anlayışı demokrasi anlayışı, azınlık anlayışı olur mu?

H. Alagöz: O zaman katkıda bulunmuş mudur katkıda bulunmamış mıdır sizce?

A. Birdal: Yani katkıda bulunmamıştır. Demokratikleşme yolunda da doğrusu biz öyle düşünmüyoruz. Yani demokratikleşmenin hep sözde kaldığını düşünüyoruz. Yani bakın size vereceğim orda rakamlarda var. Kişisel siyasal özgürlükler, kültürel haklar. İşkence sürüyor sistematik. 309 başvuru var İnsan Hakları Vakfı’na. Cezaevindeki sayı Türkiye tarihinde hiç bu kadar yükselmemişti. 120.098 tutuklu ve hükümlü. Ve tutuklu sayısı yüzde 47. Bilmem 54000 tutuklu ve yıllarca tutuklu olan var, ya da mahkemeye çıkamıyor ya da çıkıp bilmem neden dolayı ertelenen 4 ay sonra gidiyor, sonra bilmem

neden dolayı 4 ay daha. O yüzden işte AKP yüzünü başka yöne çevirdi. Yoksa başta tamam doğru, iyi uyum yasaları falan çıkarılıyordu. Ama bizim AKP'ye tanıdığımız kredi sona erdi çünkü samimi değiller. Kürt açılımı falan. Neyse bunlar şimdi kaydedilmiyor değil mi?

H. Alagöz: Ediliyor.

H. Alagöz: Katkıda bulunmamıştır o zaman.

A. Birdal: Evet. Çünkü önce bence kendilerinin içselleştirmiş olması gerekiyor ki, niyet edeceksiniz demokratikleşmeye, insan haklarına ki bu Avrupa Birliği süreci katkıda bulunacak. Bunların öyle bir niyeti yok. Ben dün bir örnek verdim. Bir otobüste Türkiye halkı. Perdeleri çekili ve bunlar otobüsü dışardan sallıyorlar. Otobüsün içindeki halk da gittiğini zannediyor. Perdeleri bir açıyorlar ki aynı yerdeler. Bu buna benziyor gerçekten. Ondan şu an öyle bir katkıda bulunduğu söylenemez.

H. Alagöz: Son sorusu anketin: 2023'e kadar Türkiye'nin AB'ye gireceğine inanıyor musunuz?

A. Birdal: Yanıtları neler?

H. Alagöz: “Evet”, “hayır”, “kararsızım”.

A. Birdal: Yani ben 2023'e kadar AB'nin kalacağından da emin değilim. AB kalırsa yeni genişleme profili ne olacak, değerleri ne olacak? İşte o yüzden diyorum eksik o sorular şık olarak.

H. Alagöz: O zaman kararsızım mı diyorsunuz üç şık olduğu için.

A. Birdal: Peki o zaman kararsızım yazın.

H. Alagöz: Şimdi size asıl Akın Birdal olarak BDP'nin Avrupa Birliği politikasını sorayım. Ne düşünüyorsunuz? Genel olarak siz eklemek istediğiniz şeyleri ekleyin.

A. Birdal: Bakın AB önce Avrupa Ekonomik Topluluğu olarak oluştu, biliyorsunuz. Sonra Avrupa Topluluğu, daha sonra da demokratik ve siyasi değerleri de katarak Avrupa Birliği'ne dönüştü. Bu aslında Sovyetlere karşı oluşturulmuş ekonomik bir blokta. Ama Soğuk Savaş sonrası Avrupa kendi birliği ve varlığını koruyabilmek için ekonomik gelişme ile demokrasi arasında doğrudan bir ilişki kurdu. O nedenle bir takım demokrasi ve hukuk normlarını geliştirdiler. Avrupa Konseyi'nden çıkan belgeler, Avrupa Güvenlik ve İşbirliği Örgütü ve Kopenhag kriterlerinin belirlenmesi, Paris Şartı, Moskova Belgesi, Viyana Bildirgesi bunları esas almıştır. 1993 yılında Viyana Bildirgesi'nin 8. maddesi de demokrasi, ekonomi ve insan hakları ile ilişkilendirilmiştir.

