JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY AND THE EU: AN INQUIRY ON THE
DEBATES OF EUROSCEPTICISM IN TURKEY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

CEYHAN ÇİÇEK

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF EUROPEAN STUDIES

FEBRUARY 2012

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

_____

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science

_____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Galip Yalman
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science

_____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Özgehan Şenyuva
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Galip YALMAN	(METU, ADM)	_____
Assist. Prof. Dr. Özgehan ŞENYUVA	(METU, IR)	_____
Assist. Prof. Dr. Başak ALPAN	(METU, ADM)	_____

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ABSTRACT

JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY AND THE EU: AN INQUIRY ON THE DEBATES OF EUROSCEPTICISM IN TURKEY

Çiçek, CEYHAN

M.S. In the Program of European Studies

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Özgehan ŞENYUVA

February 2012, 131 Pages

This thesis aims at analyzing the EU policy of AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma partisi - Justice and Development Party) based on the concepts of Euroscepticism and Europragmatism. Related to that aim initially the Euroscepticism and conjoint concepts are considered. Furthermore, Euroscepticism in Turkey is discussed at public and political party levels. To what extent the EU policy of AKP has undergone a change since it came to power in 2002 is discussed. Moreover the EU policy of MGH (Milli Görüş Hareketi - National Outlook Movement), a political movement from which AKP emanated is discussed. Looking at their EU policy, it is discussed to what extent AKP differs from the National Outlook Movement. Literature review and discourses of the party officials showed that the Political Islam in Turkey has been in a transformation process since 28 February Process and in this process EU has formed an anchor for the Political Islamists. AKP that separated from the Political Islam movement has also been affected by this transformation process. AKP has given support for the EU process if it serves to domestic goals of the party. However since 2005 due to the internal and external factors AKP's commitment to the EU process has declined.

Keywords: AKP, Euroscepticism, Europragmatism, MGH

ÖZ

ADALET VE KALKINMA PARTİSİ VE AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ: TÜRKİYE'DEKİ
AVRUPA KUŞKUCULUĞU TARTIŞMALARI ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

Çiçek, CEYHAN

Master, Avrupa Çalışmaları Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd Doç. Dr. Özgehan ŞENYUVA

Şubat 2012, 131 Sayfa

Bu tezin amacı, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP)' nin Avrupa Birliği politikasını
Avrupa kuşkuculuğu ve Avrupa faydacılığı kavramları temelinde incelemektir. Bu
amaca yönelik olarak öncelikle Avrupa kuşkuculuğu ve buna bağlı kavramlar dikkate
alınmıştır. Ayrıca Türkiye'de Avrupa kuşkuculuğu kamuoyu ve siyasi partiler
düzeyinde tartışılmıştır. Bu kavramlar eşliğinde AKP'nin AB politikasında 2002
yılında iktidara gelişinden bu yana süreç içerisinde bir değişiklik olup olmadığı
tartışılmıştır. Ayrıca AKP'nin içinden çıktığı siyasal hareket olan Milli Görüş
Hareketi'nin de AB politikası incelenmiştir. Bu kapsamda AB politikası özelinde
AKP'nin Milli Görüş Hareketi (MGH)'nden ne ölçüde farklılaştığı tartışılmıştır.
Literatür taraması ve parti yetkililerinin söylemleri Türkiye'de Siyasal İslam'ın 28
Şubat döneminden bu yana bir dönüşüm içerisinde olduğunu ve bu dönüşüm
sürecinde AB'nin Siyasal İslamcılar için önemli bir dayanak noktası olduğunu
göstermiştir. Siyasal İslam hareketinden gelen AKP de bu dönüşüm sürecinden
etkilenmiş ve iç politikadaki amaçlarıyla örtüştüğü sürece AB sürecini desteklemiş
ve bu yönde yoğun çaba sarf etmiştir. Ancak 2005 yılından itibaren iç ve dış
sebeplerden dolayı AKP'nin AB sürecine olan bağlılığı azalmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: AKP, Avrupa Kuşkuculuğu, Avrupa Faydacılığı, MGH

To my family for their support and encouragement

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Assist Prof. Dr. Özgehan Şenyuva for his guidance, academic assistance, advice, and criticism throughout the research.

I would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Galip Yalman and Assist. Prof. Dr. Başak Alpan for their suggestions and comments.

Last but not the least I am grateful to my family for their unconditional support and encouragement through my life.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU	European Union
AKP	Justice and Development Party
DSP	Democratic Left Party
MHP	Nationalist Action Party
ANAP	Motherland Party
TKP	Turkish Communist Party
SP	Felicity Party
MSP	National Salvation Party
CHP	Republican People's Party
CEEC	Central and Eastern European Countries
MGH	National Outlook Movement
EC	European Commission
DTP	Democratic Society Party
RP	Welfare Party
FP	Virtue Party
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party
MNP	National Order Party
EC	European Community
DYP	True Path Party
TUSIAD	Turkish Industry and Business Association
NSC	National Security Council
GCA	Greek Cypriot Administration
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
MUSIAD	Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association
MAZLUM-DER	The Association of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
KKTC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Political parties' policies on the EU (European Union)[1] have become significant for the European political structure. EU policy of the political parties is not just a foreign policy issue; rather it is also related to domestic political competition. It is so important in domestic politics that according to Sitter "European question has perhaps affected party competition more than any other single issue in the late 20th century"[2]. In this sense as a concept related to political parties' EU approaches *Euroscepticism* has emerged as a remarkable issue of party politics in Europe. It is significant to note that as European integration intensified, Euroscepticism within political parties also increased in Western Europe[3]. Even though Euroscepticism emerged in Western Europe within the discussions concerning the usage of Euro as the currency and the referendum process of Maastricht and Nice agreements, after the membership process of the Central and Eastern European Countries it has become, indeed, an effective and controversial concept throughout the Europe[4]. Rejection of European Constitution in Netherlands and France in 2005 also made clear that a group of people were critical and skeptical to the EU5. "A sizeable minority of the public is now hostile to or ambivalent about the Europe" and today it

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[1] Since its foundation EU adopted various names such as European Coal and Steel Community, European Economic Community, European Community, and the European Union. Hence it will just be called as EU (European Union) in this theisis in order not to let any confusion.

[2] Nick Sitter, "Opposing Europe: Euroscepticism, Opposition and Party Competition", *SEI Working Paper*, No. 56, 2002, p. 5.

[3] Paul Taggart, "A touchstone of dissent: Euroscepticism in contemporary Western European party systems", *European Journal of Political Research,* No: 33, 1998, p. 363.

[4] Jan Rovny, "Conceptualising Party-based Euroscepticism: Magnitude and Motivations", *Collegium*, No. 29, 2004, p. 31.

[5] Marcel Lubbers and Peer Scheepers, "Divergent trends of Euroscepticism in countries and regions of the European Union", European Journal of Political Research, Vol. 49, 2010, pp. 787-817.

is seen deepening diversion of ideas concerning the scope of the EU[6]. Similarly, in Turkey concept of Euroscepticism has recently started to be discussed more often. In Turkey, as Taraktaş pointed out, similar to other candidate countries both public and party-based Euroscepticism has increased during the EU negotiation process[7]. In this sense as a single party government the AKP's (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi-Justice and Development Party) position on Turkey-EU relations has become crucial. This thesis aims at analyzing the EU policy of AKP in relation to Political Islam and the MGH (Milli Görüş Hareketi- National Outlook Movement) in Turkey. Considering that the founders of the AKP are former members of the MGH it would be insufficient to analyze the AKP without looking at MGH. Therefore it is needed to discuss whether or not the EU policy of AKP is a continuation of MGH and if not, in what way their EU policy differentiates.

There are five reasons why the AKP was chosen for this study. Firstly AKP, which has been in power since 2002 as the single ruling party, successively won three elections. After the ANAP (Anavatan Partisi-Motherland Party) in 1980s, the AKP became the first party to achieve such a political victory. Furthermore AKP increased its votes in three subsequent elections, which is unprecedented in the political history of Turkey. In 2002 the AKP got 34,29 % of the votes that was a remarkable victory for a party founded just one year before. In 2007 AKP increased its votes to 46,58 %. Lastly in June 2011 AKP won the elections by receiving 49,83%. In sum it can be concluded that the AKP has become the most influential political party of the 2000s. Concomitant to the overwhelming election results AKP has managed to hold a great majority in the parliament since 2002. AKP had 363 seats of 550 after 2002, 341 after 2007 and 327 seats after 2011 general elections. This is important because before the AKP there were coalition governments in Turkey and it was very difficult for a party to formulate and pursue its own EU policy. Today those coalition dynamics have disappeared and AKP with its majority in parliament has the capacity of implementing legal technical process.

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[6] Ian Down and Carole J. Wilson, "Opinion Polarization and Inter-Party Competition on Europe", *European Union Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2010, p. 62.

[7] Başak Taraktaş, "A Comperative Approach to Euroscepticsm in Turkey and Eastern European Countries", *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2008, p. 250.

Second, under the AKP rule Turkey achieved paramount and remarkable success with respect to the EU accession process. Turkey had signed the Ankara Agreement in 1963 which formed a partnership with the European Economic Community. Since that time Turkey has been trying to join to the EU. In this sense it is the AKP reign when Turkey met the Copenhagen Criteria[8] and became eligible for membership and thereof accession negotiations started on 3 October 2005.

Third, as Özbudun and Hale[9], and Karlsson[10] suggest it is ironic that a religiously oriented party, the AKP after getting power in 2002, has become the most enthusiastic party for the EU membership. Although the leading cadre of the AKP was coming from MGH which was traditionally anti-Western at large, the party worked so much on the EU process.

Fourth, despite its electoral victories and its efforts in the EU process since 2002, some circles are still in doubt about AKP's aims. To provide an example CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi-Republican People's Party) that is the main opposition party claims that the AKP has used the EU process for its own interests[11]. Similarly some scholars claim that the AKP is not sincere on EU issue[12]. Moreover, some scholars suggest that the AKP as an opportunist party internalized the EU process because the EU conditionality and the AKP's policy agenda were overlapped[13]. On

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[8] For the details of the Copenhagen Criteria see; Conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council, Copanhagen, 22.06.1993, available from http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=DOC/93/3&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en, accessed on 29.12.2011.

[9] Ergun Özbudun, William Hale, Türkiye'de İslamcılık, Demokrasi ve Liberalizm: AKP Olayı, İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2010, p. 82.

[10] Ingmar Karlsson, Turkey in Europe but not out of Europe?, TESEV Yayınları, May 2009, p. 11.

[11] CNN Türk, Kılıçdaroğlu: "AK Parti, AB'yi kullandı", 11.12.2011, available from http://www.cnnturk.com/2011/turkiye/12/11/kilicdaroglu.ak.parti.abyi.kullandi/640081.0/index.html, accessed on 17.12.2011.

[12] Birgün, Prof. Dr. İlhan Uzgel: AKP için tarih şimdi rayına oturdu, 18.11.2011, available from http://www.birgun.net/politics_index.php?news_code=1324211017&year=2011&month=12&day=18, accessed on 19.11.2011.

[13] Mehmet Uğur and Dilek Yankaya, "Policy Entrepreneurship, Policy Opportunism, and EU Conditionality: The AKP and TÜSİAD Experience in Turkey", *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 2008, pp. 581-601; Burhanettin Duran, "JDP and Foreign Policy as an Agent of Transformation", in Hakan Yavuz (ed), *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, University of Uteh Press: Salt Lake City, 2006; İhsan D. Dağı, "The Justice and Development Party: Identity, Politics, and Human Rights Discourse in the

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the other hand some circles like the conservative media or some liberal scholars argue that the AKP is sincere on the EU process. According to these people Political Islam has been in a transformation since the mid-1990s and they have acknowledged the virtues of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. EU as the center of these values became a reference point for these people and thereupon AKP, whose leaders were the former Political Islamists, emerged as a pro-EU party[14].

Fifth, AKP's foreign policy is subject to criticism. MGH, from which the AKP emerged, was anti-Western and anti-European in the past[15]. Therefore AKP's foreign policy has been discussed in Turkey from various aspects. In this sense Davutoğlu's, who was the chief foreign policy advisor of Tayyip Erdoğan and the Minister of Foreign Affairs since 2009, vision which foresees multidimensional and active foreign policy and close relationship with neighbors[16] led to discussions of "shift of axes" in Turkey. Besides any arguments, it is clear that Turkey has pursued a more active foreign policy since 2002[17]. Regarding the context of this thesis it is important to analyze to what extent such an active foreign policy affects the EU process.