Ama AB bu küresel kriz nedeniyle kendi ekonomik ya da emperyal beklentileri için kendi demokratik ve siyasi değerlerinden uzaklaşmaya başladı. Örneğin bu hafta güncel konuşalım önceki gün AB dışişleri bakanları toplandı AB zirvesine esas olmak üzere Brüksel’de ve toplantı öncesi dört dışişleri bakanı, İtalya, İngiltere, Finlandiya, İsveç dışişleri bakanları, International Herald Tribune’de Türkiye’yi destekleyen bir yazı yayınladı. Türkiye’yi öven ve AB’ye almak isteyen. Fakat dün Avusturya dışişleri bakanı bir açıklama yaptı ve AB ile Türkiye yol ayrımında dedi. Zaten Fransa ve Sarkozy beş kere çekince koydu uygulama planına. Merkel biraz daha çekingen davranıyor çünkü Türkiye stratejik bir müttefiki. Tarihsel, ekonomik. O nedenle köprüleri de atmak istemiyor. Ama Sarkozy kesin karşı tutum içerisinde. Örneğin geçtiğimiz günlerde yayınlanan Avrupa İlerleme Raporu. Eleştirel yanları elbet var ama Türkiye iyi yolda diyor. Örneğin şöyle bir anekdot anlattım mecliste: AB’ye tam üye ülkeleri belirlemek için daha önceki tam üye 12 ülke bir kırsal alanda toplanıyorlar ve bir kaplanı serbest bırakıyorlar. Aday ülkelere kim bu kaplanı önce getirirse tam üyelikte öncelik vereceğiz diyorlar. Çek Cumhuriyeti geliyor, Polonya, Romanya geliyor. Her biri bir bahane. Bizim Türkiye heyeti yok. Nerde diye merak ediyorlar falan. Tam o sırada bir helikopter, bağarıyorlar kaplanım de kaplanım de diye. Şimdi Diyarbakır’da Türküm de diye Kürtlere yapılan işkence ve trajediler var. Şimdi işte o anlayışla kili kaplan diye yutturmaya çalışıyorlar Avrupalılara. Avrupalılar da işlerine geldiği zaman kili kaplan diye kabul ettiler, işlerine geldiği zaman da siz bizi kandırıyorsunuz dediler. Hem Türkiye çok önemli potansiyeli olan bir pazar, hem de Türkiye üzerinden Ortadoğu’da potansiyeli çok olan daha dokunulmamış kaynakları var. Bunu da Türkiye üzerinden böyle bir yol izliyorlar. Ayrıca Türkiye’nin İslam ülkesi olmasından yararlanmaya çalışıyorlar. Örneğin dün Avrupa İnsan Hakları Mahkemesi HADEP’in kapatılması hakkında Türkiye aleyhine karar verdi. 29000 euro falan ceza verdi. Ama parti kapatılmış oldu tabii. Şimdi yine aynı HADEP döneminde iki siyasetçi arkadaş kendi bölgelerinde milletvekili seçilebilecek oy alıyorlar ama yüzde 10 barajı olduğu için geçemiyorlar, Ankara’ya gelemiyorlar. Ve Avrupa Konseyi’nde üye ülkelerde en yüksek baraj Federal Almanya’da. O da yüzde 5. O da kendi eyaletlerinde belli bir oy yüzdesini aldığı zaman federal parlamentoda temsil olanağını buluyorlar. Yani temsilde adalet gerçekleşiyor. Bizde yüzde 10. Arkadaşlar Avrupa İnsan Hakları Mahkemesi’ne başvuruyor, mahkeme de herkes kendi koşullarına göre düzenleme yapar

diyor. Olur mu? İnsan hakları evrensel, siyasi haklar, yönetime katılma hakkı normatif değerler var. Yani şimdi ben AB açısından doğrusu Soğuk Savaş sonrası insan haklarının, korunma ve denetim mekanizmalarının siyasete ya da devletin etki alanına girmesi kanısındayım. İşte bu karar somut örneği. Örneğin bugün ayın 15'i. 10 Aralık'ta başlayan insan hakları haftası içerisindeyiz. O yüzden sıkça insan haklarının fotoğrafını verdik mecliste. Bunlar AB insan hakları hedefinden uzaklaşmışlığının resmidir. Türkiye'nin Asya ve Avrupa arasında stratejik önemi vardır. Bir de şimdi siyasi stratejik önem kazandı İslam ülkeleri ile olan ilişkilerinden dolayı ve bence Türkiye bunu kullanıyor. Mahallenin şımarık çocuğu gibi davranıyor. Bana muhtaçsınız gibi davranıyor AKP hükümeti. Yoksa demokrasiyi, insan haklarını, hukukun üstünlüğünü içselleştirmiş gibi değil AKP hükümeti. Ama ilk anda böyle davranıyorlardı ve hepimiz desteklemiştik.