The Turkey-EU relation is still a considerable issue when taken into account separately from AKP. Turkey applied to the European Economic Community in 1959 and signed the Ankara Agreement which created an association between the two sides in 1963. In 1987 Turkey applied to the European Community for full membership but this was rejected by the EC (European Commission). In the 1999 Helsinki Summit Turkey was given candidate status and after this decision a reform process for democratization in Turkey started. In the period of the coalition

Search for Security and Legitimacy", in Hakan Yavuz (ed), *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, University of Utah Press: Salt Lake City, 2006, pp. 88-106.

[14] Şaban Tanıyıcı, "Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey: Islamist Welfare Party's Pro-EU Turn", *Party Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 2003, pp. 463-483.

[15] See for instance the arguments by the leader of National Outlook Movement, Necmettin Erbakan, Türkiye'nin Temel Meseleleri, Ankara: Rehber Yayınları, 1991.

[16] Ahmet Davutoğlu, Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu, Küre Yayınları: İstanbul, 2009.

[17] Meltem Müftüler Baç, "Turkish Foreign Policy, its Domestic Determinants and the Role of the European Union", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2011, p. 288.

government comprised of DSP (Demokratik Sol Parti- Democratic Left Party) MHP (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi- Nationalist Action Party) and ANAP three harmonization packages were passed by the parliament in order to meet the Copenhagen Criteria which are the preconditions for membership. After coming to power on 3 October 2002, AKP focused on the EU process and accelerated these reforms. As a consequence of the efforts that Turkey made, in the 2004 Brussels Summit it was agreed to start negotiations on 3 October 2005.

As one can recognize EU-Turkey relations have a history more than 50 years and this relationship can be called a *cyclical process* as Öniş indicated[18]. Some periods such as 1999-2004 can be interpreted as the upturn of the cycle while the post-2005 period is clearly the downward phase of the cycle[19]. Explaining the historical stages of Turkey-EU relations Eralp uses the concept of "temporality" which refers to "the level of convergence or divergence between the dynamics of European integration and Turkish developments over time"[20]. As Eralp points out when the dynamics of the EU and developments in Turkey are converged Turkey-EU relations picked up speed[21]. Although Turkey-EU relations could be characterized by fluctuations, EU membership has always been one of the main objectives of Turkish Foreign Policy. As Öniş suggests "the long term trend has clearly been in the direction of Turkey's integration to the EU" and as a response to different scenarios he reminds that "there is no country which has reached to the point of negotiations and then failed to qualify as a full member"[22].

While analyzing Turkey-EU relations another important point to keep in mind is that it is a supra-party issue in Turkey. For the last 50 years neither different

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[18] 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, p. 258.

[19] Ibid., p. 258.

[20] Atila Eralp, "The Role of Temporality and Interaction in the Turkey-EU Relationship", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No. 40, 2009, p. 150.

[21] Ibid., p. 150.

[22] Ziya Öniş, "Contesting for Turkey's Political 'Centre': Domestic Politics, Identity Conflicts and the Controversy over EU Membership", *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 2010, p. 371.

political parties in power with different ideologies and priorities have given a break nor has any ruling party given up during this process. Even though governments may change their priorities in terms of foreign policy, the EU membership is the invariable aim of almost all ruling parties. Table 1 shows in what ways different political parties have contributed to this process since Turkey-EU relations started.

Table 1. Turkish Political Parties in the EU Membership Process

DATE	EVENT	LEADER	PARTY
31 July 1959	Application for Associate Membership of the EEC	Adnan Menderes	Democratic Party (DP)
12 September 1963	Signing of the Ankara Agreement	İsmet İnönü	Republican People's Party (CHP
23 October 1970	Signing of the Additional Protocol	Süleyman Demirel	Justice Party (AP)
14 April 1987	Application for Full membership to the EC	Turgut Özal	Motherland Party (ANAP)
1 January 1996	Completion of the Customs Union	Tansu Çiller	True Path Party (DYP)
12 December 1999	Recognition of the Candidate Status of Turkey	Bülent Ecevit	Democratic Left Party (DSP)
		Mesut Yılmaz	Motherland Party (ANAP)
		Devlet Bahçeli	Nationalist Action Party (MHP)
17 December 2004	The Resolution for Starting the Negotiations	R. Tayyip Erdoğan	Justice and Development Party (AKP)
3 October 2005	Starting the Accession Negotiations	R. Tayyip Erdoğan	Justice and Development Party (AKP)

The milestones presented in the above table lead us to the idea of viewing the EU process as a *supra-party state policy* for Turkey. And this process should not be merely considered as a foreign policy issue because it has led to political, economic and social transformation in Turkey. Thus the EU process is also a domestic policy and it is important to look at how the political parties stance on this issue.

Since 2005 Turkey-EU relations have come up to a divergence period due to external and internal reasons. In this period; Rejection of the UN (United Nations) Plan (Annan Plan) on Cyprus which sought the reunification of the island, and then the accession of the Greek Cypriot Administration to the EU as the unique representative of the Island, skeptical views to Turkey's EU membership of some European leaders such as Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy, and tensions in domestic politics of Turkey decelerating the EU reform process caused to a stagnation in Turkey-EU relations.

As of 2011 December, 13 of 35 chapters have been opened and only one of these chapters, Science and Research, was temporarily closed. The positive trend in Turkey-EU relations ended with the decision of the European Commission declaring that eight negotiation chapters would not be opened and none of the chapters would be closed unless Turkey opened its airports and harbors to Cyprus in accordance with a requirement of the 1963 Ankara Agreement[23]. Concomitant to this legal blockage there are also political obstacles for Turkey's negotiation process set by member states. France blocked five chapters[24] for being related with full membership. In addition to this, the Greek Cypriot Administration declared that they will unilaterally prevent the opening six chapters by referring to the Additional Protocol[25]. Given that, technically there are just three chapters that can be opened: Public Procurement, Competition Policy and, Social Policy and Employment[26]. That no new chapter has been opened since June 2010 is also an indicator for the stagnation of the EU negotiation process

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[23] Council of the European Union, Press Release of Council Meeting of General Affairs and External Relations, 11 December 2006, Brussels.

[24] These chapters are; Agriculture and Rural Development, Economic and Monetary Policy, Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Funds, Financial and Budgetary Provisions, Institutions

[25] These chapters are; Education and Culture, Energy, Judiciary and Fundamental Rights, Foreign Security and Defense Policy, Justice Freedom and Security, Freedom of Movement for Workers

[26] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU Accession Negotiations, available from http://www.mfa.gov.tr/eu-accession-negotiations.en.mfa, accessed on 28.12.2011

Table 2.The Current Status of the Accession Negotiations

Opened Chapters that are Temporarily Closed	The Chapters for which Turkey Presented its Negotiation Position	The Chapters that were Approved by the Council and for which the Opening Criteria has been Established	The Chapters for which the Council and the Commission Agreed on Sending the Screening Report
Science and Research	Education and Culture (Blocked by Southern Cyprus)	Free Movement of Goods*	**The Chapters are still Being Discussed in the Council**
Opened Chapters	Economic and Monetary Policy (Blocked by France)	Right of Establishment and Freedom of Provide Services*	Freedom of Movement for Workers (Blocked by Southern Cyprus)
Enterprise and Industrial Policy		Public Procurement**	Fisheries*
Statistics		Competition Policy**	Transport Policy*
Financial Control		Financial Services*	Energy (Blocked by Southern Cyprus)
Trans-European Networks		Agriculture and Rural Development* (Blocked by France)	Regional Policy and Structural Instruments (Blocked by France)
Consumer and Health Protection		Social Policy and Employment**	Judiciary and Fundamental Rights (Blocked by Southern Cyprus)
Company Law		Customs Union*	Justice, Freedom and Security (Blocked by Southern Cyprus)
Intellectual Property Law			External Relations*
Free Movement of Capital			Financial and Budgetary Provisions (Blocked by France)
Information Society and Media			**The Chapters are still Being Discussed in the Commission**
Taxation			Foreign, Security and Defense Policy (Blocked by Southern Cyprus)
Environment			
Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policy			

* In accordance with the decision taken by the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council on 11 November 2006, Additional Protocol is an opening criteria for these eight chapters.
** Only three chapters that underlined in the table can be opened technically.

Apart from the political blockages on the negotiation process some member states' leaders have started to question Turkey's Europeanness and its eligibility for full membership. Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy, leaders of Germany and France respectively, have objected Turkey's full membership and proposed alternative status such as privileged partnership[27]. These negative signals coming from Europe also negatively affected Turkish public opinion on EU. While the EU support in Turkish public opinion was 64% in 2002 and 71% in 2004, it decreased to 42% in autumn 2010[28]. Moreover among Turkish citizens trust to the EU was 21% in autumn 2010[29]. Considering these facts it can be said that Turkey-EU relations have been in a stagnation period since 2005. In this context it is worth to analyze the EU policy of the AKP which has been in power in Turkey since 2002 with a huge public support. Although the main aim of this study is to focus on AKP's EU policy by putting special emphasize on the post 2005 period, it is also necessary to conceive the MGH's ideology and its EU policies. Since founders of the AKP were mostly members of MGH, it is necessary to consider MGH's EU view in order to understand background and evolution of the AKP's EU perception. Accordingly I will cover the political parties emerged from MGH and their EU policies. After giving brief information on the EU policies of the Political Islamists I will focus on the AKP case in post 2002 period. I will subdivide the post-2002 period into two; the period between 2002 and 2005, and the post 2005 period. As the EU negotiation process has gone into a divergence period since 2005 due to factors mentioned above, this thesis seeks to compare the AKP's EU policies with regard to this time division.

In this study I will mainly use the interpretative-textual method. After giving a theoretical background about Euroscepticism and related concepts, I will examine the EU policy of the AKP and its predecessors by referring to the concept of Euroscepticism. The main aim of the thesis is to answer the question to what extent

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[27] For a detailed analysis of the concept of privileged partnership and its impact on Turkey-EU Relations see Seyfettin Gürsel and Beril Dedeoğlu, AB-Türkiye: Üyelik Yerine Özel Statü Tasarımının Analizi, Ankara, Ocak 2010.

[28] European Commission Public Opinion, Eurobarometre 74, Ulusal Rapor Turkiye, Güz 2010, available from http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb74/eb74_tr_tr_nat_pre.pdf, accessed on 11.12.2011.

[29] Ibid.

the AKP is a Eurosceptic party.   This study is based on various academic literature, print media, and official documents. In the context of academic literature the articles and the books related to the Eurocespticism, political parties' EU policies were analyzed. Furthermore party programmes, election manifestos, regular journals and other official documents of the AKP related to the Turkey-EU relations, and official documents of the EU such as regular Reports or Eurobarometer results were analyzed. Moreover the mainstream newspapers and internet news sites were scanned in order to seek what kinds of reactions came from party officials. By doing this I focused on important dates regarding the EU-Turkey relations.

This study consists of five main parts. Following the introduction in the second chapter which is the theoretical and conceptional part, I will summarize the literature on the issue in a comparative way and try to see whether those theories and approaches on the political parties' EU policies are compatible with the Turkish case. Since most of the studies focus on the new EU members, specifically the Central and Eastern European Countries, I will use the concepts which are more compatible with the Turkish case. In this part I will try to answer the questions of "What is Euroscepticism?", "What are the factors that lead to Euroscepticism?", "What is Party-Euroscepticism?" and, "What are the roots of Euroscepticism in Turkey?" In the third chapter I will analyze the EU policies of the MGH. In order to understand the root of the AKP's EU policy this chapter seeks to clarify to what extent Political Islamists changed or modified their EU perception in time. In the fourth chapter I will focus on the AKP's EU policy by dividing into two period; 2002-2005 and post-2005. The main aim of this chapter is to make a comparison between the two periods of AKP regarding its EU policies. In other words to what extent AKP's EU policy has changed since 2005 will be discussed. Finally I will conclude by making a general evaluation of the AKP's EU policy.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Defining and Differentiating Euroscepticism

European integration has been an elite project mainly driven by the European elites and the bureaucrats. Substantially supported by the European elites the project of European integration has not been supported by the European public to the same degree. Neo-functionalist theory had envisaged that elites would be the driving force of integration and public would shift their loyalty to the European level as the European integration deepens and the public benefits from the integration. However in last twenty years it is observed that as the European integration has intensified, opposition and skepticism towards the EU have also increased[30]. Bureaucratic elites ignored the public opinion at the beginning of EU integration process and currently the public opinion has become one of the obstacles for further integration and enlargement. Today, even if its intensity, its types and its reasons are different, "*increased Euroscepticism* has been the corollary of increased integration"[31].