H. Alagöz: Yani ilk başta AKP'nin böyle bir imajı olduğunu mu düşünüyorsunuz?

A. Birdal: Kuşkusuz düşünüyorum, evet.

H. Alagöz: Peki şu an dediklerinizden yola çıkarak Türkiye AB'de olsaydı sonuçta ikircikli bir yapı var, hem öyle söylüyorlar insan haklarına saygılıyız falan diye, hem de yüzde 10 barajı var. Bu Türkiye'nin kendi iç meselesidir falan diyorlar. Türkiye AB üyesi olsa sizce bu çözülür mü?

A. Birdal: Tabii, AB üyesi olsa Türkiye tiyatro salonuna girmiş olacak. Şu an Türkiye kapının önünde, gişede pazarlık yapıyor. Oysa tiyatro biletleri herkes için standarttır. Ama bizimkiler 7 lira olmaz mı diye pazarlık yapıyorlar. Şu an içerde değil ama girdikten sonra mecburen uyacaklar. Aksi takdirde yaptırımları var. Yani şimdi Avrupa İnsan Hakları Sözleşmesi'nin düşünce, ifade özgürlüğü, örgütlenme özgürlüğü, kişi güvenliği hakkı var.

H. Alagöz: Zaten Avrupa Birliği 2010 İlerleme Raporu'nda basın özgürlüğünden bahsediyor.

A. Birdal: Elbette mesela şuan 39 gazeteci içerde. Örneğin Kürt sorunu Türkiye demokrasisi için olmazsa olmaz bir sorun. Bizim burada olma amacımız Kürt sorununun çözümüne ilişkin yaratılmış önemli bir fırsattır. Halk artık mobilize oluyor, deneyim kazandı. Kendi iradesine, kimliğine sahip çıkıyor ama ne yazık ki bu sorunun çözümüne ilişkin ciddi hiçbir şey yapılmadı. Eğer bir şey yapılmış gözüküyorsa bu Kürt halkının cesaret ve kararlılığındandır. Ve bunun bedelleri oluyor. Ama kuşkusuz dünya

değişiyor. Ama halkın doğrudan mücadelesi ile ilgili. Bedelle ilgili. Örneğin 95-96 yıllarında ben insan hakları savunucusu olarak dernek başkanı olarak, 95'te Mersin'de, 96'da Ankara'da 1 Eylül Dünya Barış Günü'nde Kürt halkından ve barıştan söz etmiş olmaktan dolayı 312'den 2 yıl hapis cezası aldım ve yattım. Ama şimdi biz şu an Kürt halkının varlığından değil onun hak ve özgürlüklerinden bahsedebiliyoruz. Kuskusuz dünya değişiyor.

H. Alagöz: Bunda Avrupa Birliği'nin etkisi var mı?

A. Birdal: Tabii ki bunda AB'nin etkisi var. Ve AB sermayesinin de önemli rolü var. Çünkü Türkiye şu an finans kapitalin çok önemli merkezlerinden biri oldu. Bugün İstanbul'da büyük plazalara bakın, finans kapitalin tüm temsilcilikleri var. O hak ve özgürlüklerin gelişmesi bundan kaynaklanıyor. Çünkü şu an TÜSİAD'a ortakları müttefikleri şu olmazsa ben yokum diyor. Ben bu yatırımları yapamam diyor. Bu da çok önemli bir itici güç oluyor. Ekonomik itici güç daha önemli bir rol alıyor.

H. Alagöz: Mesela BDP. Genelde dış basına falan baktığımızda, sizi medyada gördüğümüzde daha çok Kürt partisi olarak tanıtılıyorsunuz. Ama aslında sizin ekonomi, kadın hakları gibi çok konularda da çeşitli projeleriniz, çalışmalarınız var. Kadınların kotası bakımından parti organizasyonuna baktığımızda cinsiyet temelinde diğer partilere nazaran çok daha demokratik bir yapı göze çarpıyor.