Euroscepticism at public and political level mutually affect each other. Therefore, although this thesis does not aim at analyzing opposition or skepticism towards the EU in public level, it is necessary to keep in mind this tendency in order to comprehend the Euroscepticism at political level. As Verney points out that Euroscepticism gained importance and emerged as a significant phenomenon in European integration with the early 1990s[32]. In the early 1990s Maastricht Treaty which brought a significant change to the EU was one of the most crucial attempts in challenging the national sovereignty and identity and its ratification was not very easy. In this sense the first important sign of the public Euroscepticism may be the

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[30] Taggart, op. cit., p.363.

[31] Ibid., p.363.

[32] Susannah Verney, "Euroscepticism in Southern Europe. A Diachronic Perspective", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 1, March 2011, p. 1

ratification crisis of Maastricht Treaty in Denmark. The treaty was vetoed at the referendum in Denmark and approved only with a second referendum. The treaty was also approved with a slight majority in France. This ratification crisis showed that European public had some dissatisfaction about the European integration. In this sense with the early 1990s EU issues have started to be discussed more within the frame of domestic politics and in Taggart and Szczerbiak's words "it has created its own politics at domestic levels"[33]. As a result of these discussions Euroscepticism has also gained further importance and been studied in literature more.

This thesis focuses on the AKP's EU policy after 2005 and seeks to explain whether the party switched towards a Eurosceptic approach or not. Therefore it is needed first to discuss the concept of 'Euroscepticism'. However it is not very easy to define and classify the term of Euroscepticism because it is a flexible term and there are many definitions made by different scholars. There are certain major debates regarding the definition of Euroscepticism; should all kinds of criticisms towards the EU be defined as Euroscepticism? Does Euroscepticism refer to total rejection of European integration? These questions led to disagreements among the scholars. Another problem for the researchers who study Euroscepticism is that scholars have generally focused on the factors leading to Euroscepticism than defining the term. Since there are many classifications of Euroscepticism and other concepts related with Euroscepticism, in this thesis I chose the most frequently used definition within the literature that is also the most applicable one for the Turkish model. In this part I will proceed with a literature review on Euroscepticism and present the ongoing debates concerning the definition of Euroscepticism.

Taggart and Szczerbiak made great contributions to the discussions of Euroscepticism and developed comprehensive definitions. Most of the current literature on Euroscepticism uses the definition of Taggart, according to which Euroscepticism "expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration"[34]. Actually according to Taggart, Euroscepticism does not incorporate a

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[33] Paul Taggart and Alex Szczerbiak, "Parties, Positions and Europe: Euroscepticism in the EU Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe", *SEI Working Paper*, No. 46, 2001, p.5.

[34] Taggart, op. cit., p. 366.

single position to the EU. There are three sub-groups of Euroscepticism. First there is one group of people who rejects the European integration completely[35]. Second some people support European integration in principle but criticize the EU for being too inclusive. In contrast the third group also supports European integration in principle but criticizes the EU for being too exclusive[36].

Although Taggart's conceptualization on Euroscepticism is useful, it is to some degree superficial and insufficient to understand the discourses of political parties and how their points of views differ from each other. Therefore Taggart and Szczerbiak classified Euroscepticism in their further research which focused on the party systems of CEEC (Central and Eastern European Countries) in candidacy periods. In this research they subdivided the Euroscepticism into two according to its intensity; **hard** and **soft Euroscepticism**[37]. According to this classification, **hard Euroscepticism** refers to "outright rejection of the entire project of European integration, and opposition to one's country joining or remaining a member of the EU". In principle hard Eurosceptics rejects any integration process in Europe and they object to the current form of European integration[38]. Accordingly hard Euroscepticism can also be called EU-opposition.

Soft Euroscepticism, according to Taggart and Szczerbiak "involves contingent or qualified opposition to European integration"[39]. Although soft Euroscepticism results from the objection to specific EU policies it is not "incompatible with the expressing the broad support for the entire project of European integration"[40]. Soft-Euroscepticism may also be defined as **policy-**

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[35] Later this group of people would be called as hard-Eurosceptic by Taggart and Szczerbiak see; Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2004, op.cit.

[36]Taggart, op. cit., pp. 365-366.

[37] Paul Taggart and Alex Szczerbiak, "Contemporary Euroscepticism in the Party Systems of the European Union Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe", *European Journal of Political Research,* Vol. 43, 2004, pp. 1-27

[38] Ibid., p.3.

[39] Ibid., p.4.

[40] Taggart and Szeczerbiak, 2004, op. cit., p.4.

Euroscepticism or national-interest Euroscepticism[41]. Political parties or public in general may adopt a soft Eurosceptic approach due to a specific EU policy that is regarded as against national interests. According to this definition in my opinion criticisms against Euro in Britain or Common Agricultural Policy in Poland are examples of soft Euroscepticism as these two countries are not against the principle of European integration; rather they criticize specific policies which are considered against their national interests. Because policy-Euroscepticism, according to Taggart and Szczerbiak, is mainly "a time and country specific phenomenon"[42] any political party may adopt a soft Eurosceptic approach according to circumstances. **National-interest Euroscepticism**, on the other hand, "involves employing the rhetoric of defending or standing up for 'the national interest' in the context of internal debates within the EU"[43]. Similar to the policy-Euroscepticism it is not against the idea of European integration. In this sense Lubbers and Scheepers focus on the importance on the nation-state and nationalist motivations which drive Euroscepticism[44]. Similarly M. Laren claims that "people are hostile towards the European project in great part because of their perceptions of threats posed by other cultures"[45]. Moreover M. Laren argues that people may oppose to the European integration because it may threaten nation-state not the individual's own life[46]. In this sense Beichelt points out politicians such as De Gaulle and Thatcher were very sensitive on the notion of nation-states and claimed that nation states should not be risked for the sake of European Integration[47]. As Taraktaş suggests "pre accesion strategy set up a

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[41] Ibid., p.4.

[42] Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart, "Opposing Europe: Party Systems and Opposition to the Union, the Euro and Europeanisation", *SEI Working Paper*, No. 36, 2000, p. 6.

[43] Ibid., p. 7

[44] Marcel Lubbers and Peer Scheepers, "Explanations of Political Euroscepticism at the Individual, Regional and National Levels", *European Societies*, Vol. 9 No.4, 2007, pp. 643-669.

[45] Lauren M. Laren, "Public Support for the European Union: Cost/Benefit Analysis or Perceived Cultural Threat?", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 64, No.2, 2002, p. 551.

[46] Ibid., p. 554.

[47] Timm Beichelt, "Euro-Skepticism in the EU Accession Countries", *Comparative European Politics*, Vol. 2, 2004, pp. 29-30.

hierarchical relationship between the EU and each candidate country"[48]. The EU conditionality may be seen as an imposition in such a relationship by the national public opinion and politicians in a candidate country. Accordingly national-interest Euroscepticism increases in candidate countries during the negotiation process. In this context some political parties may adopt a soft Euroscepticism focusing on the national interests in order to gain grounds in public. In other words during the accession process nationalist feelings in public are likely to increase and political parties may try to use this atmosphere to get popular support.

In a further attempt Sorensen defines Euroscepticism by dividing the term into three elements; *euro*, *sceptic*, and *ism*[49]. Regarding the term of "euro" it is important to clarify whether it refers to EU or the Europe. Secondly it is important to specify whether "sceptic" refers to outright rejection or "being open to persuasion"[50]. In this sense Taggart and Szczerbiak's definition of hard Euroscepticism is worth to discuss. Thirdly due to the "ism" it is debatable whether the Euroscepticism can be seen as an ideology alone or not[51]. According to Sorensen, Euroscepticism refers to "opposition to or skepticism towards the EU or Europe which may be directed towards the Union in its entirety or towards particular policy areas or developments"[52]. In this sense Sorensen's definition of Euroscepticism is very similar to Taggart's definition. Both scholars argue that Euroscepticism includes both opposition and scepticisim whether to the entire project of the EU or to some of its policies. Sorensen introduces four dimensions of Euroscepticism; *ideological*, *utilitarian*, *sovereignty-based* and *principled Euroscepticism*. While the **ideological Euroscepticism** is about how different ideologies evaluate the European Integration, **utilitarian Euroscepticism** is mainly about what economic gains are expected and achieved from the integration. Utilitarian approach is much related with the neo-

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[48] Taraktaş, op. cit., p. 251.

[49] Catharina Sorensen, "Love me, Love me not…A Typology of Public Euroscepticism", *SEI Working Paper,* No: 101, 2008, p. 5.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Catharina Sorensen, Types of Euroscepticism, *Danish Institute for International Studies*, 2006, available from http://www.eu-consent.net/library/Award_Winner2.pdf, accessed on 22.10.2011, p. 3.

functionalist theory because as people benefit economically with the integration, their loyalty will shift to the European Union[53]. **Sovereignty-based Euroscepticism** is related with the national identity and Sorensen refers to Anthony Smith's argument that national identity may not be transferred to the European level[54]. Lastly **principled Euroscepticism** refers to opposing to integration or cooperation totally. In this sense principled Euroscepticism is similar to Taggart and Szczerbiak's definition of hard Euroscepticism. In fact principled Euroscepticism according to Sorensen is more appropriate with Eurorejectionism because it refers to total rejection of integration[55].

Sorensen in her examination of Euroscepticism in Denmark, France and United Kingdom renames the four categories of Euroscepticism. In this work Sorensen uses the concepts of utilitarian and sovereignty-based euroscepticism again. However she includes **democratic euroscepticism** as the third type which refers to critique to the EU mainly because of its lack of democratic legitimacy. In other words European Parliament and people in general have little voice in EU issues and this has damaged the democratic structure of the Union. The last type of euroscepticism to Sorensen's typology is the **social euroscepticism** which refers to discontent with the limited Social Europe[56]. European Union, for Sorensen, has very much adopted liberal values and ignored the social welfare practices.

In the next chapter the theoretical debates on party Euroscepticism will be summarized.

2.2 Party-based Euroscepticism

Political parties are not unified institutions but they include different interests and ideologies. Moreover these different interests, debates and arguments may change according to both internal and external developments and conjecture. Similar to other policies or debates the political parties can be classified according to their

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[53] Sorensen, 2006, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

[54] Ibid., p. 6.

[55] Ibid., p. 7.

[56] Sorensen, 2008, op. cit., p. 8.

approaches towards the EU. Moreover they can be classified based on the concept of Euroscepticism.

In this part party-based Euroscepticism will be presented mainly by using the two categorization made by Taggart & Szczerbiak and Mudde & Kopecky. These scholars have influenced each other and reviewed their definitions and classifications as a result of these critiques. Taggart and Szczerbiak in their study which focuses on member and candidate states subdivided the Eurosceptic parties into two; *hard* and *soft Eurosceptic parties*[57]. In their typology *hard Euroscepticism* refers to

> Principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposition to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived[58].

There are two indicators to decide whether a political party is a hard Eurosceptic or not. Firstly, a party can be labeled as hard Eurosceptic on the condition that its fundamental aim is to oppose to the EU or EU opposition is the main character of the party. The second indicator is about the ideological position of the party and the "current trajectory of the EU"[59]. For example nationalist parties may oppose the EU because of its supranational character. In this sense hard Euroscepticism is more related with the opposition to the EU. *Soft Euroscepticism* on the other hand for Taggart and Szczerbiak refers to not a principled rejection or opposition to the European integration or EU membership of a country but a qualified opposition to the EU in some policy areas. Moreover soft Euroscepticism may exist in political parties in which "there is a sense that national interest is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory"[60]. For Taggart and Szczerbiak, soft

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[57] Paul Taggart and Alex Szczerbiak, "The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate States", *SEI Working Paper*, No. 51, 2002.

[58] Ibid., p. 7.

[59] Ibid., p. 7.

[60] Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2002, op. cit., p. 7.

Eurosceptic parties may perceive the EU problematic if the European integration "runs counter to interests, policies or issues that they support"[61].

Euroscepticism does not appear as a single form in political parties according to Taggart. He argues that Euroscepticism can exist in political parties in four ways[62]. Firstly, there are *single issue Eurosceptical parties* which exist just to oppose European integration and to gain popular support on EU issues. Secondly, there are *protest based parties with Euroscepticism* that have adopted Eurosceptic approach as a complementary to their general opposition to the political system. These parties are generally marginal parties "outside the established group of parties"[63]. Thirdly, there are *established parties with Eurosceptical position.* Established parties according to Taggart's classification are the parties in reign or those which have chance to be government and these parties can adopt Eurosceptic position according to conditions. Fourthly, there are parties which are pro-EU essentially but may have some Eurosceptical factions[64].

Kopecky and Mudde see weaknesses in Taggart and Szczerbiak's elaboration and developed their own approach for the political support to the EU[65]. They argue that typology of *hard-soft Euroscepticism* is not clear and by applying to this typology it is not possible to decide whether a party is pro-European or not. They also claim that there are different interpretations of European integration and it is very difficult to define Euroscepticism with rigid terms. For example they suggest that Taggart and Szczerbiak's definition of Euroscepticism is too inclusive and may include any sort of disagreement with the EU. In other words for Kopecky and Mudde when a pro-EU party expresses its criticism to an EU policy, that party should not be automatically called soft-Eurosceptic[66]. Neumayer also claimed that

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[61] Ibid., p. 8.

[62] Taggart, op. cit., p. 368.

[63] Ibid., p. 368.

[64] Ibid., p. 368-369.

[65] Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde, "The Two Sides of Euroscepticism: Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe", *European Union Politics*, Vol. 3 No. 3, 2002, pp. 297-326.

[66] Kopecky and Mudde, op. cit., p. 300.

although Taggart and Szczerbiak's typology was quite descriptive for the protest parties' EU polices, it is not sufficient to explain the mainstream parties' EU polices[67]. Rather Kopecky and Mudde categorize "oppositions to Europe by defining the term of Euroscepticism in relation to other party positions on Europe" and use two concepts; *diffuse* and *specific* support for European integration[68]. While *diffuse support* refers to "support for the general ideas of European integration", *specific support* implies "support for the general practice of European integration"[69]. As a result of their typology they have developed a four-type category regarding the parties' EU policies. According to this categorization both *Euroenthusiasts* and *Eurosceptics,* which are called *Europhiles* together*,* support the general principles of European integration. *Europhiles* believe in the concept of "pooled sovereignty" which is the political aspect of European integration and "integrated liberal market economy", the economic aspect of the integration. However such a kind of a division includes many groups who support the integration for different reasons. For example the federalists support the integration so that it would lead to a new type of a state in Europe. On the other hand some groups or parties support the integration mainly for economic reasons. While the *Euroenthusiasts* support the EU in theory and its current practice, *Eurosceptics* support the EU integration in theory but not its current form. In this sense it should be clarified that there is a significant difference between Kopecky & Mudde's definition of Euroscepticism and Taggart & Szeczerbiak's one. In Taggart& Szeczerbiak's conceptualization hard-Euroscepticism refers to "outright rejection of the entire project of European integration, and opposition to one's country joining or remaining a member of the EU"[70]. However Kopecky and Mudde do not make any division such as hard and soft Euroscepticism and argue that Eurosceptics refer to parties which support to EU integration with some critique to its current form. On the other hand *Eurorejects* and *Europragmatists* are called

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[67] Laure Neumayer, "Euroscepticism as a political label: The use of European Union issues in political competition in the New member States", European Journal of Political Research, Vol. 47, 2008, pp. 135-160.

[68] Kopecky and Mudde, op. cit.

[69] Ibid., p. 300.

[70] Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2004, op. cit., p. 3.

Europhobes and they do not "support the general ideas of European integration underlying the EU"[71]. *Eurorejects* oppose to the European integration in theory mainly because of ideological reasons such as nationalism, isolationism, or socialism. *Europragmatists*, on the other hand, do not evaluate the European integration with ideological considerations but with pragmatic considerations. They support the European integration as long as the integration provides utility for them. In short according to Kopecky and Mudde, Euroscepticism cannot be explained in essentialist and rigid terms. Rather they argue that Euroscepticism can take different forms and shapes, following from different visions of European integration and different interpretations of the EU[72].

Table 3. Typology of party positions on the EU

Europhiles	Europhobes
Euroenthusiasts	Europragmatists
Eurosceptics	Eurorejects

Source: Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde, "The Two Sides of Euroscepticism: Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe", *European Union Politics*, Vol. 3 No. 3, 2002, p. 303.

Kopecky and Mudde's definition of Europragmaticism was challenged by Szczerbiak and Taggart who argue that there is no party in current member states which "oppose to European integration in principle but supportive of the further extensions of EU sovereignty and deepening of integration process" just with the pragmatic considerations[73]. They also criticize the Euroenthusiast category for being too inclusive that divergent parties may be included into the same category[74].

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[71] Kopecky and Mudde, op. cit., p. 303

[72] Ibid., p. 304.

[73] Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart, "Theorising Party-based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement and Causality, *SEI Working Paper,* No. 69, 2003, p. 9.

[74] Ibid., p. 9.

In fact partly influenced by the Kopecky and Mudde's critique, Taggart and Szczerbiak accepted that their definition of soft and hard Euroscepticism is too broad and may include the parties which are pro-EU in essence[75]. As stated by Flood

> They recognize the need to recast the hard/soft distinction within a more comprehensive model to include positions in favour of different degrees and kinds of integration as well as those which oppose it in varying degrees[76].

According to the new definition of hard Eurocepticism, what is called Eurorejectionism by Kopecky and Mudde, refers to "principled opposition to the project of European integration as embodied in the EU"[77]. On the other hand soft euroscepticism, what is called simply euroscepticism by Kopecky and Mudde, refers to "not a principled opposition to the European integration but opposition to the EU's current or future planned trajectory"[78]. Szczerbiak and Taggart agree with Kopecky and Mudde on their statement that any criticism against the EU integration should not be perceived as a Eurosceptic approach. Almost all parties including the most pro-EU parties may have some criticisms against the EU. In this sense for Szczerbiak and Taggart qualitative criticisms have greater importance than the quantitive ones. For example opposing to Economic and Monetary Union is much more important than opposing to Common Fishery Policy for describing a party as Eurosceptic[79]. In this sense parties opposing to the core areas of the EU such as Common Foreign and Security Policy or Constitution for the EU can be described as Eurosceptic[80].

Similar to Szczerbiak and Taggart, Biechelt also suggests that Eurosceptic parties are the parties which are oppose to some fundamental principles of the European integration such as transfer of sovereignty, or economic integration[81].

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[75] Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2003, op. cit., p. 7.

[76] Chris Flood, "Dimensions of Euroscepticism", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 4, pp. 914.

[77] Ibid., p. 12.

[78] Ibid., p. 12.

[79] Ibid., p. 13.

[80] Ibid., pp. 13-14.

[81] Beichelt, op. cit., p. 36.

Biechelt argues that a political party which is substantially against the main principles and the practices of the EU, that party is called Eurosceptic even it has no anti-EU discourses[82].

There is another issue regarding the party-based Euroscepticism; the role of party-based Euroscepticism in domestic politics. Szczerbiak and Taggart in their study focused on how the political parties approach to the European integration and more specifically how the Euroscepticism play a role in inter-party competition[83]. For them EU issue is an important factor in domestic politics. They also suggest that "to what extent a party uses the issue of Europe in party competition depends on the party's electoral strategy"[84].

Regarding the EU issue and its effect on party competition Rohrschneider and Whitefield highlighted an important point that political parties' approaches on the EU and Euroscepticism are related with the domestic political debates[85]. For example if the economic issues dominate the domestic politics and party competition, Euroscepticism especially in opposition parties is stated in economic aspects. If the domestic politics is discussed with the nationalist discourses the parties evaluate the EU more with ideological and nationalist arguments and thus Euroscepticism becomes more related with the nationalist sentiments[86].

Regarding the party-Euroscepticism in literature there is also a distinction made between Euroscepticism and EU-scepticism. According to Kopecky and Mudde while Euroscepticism totally rejects the idea of integration, EU-scepticism supports the idea of integration but not the current form of European integration[87]. And as Biechelt argues a party may be Eurosceptic without adopting "anti-EU

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[82] Beichelt, op. cit., p. 36.

[83] Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2003, op. cit., p. 4.

[84] Ibid., p. 21.

[85] Robert Rohrschneider and Stephen Whitefield, "Political Parties, Public Opinion and European Integration in Post-Communist Countries", *European Union Politics,* Vol.7 No.1, 2006, p. 152.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Kopecky and Mudde, 2002, op. cit., pp. 302-303.

rhetoric if the party fundamentally disagrees with the main ideas of European integration"[88].

Under the light of above-presented approaches to Euroscepticism, in this thesis I will predominantly use the terminology of soft and hard Euroscepticism made by Taggart and Szczerbiak. I will also utilize the concept of Europragmatism used by Kopecky and Mudde.

2.3 The Factors Shaping Political Parties' EU Policies and Party-Euroscepticism

As mentioned in the previous part concepts describing the political parties' approaches towards the EU and definitions of Euroscepticism are controversial. Likewise there is also debate about the question of which factors are more important in shaping political parties' policies on the EU and Euroscepticism accordingly. In this sense the main debate is about whether a party's ideology which refers to long-term factor or strategy which is the short-term factor is more important in determining the party's approach to EU. In other words as Kopecky and Mudde questioned "is a party's position on European Integration to be changed whenever it is deemed strategically convenient, or is it grounded in the broader party ideology and thus less vulnerable to short-term political considerations?"[89]. Analyzing the Euroscepticism in Central and Eastern Europe Taggart & Szczerbiak suggest six propositions related with Euroscepticism in political parties[90]. Mainly referring to Taggart & Szczerbiak's study in this part I will summarize the factors affecting party Euroscepticism.

The **first factor** affecting the political parties' EU stances is the **party's ideology**. Kopecky and Mudde suggested that party's ideology is the main factor shaping the Euroscepticism in political parties[91]. According to Taggart and Szczerbiak it is not the party's ideology but the party position and strategy which shape the level of Euroscepticism in a political party. They argued that party

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[88] Beichelt, op. cit., p. 36.

[89] Kopecky and Mudde, op. cit., p. 319.

[90] For a more detailed analysis on Euroscepticism in Central and Eastern European Countries see Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2004, op. cit., pp. 5-8.

[91] Kopecky and Mudde, 2002, op. cit., p. 321.

Euroscepticism is not related with the parties' position on left-right spectrum[92]. It is also argued that a party can not be labeled as being Eurosceptic or not only by considering its ideology since there are different Eurosceptic parties both at left and right spectrum. In this regard it is not important to be at the left or right, rather it is important to be in the center or in the core of the political system. This factor will be mentioned later again.

On the other hand in Kopecky and Mudde's opinion "ideology is the crucial factor in explaining the positions that political parties adopt on issues surrounding the current process of European integration"[93]. They argue that there can be slight changes in parties' approaches on the EU, for example a Eurosceptic party can become Euroenthusiast or vice versa as both of them are Europhiles and support the general principles of European integration. However they cannot become Europragmatic or Euroreject. The parties, according to Kopecky and Mudde, "move their position on the dimension support for the EU but not on the dimension support for European integration"[94]. That political parties with the same point of view adopt almost identical discourses towards the EU proves that ideology as the main factor shapes both EU policies and Euroscepticism of the parties accordingly. In their article which analyzes the political parties in Central and Eastern Europe, Kopecky and Mudde presented that all social democrat parties are Europhile and all far right parties are Europhobes. Thus political parties in the same party family have similar views about the EU and party ideology is the main factor shaping the EU policies. However they also acknowledged that Taggart and Szczerbiak are right because strategic factors and being in government or in reign are also important factors affecting the parties' EU policies even if the main factor is the ideology[95]. Beichelt's opinion is also compatible with Kopecky & Mudde's argument because he argues that Euroscepticism is mainly the result of party ideology and in this sense "Euroscepticism fits well into the ideologies of two party families: nationalist and

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[92] Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2001,op. cit., p. 11.

[93] Kopecky and Mudde, op. cit., p. 321.

[94] Ibid., p. 319.

[95] Ibid., p. 320.

communist parties.[96]" Likewise Hooghe claimed that we can predict a political party's EU orientation if we know where that party stands on economically and politically. However domestic events and changes within the EU may also affect the political parties' EU approaches[97]. Similarly, as for Rovny, although both strategic and ideological considerations affect the EU policies of political parties, certain political ideologicies are more likely to adopt Eurosceptic stance[98].

Sitter combines these arguments and proposes that there are basically three factors which shape the parties' positions on EU affairs; **party's identity or ideology, their strategies on electoral competition and whether being opposition or government**. He argues that party ideology, which is the long term factor, is influential on the overall party's position on EU affairs and on whether the party adopts a Eurosceptic approach or not. If the party adopts a Eurosceptic position, it depends on tactical short term decisions which degree of Euroscepticism develops in that party[99]. Party ideology is the long term variable, but the competition between government and opposition and pursuit of "may be expected to have a more immediate impact on a party's Eurosceptic stance"[100].

Similar to Sitter's argument, Rohrschneider and Whitefield also argue that together with the "ideology and social characteristics of the party" national economic and social conditions may also affect the parties' EU policies[101]. Like Sitter, Rohrschneider and Whitefield argue that EU policies of the political parties cannot be explained by using one of these factors. According to them although ideological and social characteristics of the party are important on EU issues, national economic, social and political conditions are also effective in explaining party policies about the

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[96] Beichelt, op. cit., p. 30.