A. Birdal: O rastlantı değil çünkü o tekelci sermayenin medyası özgür değil. O nedenle resmi ideolojiye bağlı çünkü bunlar devlet tarafından palazlanıyor. Devlet ihaleleriyle Türk burjuvazisi yaratılıyor, kendi yaratıcı üretici gücü ile değil. O nedenle devlete bağlı. Bizim elimizde veriler var, genelkurmay bile o medyayı nasıl yönlendiriyor. Örneğin ambargo konulmuş kişiler vardı, onlar medyaya çıkamazdı. Şimdi o da yavaş yavaş kırılıyor.

H. Alagöz: Peki partinizin AB ile ilgili yayını var mı hiç? Ben bulamadım çünkü.

A. Birdal: Partinin böyle bir yayını olduğunu sanmıyorum. Biz daha öyle bir bellek, hafıza, arşiv yaratmayı henüz başaramadık.

A. Birdal: İnsan Hakları Derneği ile falan görüştünüz mü?

H. Alagöz: Yok, görüşmedim, şu an sadece partilere bakıyorum. Ama siz sonuçta partiden bir yetkili olarak şu kaynakları araştır dersiniz daha iyi olur. Siz bir araştırmacı olsaydınız, benim yerimde olsaydınız nasıl araştırırdınız?

A. Birdal: Şimdi tabi birçok konuşmada AB referans gösterilmiştir. AB ile ilgili sözleşmeleri, belgeler. Ama işte bunu tabi bütününe baktığınızda bulursunuz. AB ile ilgili olarak hazırlanmış bir bülten, broşür falan yok.

H. Alagöz: O yüzden ben yine tutanaklara bakacağım. Kim ne söylemiş falan.

A. Birdal: Örneğin şöyle bir şey de alabilirsiniz. Demokratik özerklik. Şimdi bu Avrupa yerel yönetim özerklik şartı var. Mesela bu esas alınmıştır. Ama Türkiye bu özerklik şartını kabul ederken bazı çekincelerini sunmuştur. Yani şimdi demokratik özerklik bir Kürdistan, ayrışma bölme falan değil. Merkezi hükümetlerin yükünü bölgelere dağıtmaya yönelik bir şey. Siz de iyi bilirsiniz sekiz tane bölge Marmara, Ege, Doğu Anadolu... Ve bütün dünya aslında şimdi ona doğru gidiyor. Yerinden yönetim. Doğrudan demokrasi. Savunma, maliye, dış işleri ve adalet. Bunların dışında ekonomik, sosyal, kültürel faaliyetlerin artık yerel yönetimlerle yapılması öngörülüyor. Ve merkezi hükümetlerin yükü de hafifletiliyor. Ve örneğin Diyarbakır diyelim. Demokratik özerk bir yönetim. Valisini Diyarbakırlılar seçiyor. Vali bilecek ki ben bu halkın çıkarlarını gözeterek çalışırsam bu halk beni yeniden seçecek. Aksi takdirde seçmezler. Emniyet müdürünü Diyarbakır halkı seçiyor. Şimdi işkence yapabilir mi böyle bir emniyet müdürü? Ya da işkence yapın diye bir talimat verebilir mi? Mümkün değil.

H. Alagöz: İşlevsel bir şey mi o zaman?

A. Birdal: Elbette. Milli Eğitimi ile, eğitimi ile, kültür müdürleriyle bilmem ne. Ve artık cezalandırma değil ödüllendirme yoluna gidiliyor. Örneğin Britanya'da bence Cameron yeni bir Büyük Alan Projesi, bir hayat projesi yapıyor, bunları yapıyor ve cezalandırmak yerine örneğin kim trafik kurallarına uymuş fotoğraflarla bulup ödüllendiriyorlar. Bu defa siz ödüllendirme şeyi ile uyuyorsunuz o kurallara. Teşvik çok önemli. Sarkozy'nin bile şimdi yeni yerel yönetimlerle ilgili bir projesi var. Bizde de demokratik özerklik dediğimiz zaman bölüyorlar diyorlar.