[97] Liesbet Hooghe, "What Drives Euroscepticism?: Party-Public Cueing, Ideology and Strategic Opportunity", *European Union Politics*, Vol. 8 No. 1, 2007, p. 7.

[98] Ibid., p. 36.

[99] Sitter, 2002, op. cit., p. 5.

[100] Ibid., p. 23.

[101] Rohrschneider and Whitefield, op. cit., p. 152.

European Union[102].According to Rohrschneider and Whitefield, political parties focus on some specific EU policies and criticize the EU mainly because of the characteristics of the political competition in that country. For example, if the debates on economic issues dominate the political competition in a country, political parties generally evaluate EU in accordance with the economic policies and successes. And "where nationalist issues dominate the domestic politics, integration and enlargement will to a greater extent take on these ideological clothes"[103]. In Turkey EU is discussed mainly via addressing the national interests and unitary of the state. Because the nationalism dominates the political atmosphere in Turkey in general, EU issues are discussed in the framework of nationalism and this leads to rising Euroscepticism in Turkey. In the literature there is no consensus on the question whether the party ideology or strategy is more important in to explain the political parties' EU policies. In this point lastly it is worth to note that ideology and strategy are not isolated from each other. As Neumayer pointed out "ideologies are created by politicians in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors and gain political capital"[104].

As a **second factor** determining the political parties' EU policies, related to the ideology-strategy debate, Sitter attaches greater importance to **being opposition or government**. He argues that political parties' approaches on EU are mostly affected by the parties' positions in the domestic politics[105]. He argues that it is very difficult for a governing party especially in a candidate country to take a Eurosceptic approach. According to Sitter the EU membership is "a project driven largely by member state governments, opposition to specific measures tends to be the privilege of the opposition"[106]. The main logic here is that opposing to EU membership is very costly for the governing party in a candidate country. If a governing party in a candidate country rejects EU membership, it will lose external economic and

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[102] Ibid., pp. 151-152.

[103] Ibid., p. 152.

[104] Neumayer, op. cit., p.141.

[105] Sitter, 2002, op. cit.

[106] Ibid., p. 12.

political support and also domestic social support. On the other hand for an opposition party there is no cost adopting a Eurosceptic approach. Opposition parties may easily take a Eurosceptic approach in order to manipulate the public and make pressure on the governing party. In this sense Sitter argues that even pro-EU parties may take Eurosceptic position when they are in opposition. One of the main arguments in Sitter's work is that opposition parties tend to transfer the EU issues to the domestic political debates and the parties may modify their discourses considering the other parties' EU discourses[107]. In this sense euroscepticism is mostly seen as an opposition party phenomenon in order to gain ground against governments, though not only peripheral parties but also mainstream parties might pursue Eurosceptic policies[108].

According to Taggart and Szczerbiak, **another factor** shaping the parties' positions on the EU affairs or the level of Euroscepticism is **position of that party in its political system**. This factor is about whether the party is at the **core or at the periphery** of the political system. According to Taggart and Szczerbiak wholly Eurosceptic parties are at the peripheries of their party systems while parties at the core of their party systems are generally not Eurosceptic[109]. They argue that if a political party is at the core of the system, in other words if it is government or potential government party, it is very costly to adopt a hard Eurosceptic approach. Because a widespread belief occurs in candidate countries that EU membership will bring economic, political and social benefits it is very difficult for the mainstream parties to reject accession process totally. Rather they sometimes could adopt a soft Eurosceptic approach when the public reduces its support to EU. On the other hand the parties those are at the periphery of the political system "are able to take Eurosceptic positions because this is a relatively cost-free stance"[110]. Having analyzed the Western Europe Sitter concluded that in Western Europe there are few

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[107] Ibid., p. 12.

[108] Nick Sitter, "The Politics of Opposition and European Integration in Scandinavia: Is Euroscepticism a Government-Opposition Dynamic?", *West European Politics*, Vol.24 No.1, 2001, pp. 22-39.

[109] Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2000, op. cit., p. 5.

[110] Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2004, op. cit., p. 5.

mainstream parties that adopt soft-Eurosceptic position and no one adopting hard Eurosceptic approach[111]. Similar to Sitter, Taggart and Szczerbiak also argued that "only protest parties are likely to adopt a hard Eurosceptic stance" and mainstream parties are generally pro-EU or soft Eurosceptic[112]. For example hard Eurosceptic parties are generally communist or far-right and nationalist parties in Europe and these parties "rely on the EU issue in their efforts to attract voters" as stated by Biechelt[113]. And it is difficult for a protest party at the periphery of political system to move into mainstream party scale without abounding its hard Eurosceptic approach[114].

This factor is also much compatible with the Turkish case because the EU membership has been seen as a state policy in Turkey, and mainstream political parties have not rejected the EU membership entirely. Political parties in Turkey has been aware of the fact that Turkey has strong relations with the EU and has a desire to become an EU member for more than fifty years so it is very costly for the political parties to abandon EU perspective totally.

The forth factor related to the political parties' support for the EU is the **expectations from the EU membership**. Rohrschneider and Whitefield argue that in order to comprehend the public or the political parties' support for the EU, it should be analyzed what kinds of expectations from the EU membership are envisaged by the public and parties[115]. This is also related with the concept of functional Europeanism developed by Conti. According to Conti functional Europeanist parties

> Refer to parties that ascribe their support to European integration to a prior goal: serving domestic interests or a specific party interest distinct from integration. In this case pro-Europeanism is functional to a goal other than European integration per se[116].

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[111] Sitter, 2002, op. cit., p. 14.

[112] Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2000, op. cit., p. 7.

[113] Beichelt, op. cit., p. 29.

[114] Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2000, op. cit., p. 7.

[115] Rohrschneider and Whitefield, op. cit., p. 144.

[116] Nicolo Conti, "Party Attitudes to European Integration: A Longitudinal Analysis of the Italian Case", *SEI Working Paper*, No: 70, 2003, p. 18.

Another factor affecting the political parties' positions on EU discussions is the "**national-difficulty criterion**" asserted by Lubbers and Scheepers[117]. They argue that political parties or public support the European integration more in international issues which are difficult to solve by individual countries, such as fighting crime and environmental issues. In contrast support for the EU decreases in more sensitive issues such as socio-cultural policy issues or foreign policy issues.

The last but not the least, **public opinion** is a very important factor that affects political parties' EU policies. Political parties determine their EU policies taking into consideration the public opinion. In other words a political party cannot pursue an EU policy significantly different from the general public opinion on the EU. Related with the public opinion, a country's prospects for accession is a very important factor determining the public opinion and levels of Euroscepticism[118]. The argument here is that as the membership becomes more apparent, the "costs will become more apparent while the benefits are still long term and abstract"[119]. Therefore Euroscepticism may increase during the negotiation process as to become closer to the membership. This is also related with the nature of negotiation process. Because the negotiation process between the EU and candidate countries is an asymmetric relation and "the EU effectively has absolute discretion over a country's progress towards the relationship it seeks"[120], it is possible that the EU requirements could be seen as impositions by the public and political parties in candidate countries. Moreover, the reforms which are made to fulfill the membership criteria generally have not brought apparent benefits for ordinary people.

In summary it can be said that there are mainly six factors, related to each other, affecting the political support for the EU. Among these factors in my opinion party's strategy depending on domestic politics is the most crucial factor in

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[117] Lubbers and Scheepers, 2007, op. cit., p. 226.

[118] Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2004, op. cit., p. 6.

[119] Ibid., p. 6.

[120] Erhan İçener, "Privileged Partnership: An Alternative Final Destination for Turkey's Integration with the European Union?", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 2007, p.426.

determining the political support to the EU. In other words parties adapt their policies related to European integration according to domestic party competition[121]. Political parties' approaches to EU can not be analyzed accurately without focusing on Contemporary Turkish Politics. Therefore in this thesis domestic politics and party competition will be referred frequently in order to analyze political parties' policies on EU membership.

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[121] Sitter, 2002, op. cit., p. 5.

CHAPTER III

EUROSCEPTICISM IN TURKEY[122]

As mentioned earlier Euroscepticism is a natural phenomenon in candidate countries because it is an unequal and asymmetric relationship in which the EU is the predominant actor and its directives are perceived as impositions. In other words EU membership negotiations is an asymmetric relation because the EU puts specific conditions and the other side, the applicant country, has to fulfill these conditions without getting a quick reciprocity. Moreover as Taraktaş pointed out Euroscepticism tends to increase in candidate countries mainly because of "the gap between people's expectations and the EU's actual performance"[123]. Similar to previous enlargement processes, in Turkey's negotiation process the increasing Euroscepticism in public and political level is a natural phenomenon due to this asymmetric relation. But there are also other factors such as the reluctance of certain EU members, which is different from other candidate countries.

In pursuant of Turkey-EU relation dynamics and the conjuncture of the period the Euroscepticism in Turkey changed in different ways. In 1970s and 1980s Euroscepticism sometimes raised mainly because of the economic factors[124]. In late 1990s and early 2000s Eurosceptic groups in Turkey were very weak. In this period as Eylemer and Taş suggest "pro-Helsinki dynamics have strengthened the position of pro-EU circles in Turkey.[125]" Both in public and political level, there was a big

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[122] Within this thesis, Euroscepticism and similiar concepts have been formulated to name EU policies of political parties and their EU critics. As the concept of Euroscepticism emerged within the EU in order to formulate the criticisms against the EU, it is debateble whether this concept is sufficient to explain the EU debates in Turkey. However this discussion is outside of the context of this thesis. As literature focuses generally on Eurosceptism while referring to the EU policy of Turkish political parties, these concepts have been included and taken into consideration.

[123] Taraktaş, op. cit., p. 250.

[124] Ayşe Güneş Ayata, "From Euro-scepticism to Turkey-scepticism: Changing Political Attitudes on the European Union in Turkey", *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2003, p. 220.

[125] Sedef Eylemer and İlkay Taş, "Pro-EU and Eurosceptic Circles in Turkey", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 23/4, 2007, p. 561.

pro-EU majority in this period. However after 2005 Euroscepticism has raised again in Turkey. Today the reasons behind rising Euroscepticism are not economical as it was in 1970s. Cultural identity issues and Turkey-scepticism in Europe as stated by Ayata are the main reasons of Euroscepticism in Turkey[126].

Although Euroscepticism rises and its different forms emerge in Turkey, as Yılmaz pointed out Eurorejectionism remained minimal in Turkey[127]. Except for far-left parties such as TKP (Türkiye Komünist Partisi- Turkish Communist Party)[128] or far-right parties such as SP (Saadet Partisi- Felicity Party)[129] and their supporter bases almost all parties and big majority of the public are positive about the Turkey's EU membership with some criticisms and reservations.

In this part I will examine the Euroscepticism in Turkey in two parts; public based Euroscepticism and party-based Euroscepticism. As the public support to the EU membership decreased in all candidate countries, as mentioned before, most politicians "turned to Euro-skepticism as a way to regain popularity"[130]. This is just the case in Turkey. In last years public support to the EU and the politicians' enthusiasm for the EU membership and the reform process have declined in parallel to each other. As the public based Euroscepticism and party-based Euroscepticism affects and shapes each other, in order to make a precise analysis on party-based Euroscepticism, which is the main topic of this thesis, it is needed to briefly look at public based Euroscepticism.

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[126] Ayata, op. cit., p. 220.

[127] Hakan Yılmaz, "Swinging Between Eurosupportiveness and Euroscepticism: Turkish Public's General Attitudes Towards the European Union", in Yılmaz, Hakan (ed), *Placing Turkey on the Map of Europe*, Istanbul: Bogaziçi University Press, 2005, p. 180.

[128] Türkiye Komünist Partisi, TKP, ABD'ye ve AB'ye neden karşı?, 12.09.2011, available from http://www.tkp.org.tr/tkp-abd-ye-ve-ab-ye-neden-karsi-1481, accessed on 31.10.2011

[129] Saadet Partisi, Program, available from http://www.saadet.org.tr/kurumsal/v-dis-politika/687 , accessed on 01.11.2011

[130] Anna Grzymalala, Buse, and Abby Innes, "Great Expectations: The EU and Domestic Political Competition in East Central Europe", *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 17, No.1, 2003, p. 69.

3.1 Public Opinion towards the EU and Public Euroscepticism in Turkey

Historically Turkey-EU relations are perceived as a process independent from the public opinion[131]. Turkey-EU relations are shaped and directed by the state elites regardless of the public opinion just as the European integration had emerged with support and initiative of the politicians and the bureaucrats.

The maintenance of the Turkey-EU relations independent from the public opinion had an impact on the literature and as Şenyuva also stated the studies concerning the Turkish public view about the number of the EU studies remained limited till 2000s[132]. However public opinion came into prominence in time and became much more effective on decision makers. Public opinion on the EU is important in adopting and implementing the reforms for membership. According to Şenyuva "the public's support is especially crucial in the implementation of these political changes"[133]. Therefore it is important to analyze how the public perceive the EU process in Turkey. Since it is not the main aim of this thesis, I will not explain the public support to the EU in detail. I will rather briefly analyze the Turkish public opinion on the EU giving specific emphasis to the concept of Euroscepticism. While doing this I will refer to the surveys made by Çarkoğlu[134], Yılmaz[135] and also Eurobarometer surveys[136]. The common point of all these studies is that public support to the EU membership has been decreasing currently. As mentioned before Euroscepticism is a growing phenomenon in Europe and Turkey, despite the reasons are different, is not an exception in this case.

In late 1990s and early 2000s EU image was good in Turkish public's eyes and Turkish public opinion had high expectations from EU membership and

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[131] Özgehan Şenyuva, "Türkiye Kamuoyu ve Avrupa Birliği 2001-2008: Beklentiler, İstekler ve Korkular", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol. 6, No. 22, 2009, p. 98.

[132] Özgehan Şenyuva, "Turkish Public Opinion and European Union Membership: The State of the Art in Public Opinion Studies in Turkey", *Perceptions*, Spring 2006, p. 19.

[133] Şenyuva, 2006, op. cit., p. 20.

[134] Ali Çarkoğlu, "Who Wants Full membership? Characteristics of the Turkish Public Support for EU Membership", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2003.

[135] Yılmaz, 2005, op. cit.

[136] European Commission Public Opinion, Eurobarometer Surveys, available from http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_arch_en.htm, accessed on 06.01.2012.

therefore the public support was high. In a survey made in 1996 public support for the EU membership of Turkey was 54.8 percent and it rose to 61.8 percent in 1998[137]. In 2001 according to the Eurobarometer survey 68 percent of Turkish citizens would vote yes in case of a referendum on Turkey's EU membership[138]. When it comes to 2002 a slight decrease in public support to the EU is observed. Çarkoğlu[139] and Yılmaz[140] determined the public support to the EU as 64 percent in 2002. Although the majority of public had a positive approach to EU membership, this support was lower than previous year. According to Yılmaz the most important reason of the decreasing support for Turkey's EU membership was the fear about the "political costs of meeting the Copenhagen Criteria"[141]. Abolishment of the death penalty, the need to find a political solution in Cyprus, and lifting the ban on broadcasting in Kurdish has been seen as sensitive issues in Turkey. And political parties' discourses in these issues also affected the public and this led to decreasing support for EU membership. In this survey it was also determined that Turkish public has not been sure about the benefits of these reforms. Only %37 of public has been in opinion that the reforms are beneficial for Turkey[142]. That the benefits of the reforms made during the EU process for the people are not clear and these reforms do not directly concern the people themselves is another reason for the decline in public support for the EU.

Although in early 2000s the majority of the public was in favor of EU membership, in the following years "a U-turn has been observed"[143]. Şenyuva argues

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[137] Necat Erder, Türkiye'de Siyasi Parti Seçmenleri ve Toplum Düzeni, Türkiye Sosyal Ekonomik ve Siyasal Araştırmalar Vakfı, 1999. p. 79.

[138] European Commission, Candidate Countries Eurobarometer 2001, March 2002, available from http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/cceb/2001/cceb20011_en.pdf, accessed on 24.09.2011.

[139] Çarkoğlu, 2003, op. cit., p.174.

[140] Yılmaz, 2005, op. cit., p. 153.

[141] Ibid., p. 153.

[142] Ibid., p. 154.

[143] Lenka Petkova, "Turkey's EU Membership and the Public Opinion", *Central & Eastern European Watch*, available from http://www.despiteborders.com/clanky/data/upimages/petkova_turkey_eu_public_opionion.pdf, 2008, p.4, accessed on 10.08.2011.

that spring of 2004 is a turning period because since this date the ratio of Turkish citizens who thinks that the EU membership will be a good thing has decreased constantly[144]. According to the Eurobarometer surveys the percentage of people who think that Turkey's EU membership would become a good thing was 71 in the first half of 2004, and decreased to 44 in the first half of 2006, to 49 in the first half of 2008, and until 2010 this ratio was always below 50%. According to the last survey of Eurobarometer in autumn 2010 percentage of people who think that Turkey's EU membership would become a good thing was 42%[145]. In terms of the decreasing public support to the EU, 2006 is a very important date because it was the year when the EU Commission declared that eight negotiation chapters would not be opened and none of the chapters would be closed unless Turkey opened its airports and harbors to Cyprus in accordance with a requirement of the 1963 Ankara Agreement[146]. The public along with the political parties reacted to this decision and public support for the EU membership has declined more. Since 2006 Turks have argued that although Turkey has tried to achieve reforms which are necessary for the membership, EU on the other hand has tried to create new legal frameworks in order to make Turkish membership impossible when the Turkey will fulfill the accession criteria[147]. In this sense trust to the EU is very crucial. As mentioned through this thesis one of the most important factors of Euroscepticism in Turkey is the distrust to the EU especially the leaders of some member states[148]. According to the Eurobarometer surveys trust to the EU among the Turks was 25% in autumn 2007,

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[144] Şenyuva, 2009, op. cit., p. 101.

[145] Eurobarometre 74, op. cit.

[146] Council of the European Union, Press Release of Council Meeting of General Affairs and External Relations, 11 December 2006, Brussels, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/92122.pdf, accessed on 02.12.2011.

[147] Petkova, op. cit., p. 7.

[148] Eylemer and Taş, op. cit.

31% in spring 2008, 27% in autumn 2008, %38 in spring 2009[149] and lastly dropped to 21 % in autumn 2010[150].

In general it can be said that the positive view of Turkish public to the EU in early 2000's has been reversed since the mid 2000's and Turkish public opinion has adopted a more critical and a sceptical stance towards the EU. According to Şenyuva, regarding the Turkish public opinion to the EU there has been a fluctuating and unstable course and this situation is the result of the lack of stable and objective evaluation among the public and also the fact that Turkish public opinion is much affected from the daily events[151]. In other words Turkish citizens have generally much idea on the EU without sufficient objective information. In contrast with the other candidate and member states, the public in Turkey has the minimum subjective knowledge but the highest hope[152]. Thus their convention to support EU is heavily influenced by the daily news and their attitude towards EU may also be variable.

After reviewing the declining support for EU in Turkey and the accordingly rising Euroscepticism recently through statistical information, in the next part I will try to briefly explain the reasons of this case.

3.2 Factors that Lead to Euroscepticism in Turkey

There are both internal and external factors that lead to rise of Euroscepticism in Turkey and these factors can be summarized mainly in three groups. Firstly Euroscepticism in Turkey is much related with the EU's position on Turkey. In this sense as Taraktaş suggests Euroscepticism in Turkey increases when the EU is seems reluctance to accept Turkey as a full member[153]. For example during the period between 1999, when Turkey was given candidate status, and 2002, when it was

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[149] European Commission Public Opinion, Eurobarometre 71, Ulusal Rapor Türkiye Bahar 2009, available from, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb71/eb71_tr_tr_nat.pdf , accessed on 24.09.201.1

[150] Eurobarometer 74, op. cit.

[151] Şenyuva, 2009, op. cit., p. 101.

[152] Ibid., p.120.

[153] Taraktaş, op. cit., p. 254.

decided that negotiations would be started if Turkey achieved Copenhagen Criteria, public support to the EU was always above 60 % as mentioned in previous part. In other words because there was a relatively positive view to Turkey within the EU during the early 2000s, support to the EU was on the rise in Turkey. Contrary to early 2000s, when negative signals come from the EU after the mid-2000s, public opinion to the EU started to decrease and Euroscepticism was on the rise in Turkey. On 3 October 2005 the accession negotiations started however during the summit the concepts of privileged partnership and absorption capacity were discussed and as Eylemer and Taş pointed out "these kinds of tensions strengthen the suspicious of Eurosceptics in Turkey"[154]. Blockage of negotiations due to the Cyprus issue in 2006 and alternative statues proposed by French, Austrian and German leaders have led to disappointment and distrust among Turkish public and political elites. These negative signals from the EU have been conceived as double standard on Turkey. 45 percent of people believe that "Turkey is subject to negative discrimination" by the EU[155]. Eurosceptics also claim that accession process does not offer "a clear timetable for membership"[156]. EU's failure on Cyprus issue is one of the most significant examples for its double standard and unfair treatment in the eyes of the Turkish public opinion[157]. Apart from the proposed alternative statues such as privileged partnership and unresolved Cyprus issue according to Demiralp who was the former General Secretary for EU Affairs as the European leaders highlight the issues of geography, culture and population regarding the Turkey-EU relations, Turkish public opinion has lost its confidence in the EU[158]. In this sense "It is more suitable to describe Turkish public opinion as distrustful instead of pessimistic

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[154] Eylemer and Taş, op. cit., p. 564.

[155] Hakan Yılmaz, "Euroscepticism in Turkey: Parties, Elites, and Public Opinion", *South European Society and Politics*, 2011, p.16

[156] Eylemer and Taş, op. cit., p. 564.

[157] Ziya Öniş, "The New Wave of Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey", *DIIS Report*, January 2009, available from http://www.diis.dk/graphics/Publications/Reports2009/DIIS_report_2009-05_New_wave_of_foreign_policy_activism_in_Turkey_web.pdf, accessed on 11.12.2011.

[158] Euractiv, Demiralp: 'Turks increasingly distrustful of EU membership process', 01 November 2007 available from http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/demiralp-turks-increasingly-distrustful-eu-membership-process/article-168061, accessed on 11.12.2011.

towards the EU membership process"[159]. Similarly Taraktaş argues that despite the fact that Euroscepticism is a natural consequence during the negotiation process the main difference between the Turkey's accession process and the previous enlargement process is the distrust to the EU in Turkey. She also stated that "the Turkish case thus illustrates how the uncertainty of the accession affects public opinion and party positioning on the EU issue"[160].As a result Turkish public is of the opinion that the EU will not accept Turkey as a full member even if Turkey meets the criteria.

Eurosceptics render the economic aspect of Turkey-EU relations as being one-sided and disadvantageous for Turkey. For example it is argued by Eurosceptics that conclusion of Customs Union without full membership created an unbalanced relationship between EU and Turkey[161]. Moreover without taking part in decision making process of Customs Union, Turkey may be damaged from economic relations with third countries[162]. In this sense for Eurosceptics "Under the Customs Union framework, Turkey is in a position of "implementer" but not "decision-maker"[163]. Due to these factors Eurosceptics claim that the Customs Union has not brought Turkey closer to the EU but made Turkey more dependent to the EU[164]. Besides the Customs Union, the issue of financial support is another factor criticized by Eurosceptics. As Eylemer and Taş state EU is accused by Eurosceptics of giving very little financial support to Turkey as compared to other candidates[165].

Thirdly nationalism "is one of the essential keys to understand Euroscepticism in Turkey"[166]. Concepts such as national interests, national values,

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[159] Ibid.

[160] Taraktaş, op. cit., p. 249.

[161] Eylemer and Taş, op. cit., p. 566.

[162]Ibid.

[163] Erkan Erdoğdu, "Turkey and Europe: Undivided but not Divided", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 6. No.2, 2002, p. 44.

[164] Eylemer and Taş, op. cit., p.567.

[165]Ibid., p.568.

[166] Claire Visier, Euroscepticism in Turkey: European Ambiguity Fuels Nationalism, 7th Annual Turkey-EU Conference, Barcelona, 12-13 January 2007.

integrity and unity of the state are the concepts which have been much referred in Turkey-EU discussions. As Taraktaş argues "pre-accession strategy, by challenging national sovereignty erodes motivations for EU membership in the candidate countries, and increases nationalistic reactions"[167]. In this sense rise of nationalism is not a situation particular to Turkey. Regarding the Turkish case EU's insists on democratization, human rights, minority rights, peaceful settlement of Kurdish question and some EU members' arguments on the Armenian issue have led to suspicious on Turkish public opinion. In this sense according to the survey of Yılmaz, 52 percent of the respondents argue that EU membership will have a negative impact on Turkey's national sovereignty[168]. With regard to EU conditionality Nationalist Eurosceptics in Turkey fear that EU conditionality will lead to disintegration in Turkey similar to Tanzimat and Sevres[169]. These people have claimed that as the state gives rights to different ethnic and religious groups, these groups will not become more loyal to the state, rather they intends more to secede from the state[170]. In this sense Yılmaz claims that for Eurosceptics the real intention of the Europeans is to divide Turkey through the political criteria[171]. Yılmaz conceptualizes this situation as "Tanzimat and Sevres syndromes"[172].