H. Alagöz: AKP'nin öyle bir çalışması var, doğru mu?

A. Birdal: Evet, onların da yerellerin güçlendirilmesi ile ilgili böyle bir projeleri vardı. Ama işte AKP bence arkasında durmuyor. Bakın yine dün örnekler verdim bu 2010 yılında birçok kamusal düzenleme, denetim mekanizmaları ile ilgili kurumlar oluşturulacaktı. Hepsini getirdi, hiçbirini meclise taşıyamadı, hiçbiri onaylanmadı ve çıkmadı yasası. Ama işte bunları kamuoyuna getirdiğin zaman şöyle bir imaj oluyor. Ya bu adamlar bir şeyler yapıyorlar diye. Tabi ondan sonra bir vatandaş, bir okuyucu

takibini yapamıyor bunların ama biz mecliste olduğumuz için bunları izliyoruz, bunların yalanını görüyoruz. Örneğin ben dün Hrant'a karşı tutumumu açıklarken adam tahammülsüzlük gösteriyor ve sataşüyor. Bizi tehdit mi diyorsun diyor? Dedim biz sizi nasıl tehdit edelim? Şunun şurasında 20 tane milletvekiliyiz. Zaten öyle bir tehdit gücümüz yok. Ama siz bütün Kürtleri, kadınları, emekçileri, Alevileri, öğrencileri falan tehdit ediyorsunuz. Ve bu tehdidi dün başbakanımız meclise kadar taşıdı. Ve tehdit etti. Bende böyle ana muhalefet, böyle de hükümet olursa tehdit eder tabi. Yoksa güçlü bir ana muhalefet olsa valla başına yıkarlar o parlamentoyu. İşte bir Kılıçdaroğlu. Ana muhalefet lideri. İki gün önce bütçe adına konuşma vardı. Yani nasıl bir performans düşüklüğü, moral olarak hepsi çöktüler, dibe vurdular. Örneğin Kemal Anadol kendi grubuna bağıyor dinleyin diye. Böyle bir ana muhalefet olur mu? İyi bir ana muhalefet olsa masa kapaklarına vurur, yine de konuşurmaz başbakanı orda. Bu bir yoldur. Ya da mesela hep beraber terk edersiniz genel kurulu. Biz de buna şey yaparız eğer bizle bir diyalog kursalar. Yani bizim muhalefetimiz de muhalefet değil. Güçlü şeyler koyamıyoruz yani. Tepkiler. Şimdi bu bütçe halkın bütçesi değil. Uluslararası finans kurumlarının bütçesi bu ve Neoliberal politikaların uygulanacağı bir şey. Ve biz burada muhalefet olarak emin olun bir piyonuz. Böyle bir demokrasi oyununun emin olun figüranlarıyız. Ama esas oğlan/kız onlar bekliyorlar.

H. Alagöz: Önemli olan kimler karar alıyor, kimler karar alamıyor. Ona bakmak lazım.

A. Birdal: Tabi katılım çok önemli. Yani örneğin öğrenciler bu üniversite yönetimine katılmak istiyorlar. Bu kadar masum bir istek.

H. Alagöz: Yumurtasız geldim. Herkes meclise gideceğimi duyunca soruyordu yumurta götüreceksin diye.

A. Birdal: Egemen Bağış'la konuşuyoruz, bana polisin gördüğü şiddetten bahsediyor. Öğrencilerin gördüğü şiddetten bahsetmiyor.

H. Alagöz: Bir de ben literatürde partilerle ilgili kaynakların hepsini taradığım için biliyorum. Mesela AKP için AKP Avrupa Birliği politikası ve dış politikayı kendini meşrulaştırmak için kullanıyor diyorlar. Siz nasıl görüyorsunuz bunu?

A. Birdal: Bence haklılık payı yüksek bunda.

H. Alagöz: Şunu diyorlar, biraz daha açayım: AKP halktan ve siyasi ortamdan gerekli meşruiyeti göremedi ve şu anda iktidar partisi. İktidar partisi olduğu için de kendini meşru hale getirmesi lazım. Dış politika bunun için araç oluyor. Dış politika devlet

politikası ve aslında AKP kendini meşru göstermek için devlet politikası ile oynuyor diyorlar.

A. Birdal: Doğruluk payı yüksek.

H. Alagöz: Beni bilgilendirdiğiniz için çok teşekkürler gerçekten.

A. Birdal: Ben teşekkür ederim.