Regarding the nationalist discourse in Turkey towards the EU it should also be kept in mind that Euroscepticism in Turkey increases in parallel with anti-Westernism[173]. Because the main fear in Turkish public about EU membership is the loss of national identity, Western powers including the EU are perceived as threat to Turkey. As Öniş and Yılmaz indicated in the eyes of the Turkish public there is no

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[167] Taraktaş, op. cit., p. 249.

[168] Yılmaz, 2011, op. cit., p.15.

[169] Hakan Yılmaz, "Two Pillars of Nationalist Euroscepticism in Turkey: The Tanzimat and Sevres Syndromes", in Ingmar Karlsson and Annika Strom Melin (eds), *Turkey, Sweden and the European Union: Experiences and Expectations*, Stockholm: SIEPS (Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies), 2006, pp. 29-40.

[170] Ibid., pp. 29-40.

[171] Ibid., p. 34.

[172] Ibid., pp. 29-40.

[173] Yılmaz, 2011, op. cit., p. 3.

clear difference between the Europe and the United States, rather both are seen as Western by the Turkish public[174]. Therefore the start of Iraq War in 2003 resulted to a strong anti-Westernism rising nationalism in Turkey[175]. Dedeoğlu also points out that globalization, Westernization and the EU accession process are perceived as identical by the Turkish public opinion and any antagonism to globalization and Westernization lead to opposition to the EU [176]. This also led to rise of Euroscepticism in Turkey.

With regard to Euroscepticism in Turkey Taraktaş correctly points out "ulusalcılar" have emerged as a reactionary nationalist movement[177]. This movement includes secularist and nationalist sentiments and criticized both the EU and the US for posing threat to national sovereignty and integrity. This group has no strict ideology and it includes different parts of the society. The common ground of these people is to protect the state against both internal and external threats. Europeans' reluctance to accept Turkey as a full member has also increased the Eurosceptic sentiments of this group[178]. Regarding the nationalist sentiments in Turkish public media has also provoked the people with its discourses. In short, nationalism is an important factor affecting Euroscepticism in Turkey and we should not forget that even in the periods when the EU support was at the highest level there was concern and doubt among Turkish public that EU membership may bring threats to Turkey's national interests and national security[179].

Lastly the general characteristics of Turkish public opinion on the EU may be summarized. In the light of the findings of the surveys made by Çarkoğlu in 2003[180]

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[174] Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz, "Between Europeanization and Euro-Asianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 2009, p.15.

[175] Ibid., p. 15.

[176] Beril Dedeoğlu, "Türkiye'de AB Karşıtlığı-Küreselleşme Karşıtlığı İlişkisi", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol. 7, No. 28, 2011.

[177] Taraktaş, op. cit., p. 254.

[178] Ibid., p. 255.

[179] Çarkoğlu, 2003, op. cit.

[180] Ibid.

and by Yılmaz in 2005[181] EU support in Turkish public was determined in direct proportion with education and income level[182]. On the other hand according to Çarkoğlu's survey in 2003 EU support decreases among the people who identify themselves with religious or ethnic elements[183]. However high EU support among Kurdish nationalists is an exemption. From this point of view it is necessary to change the statement 'Nationalists are more sceptic towards EU" as "Turkish nationalists are more sceptics towards EU'. When it comes to 2011 Çarkoğlu and Kentmen found no direct relation Kurdish ethnicity and Alevi orientation and the EU support[184]. Regarding the ideological aspect the people who identify themselves on the left are generally more supportive to the EU[185]. In religious aspect Yılmaz found that the people who are loyal to Islamic values are more skeptical to the EU than the people who describe themselves as secular[186]. However Çarkoğlu and Kentmen in 2011 found that "religion is insignificant in determining support for EU membership"[187]. Lastly the voters of the mainstream parties are more positive to the EU than the voters of far-right and far-left parties[188].

The ground of the AKP is mainly conservative and middle income class and according to the survey of Yılmaz and Çarkoğlu EU support is not very high among these people. In this sense it should be noted that "government performance and partisan preferences are also influential in shaping attitudes concerning EU membership"[189]. Since the AKP voters are satisfied with the government's works in

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[181] Yılmaz, 2005, op. cit.

[182] Çarkoğlu, 2003, op. cit., p. 174.

[183] Ibid., p. 181.

[184] 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. 375.

[185] Yılmaz, 2005, op. cit., p. 157.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Çarkoğlu and Kentmen, op.cit. p. 375.

[188] Çarkoğlu, 2003, op. cit., p. 179.

[189] Çarkoğlu and Kentmen, op.cit. p. 375.

general, they also may be positive towards the EU despite the negative effects of religious identity on the EU.

3.3 Party-Based Euroscepticism in Turkey

As mentioned earlier EU membership has been perceived as the state policy and the requirement of modernization and Westernization process in Turkey. Mainstream political parties from both the left and right have supported the EU process at least in principle[190]. However, despite the general support to the EU process by the mainstream political parties, Euroscepticism exists in almost all political parties at varying degrees. In other words as Ayata correctly states since Turkey signed Ankara Agreement with European Economic Community "there has been no political tendency that has not gone to some degree through a stage of Euroscepticism"[191]. Political parties do not easily abandon soft Euroscepticism because they may use this discourse in order to get votes of Turkish public who mistrust the EU. On the other hand radical nationalists and Islamists are the small political groups that adopt hard Euroscepticism but these groups constitute the minority of the politics[192]. Today political parties are aware of the fact that there has been an increasing Euroscepticism in Turkey which goes hand in hand with anti Westernism. Therefore in order not to lose public support, none of the political parties have given a clear and unconditional support to the EU.

In my opinion Euroscepticism is very typical in a country which has fluctuant relations with the EU. Chronologically speaking in Turkey EU support was very high in 1980s and early 2000s and accordingly Euroscepticism was very little in these years. After the 1980 military coup all radical parties and movements which were opposed to the EU were suppressed in Turkey and remaining mainstream parties were generally pro-EU parties[193]. In 1987 Turkey applied to the EC for full membership under these conditions. In mid 1990s PKK terror and intense debates

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[190] Öniş, 2007, op. cit., p. 249.

[191] Ayata, op. cit., p. 206.

[192] Yılmaz, 2011, op. cit., p. 5.

[193] Ibid., p. 10.

between secular and Islamic groups caused political parties to focus on domestic politics so EU issues were not on top of their agenda. In 1997 refusal of the candidate status for Turkey by the EU triggered the Euroscepticism in Turkey, and political parties have a more critical approach towards the EU. Two years later Turkey was given the candidate status and after then as Öniş stated Europeanization process started in Turkey and political parties became one of the most important actors in this process. Moreover, parties have also experienced a transformation process themselves [194]. Between 1999 and 2005 EU support was very high and Euroscepticism was very little in Turkey at political level. McLaren and Baç made a survey in 2000 which aimed to investigate the parliamentarians' approaches on the EU process. They deduced that despite some negative developments and ups and downs in Turkey-EU relations, a big majority of parliaments favored Turkey's EU membership[195]. In 2011 Akşit et al. made a survey with 62 members of parliament and confirmed that 98.4 % of the MPs think that EU membership will be a good thing for Turkey. It shows the unified support for Turkey's membership of the EU among the MPs[196].Despite the high level of EU support among the MPs, the most crucial problem is the lack of trust to the EU and its institutions. Akşit et al. argued that the lack of trust may have negative impact on the reform process because it damages to the credibility of the EC (European Commission)[197].

Three-party coalition in which the MHP existed embraced the EU process and new laws were adopted in order to meet Copenhagen Criteria between February and August 2002. In this period debates on the abolition of death penalty, reforms for broadcasting of Kurdish led to reactions to the EU. In this sense MHP was the leader of soft Euroscepticism and national-interest Euroscepticism although it was in the

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[194] Öniş, 2007, op. cit., p. 247.

[195]Lauren M. Mclaren and Meltem Müftüler-Baç, Turkish Parliamentarians' Perspectives on Turkey's Relations with the European Union, in Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (eds), *Turkey and the European Union: Domestic Politics, Economic Integration, and International Dynamics*, London ; Portland : Frank Cass, 2003.

[196] Sait Akşit, Özgehan Şenyuva and Işık Gürleyen, "The Turkish Parliamentary Elite and the EU: Mapping Attitudes Towards the European Union", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol.16, No. 3, September 2011, p.399

[197] Ibid., p. 400.

coalition government. Once it took the office after 2002 general elections AKP accelerated the reform process until 2005. After 2005 Euroscepticism has increased in almost all political parties even at the governing party which had given clear support to the EU until 2005.

After 2002 elections there were only two parties in the parliament; AKP and the CHP. These parties were pro-EU and got 55 % of the total votes. In this period it can be claimed that pro- EU circles constituted the majority of the political area. According to Yılmaz's findings in 2002 elections Eurosceptic parties, MHP, SP (Saadet Partisi-Felicity Party), and GP (Genç Parti-Young Party) got almost 20 % of the votes and pro-EU parties acquired 79 % of the votes. When it comes to 2007 elections, the votes of Eurosceptic parties increased to 40 %, while the pro-EU votes decreased to 59 %[198]. There are mainly two reasons for this change. Firstly MHP, a Eurosceptic party, increased its votes in 2007. Secondly CHP had been perceived as pro-EU party in 2002 but the party tended to adopt a soft Eurosceptic approach in 2007 elections. Thirdly it should be noted that independent candidates especially in South Eastern of Turkey acquired high votes from Kurdish citizens and these candidates formed Democratic Society Party (DTP) after the elections and clearly supported the EU process[199]. For the 12 June 2011 elections it is difficult to make this kind of a calculation because the CHP under the leadership of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu has modified its discourses in many issues including the EU process but it is very early do decide whether the CHP will turn into a strong pro-EU party or stay as a soft Eurosceptic party.

Considering the political groups in Turkey, according to Ayata historically there are mainly three political groups which historically take Eurosceptic position from time to time; nationalist parties, leftist parties and Islamist parties.[200] In part 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 nationalist parties and leftist parties will be analyzed in terms of Euroscepticism. Islamist parties and their views on the EU will be analyzed in chapter IV.

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[198] Yılmaz, 2011,op. cit., p. 12.

[199] Ibid, p.12.

[200] Ayata, op. cit.

3.3.1 Nationalist Parties and Euroscepticism

Nationalists despite their general support to the Westernization and European Integration have adopted Eurosceptic approach mainly due to the "EC's unfavorable approach to Turkey" [201]. Moreover nationalists are always skeptical to the supranational character of the EU due to its harms on independence of state. As Avcı states, "similar to its European counterparts, the MHP rejects any loss of sovereignty to a centralised European bureaucracy"[202].

It is interesting that the MHP supported coalition government that proposed to revive the relations with the EU which had been suspended in early 1980s[203]. However the same party has adopted a more sceptic stance to the EU in 1990s mainly due to the end of the cold war and the emergence of new Turkic states in Central Asia[204]. In 1970s MHP adopted an anti-EU discourse but they have considered the Europe as a part of the Western Bloc against communism which they regarded as the most vital danger since 1980. However when the cold war and the communism danger came to an end in 1990s, they offered to boost the relations with newly born Turkic Republics and they even started to claim that the Customs Union may damage to this relation with those countries[205]. Therefore the EU lost its priority for the nationalists. The transformations within the EU have also become influential on MHP to become a Eurosceptic. As the EU started to take steps towards being a political union, MHP which gives priority to the concepts such as national sovereignity and identity, approached to this process sceptically.

In 1990s and 2000s the nationalists adopted a soft Eurosceptic approach and gave a conditional support to the EU membership. Nationalists generally support the EU process as long as it does not harm Turkey's long term national interests such as

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[201] Ibid, p. 208.

[202] Gamze Avcı, "The Nationalist Movement Party's Euroscepticism: Party Ideology Meets Strategy", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2011, p. 438.

[203] Esra Çayhan, Dünden Bugüne Türkiye Avrupa Birliği İlişkileri ve Siyasal Partilerin Konuya Bakışı, Boyut Kitapları, 1997, p. 222.

[204] Ayata, op. cit., 211.

[205] Çayhan, op. cit., s. 431.

Cyprus or the minority issues[206]. Nationalists criticize the EU mainly because its stance on the issues of minority rights, Cyprus dispute, and its unfavorable approach and unwillingness to accept Turkey as full member. In general it can be claimed that in last ten years the tone of the Euroscepticism has increased within the nationalists in Turkey. Despite the increase in the dosage of Euroscepticism by the MHP, as Avcı argues the party is still soft-Eurosceptic party not a hard-Eurosceptic party. The party does not still adopt an outright rejection of EU[207].

3.3.2 Leftist Parties and Euroscepticism

Leftist political groups in Turkey adopt Eurosceptic approach in some period. Since the left wing includes many fractions within itself, it is possible to see different EU perspectives in Turkish left. Furthermore regarding the EU issues Turkish leftist political groups have changed their views over time[208]. Turkish Labour Party in 1960s was Eurosceptic and claimed that Common Market with the EC would lead to colonization of Turkey. Regarding the Common Market radical leftist groups had used the slogan of "they are the partner, we are the market"[209]. In this sense the discourses of far-left, radical Islamists and nationalists were similar. These groups had claimed that common market with the EC would lead to colonization of Turkish economy. Radical left in accordance with socialist ideology has looked to the issue on economic perspective and claimed that integration with the EU will become harmful for Turkish economy and Turkish workers. In this sense socialist left is a good example of hard Eurosceptic political group because they rejected integration with the Europe essentially. Liberal left, on the other hand, has been the most Euroenthusiastic section of the left wing as they have focused on the issues of human rights, democratization, and role of military over the politics and they have argued that these issues could be solved within the EU process[210]. On the other hand

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[206] Avcı, 2011, op. cit., p. 444.

[207] Ibid.

[208] Ayata, op. cit., p. 212.

[209] Ibid, p. 213.

[210] Ayata, op. cit., p. 214.

nationalist left which was represented by Bülent Ecevit and his party, DSP, is a good example of soft Eurosceptic and National-interest Euroscepticism in line with the Taggart and Szczerbiak's classification[211]. Ecevit and his party supported Turkey's EU membership such that it was the Ecevit led coalition that succeeded to get candidate status in Helsinki summit of 1999. However the party has put some reservations with the discourse of national interests[212]. Lastly Social Democratic group represented by the CHP has supported Turkey's EU membership in principle[213]. CHP perceives integration with the Europe as a necessity of the modernization and secularization process of Turkey which was the main aim of Atatürk[214]. It is the party which has perceived EU process as the continuation of Atatürk's reforms and modernization process and also signed Ankara Agreement in 1963[215]. However the party has sometimes adopted soft Eurosceptic approach due to the various reasons. In 1970s CHP has criticized the EU for economic reasons and CHP government in 1978 unilaterally suspended the relations with the EC due to the economic factors, and in 2000s the party has criticized the EU mainly because of its unequal treatment to Turkey and its demands from Turkey which perceived by the CHP against to national interests. In this sense Başkan argues that CHP under the Baykal leadership gave a conditional support to the EU and used nationalist sentiments in when talking about Turkey-EU relations[216]. She argues that CHP under the Baykal period was a soft-Eurosceptic party[217]. Gülmez also claims that CHP is a

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[211] Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2000, op.cit, p. 7.

[212] Ayata, op. cit., p. 214.

[213] Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Programı, available from http://www.chp.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/chpprogram.pdf, p. 124, accessed on 15.10.2011

[214] Deniz Baykal, Önsöz, in Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, "Tam Üyelige Evet Özel Statüye Hayır", Ankara, 2005.

[215] Ibid.

[216] Filiz Başkan, "Siyasi Partilerin Avrupa Birliği Söylemleri", in oğuz Esen and Filiz Başkan (eds) *Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye İlişkileri: Beklentiler ve Kaygılar*, Eflatun Yayınevi, Ankara, 2009.

[217] Başkan, op. cit., p. 104.

soft Eurosceptic party[218]. CHP has criticized both the EU and the AKP. After Kılıçdaroğlu became the leader of the party, CHP started to modify its policies including the EU process. The party has adopted a more positive approach to the EU under the leadership of Kılıçdaroğlu and the party started to criticize the AKP for moving away from the EU process[219]. However it is still early to predict to what extent the CHP will support the EU membership.

In general it can be said that soft Euroscepticism in Turkey is represented by central left parties and hard Euroscepticism is represented by Islamist and nationalist parties[220]. On the other hand central right parties represent the Euenthusiasm in Turkey and the AKP since 2002 has tried to label itself as a conservative central right party. Furthermore the parties coming from Kurdish political movement such as Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi-BDP) today are one of the most pro-EU groups in Turkey.

Table 4. Political parties in Grand Turkish National Assembly and the degree of EU support

Political Party	1995-2005	Post-2005
AKP	Strong Support	Qualified Support
CHP	Qualified Support	Euro-sceptic
MHP	Eurosceptic	Eurosceptic
DTP/BDP	Strong Support	Strong Support

Source: Ziya Öniş, "Contesting for Turkey's Political 'Centre': Domestic Politics, Identity Conflicts and the Controversy over EU Membership", *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3, September 2010, p. 368.

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[218] 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, 2008, pp. 4423-436.

[219] AB Haber.com, CHP: 'AB'den uzaklaşıyoruz', 25.10.2010, available from http://www.abhaber.com/haber.php?id=32195, acessed on 20.01.2011.

[220] Yılmaz, 2011, op. cit., p. 1.

Table 3 shows how the EU policy of the political parties in the parliament has changed in time. As can be seen on the table in Turkish politics the most coherent parties regarding the EU support are the Kurdish nationalists and the Turkish nationalists. While the Turkish nationalists are Eurosceptic, Kurdish nationalists are pro-EU because they believe that Kurdish problem can be better solved in an EU member country[221].

In Turkey EU issues have been transferred to the domestic politics especially after AKP came to power. Because the Islamist background of the party has led to suspicious among the secular circles in Turkey, pro-EU and the reformist agenda of the party has been questioned in domestic politics. As Öniş highlighted the shift from strong support to qualified support of the AKP and the shift from qualified support to soft Euroscepticism of the CHP have been in a sense a result of sustain the hegemony in domestic politics[222].

In the next part I will briefly analyze how the Political Islam in Turkey has perceived the EU and how its stance to the EU has changed in time.

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[221] Ibid, p. 17.

[222] Öniş, 2010, op. cit. p. 369.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL ISLAM IN TURKEY AND THE EU

In 2001 the AKP was founded under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan who was the former member of the MGH and former mayor of the metropolitan municipality of İstanbul. Although almost all founding members of the AKP came from the Political Islamist tradition, the new party tried to identify itself with the concept of "Conservative Democracy" [223]. This new concept includes adopting universal principles without abandoning the traditional values such as religion[224].

The leaders of the AKP were previously acting under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of MGH, who was pro-Islamist and against Western ideas and the culture[225]. However with the foundation of the new party, AKP, these people worked for Turkey's EU membership and achieved crucial reforms after coming to power in the 2002 elections. As Özbudun and Hale argue it is very paradoxical that the AKP having Islamist origins has become the most enthusiastic party supporting EU membership, and the CHP on the other hand which has traditionally supported EU membership has become more critical of the EU[226]. Karlsson also states that it is ironic that religiously oriented AKP together with Kurds have become pioneers of the pro-EU groups in Turkey[227]. In this sense "The AKP's ideological position concerning Turkey's integration with the EU deserves a great deal of attention"[228].

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[223] For the details on Conservative Democracy and the AKP see; Yalçın Akdoğan, AK Parti ve Muhafazakâr Demokrasi, Alfa Yayınları: İstanbul, 2004.

[224] Ibid, p. 22.

[225] Erbakan, op. cit.

[226] Özbudun and Hale, op. cit., p. 82.

[227] Karlsson, op. cit., p. 11.

[228] Ali Resul Usul, The Justice and Development Party and the European Union: From Euroscepticism to euro-enthusiasm and euro-fatigue, In Umit Cizre (ed), *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey*, Routledge: New York, 2008, p. 190.

Before the establishment of the AKP as Usul suggests modernizing elites which includes the liberal and central left and right of the political spectrum were the major driving force for Turkey's EU membership while the conservative and Islamist groups in which the AKP would emerge had deep suspicions about close relationship with the West and the EU membership[229]. However as a result of internal dynamics in Turkey in the 1990s, Islamists who were anti-Western in the past "have become the basic actor of transformation by means of a strong reliance of external factors".[230] From this point of view, the AKP's perception of Turkey-EU relations and transformation of a party with Islamic roots deserve further analysis[231].

Since the founding leaders of the AKP come from the MGH, as Doğan stated, "in order to shed some light on the EU policy of AKP" it is necessary to look at the EU policies of previous Islamist parties namely the MNP (Milli Nizam Partisi-National Order Party), RP, and the FP[232]. As Doğan argues political Islam in Turkey has experienced a structural transformation concerning the EU affairs since the 1970s that's why pro-EU stance of the AKP could not be comprehended ignoring this process[233]. According to Özbudun and Hale ideological transformation in Political Islam in Turkey started with the FP[234]. Many scholars analyzed this transformation and the pragmatic change in conservative/Islamist parties[235]. Scholars generally

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[229] Ibid, p.175.

[230] Duran, op. cit., p. 281.

[231] Usul, op. cit., p. 175

[232] Erhan Doğan, "The Historical Discoursive Roots of the Justice and Development Party's EU Stance" *Turkish Studies,* Vol. 6/3, 2005, p. 422.

[233] Ibid, p. 421

[234] Özbudun and Hale, op. cit., p. 57.

[235] For further readings on the *Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey* see İhsan Dağı, Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and Westernization", *Turkish Studies*, Vol.6, 2005, pp. 421-437; Burhanettin Duran, JDP and Foreign Policy as an Agent of Transformation, in M. Hakan Yavuz (ed), *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, University of Uteh Press: Salt Lake City, 2006; Şaban Tanıyıcı, "Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey: Islamist Welfare Party's Pro-EU Turn", *Party Politics*, Vol. 9, No. 4, 2003, pp. 463-483; Erhan Doğan, "The Historical Discoursive Roots of the Justice and Development Party's EU Stance" *Turkish Studies,* Vol. 6/3, 2005, pp. 421-437; R Quınn Mecham, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a

looked at the issue from the "instrumentalist approach" arguing that after pressured by the state elite in post 28 February process, RP and then FP started to look at relations with the EU in a more instrumental way. Political Islamists considered that they could not survive in politics unless Turkey would become more democratic. In that sense EU conditionality was regarded by these parties and politicians as an instrument in limiting the role of military and enhancing the individual liberties, above all, the religious liberties of Muslims. As will be mentioned in following parts Political Islam in Turkey transformed in 1990s and the EU process became a strategic instrument of Islamist parties' transformation from an Islamic and anti-Western discourse to a democratic and more open structure. In that sense Tanıyıcı called the EU process as "political opportunity structure" which means that "EU together with its normative structure influenced the direction of the Islamist party change"[236]. In this part this transformation will be analyzed in accordance with the time sequence.

Although the main aim of this thesis is to analyze the AKP's EU policy in post-2005 period, it is necessary to look at the MGH and its EU conceptualization. By doing this it will be easier to decide whether the AKP adopted the EU policy of the MGH or pursues a different approach. By analyzing MGH and its EU understanding it will also be possible to see the transformation of Political Islam and the impacts of this transformation on AKP's EU policy.

4.1 National Outlook Movement and the EU before the AKP

Islamist parties is one of the political groups which historically sceptic towards the EU[237]. Political Islamists were strongly opposed to the EU especially in 1970s. Erbakan, the founding leader of MGH, and his parties were critical of the EU due to economic, cultural and political reasons[238]. According to Erbakan the EU was a Christian club having imperialist wishes on Turkey. As will be analyzed in the

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Promise of Light: the Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 2004, pp. 339–358

[236] Tanıyıcı, op. cit., p. 479.

[237] Ayata, op. cit., p. 216

[238] Ibid.

following part MGH under the leadership of Erbakan modified its rigid stance towards the EU in time[239]. Despite the Movement's Eurosceptic stance the party especially in late 1990s adopted a more positive discourse to the EU. In Turkey political Islamists have been suppressed for being a threat to secular character of the state and their parties have been closed many times. With the 1990s EU has given much more importance to the democratization and the human rights and the political Islamists in Turkey perceived the EU as a tool to transform Turkey especially in the areas of democratization, human rights, religious liberties and the role of military on politics [240]. Verney claims that as of 1990s Islamists abandoned their hard Eurosceptic approach because they realized that "Europeanization, as a route to democratization, could create a framework allowing the formation of a stable Islamist government"[241]. The assumption of creating an "Islamist government" is so assertive but it is true that political Islamists especially in post 28 February period as will be seen in the next part has used Europeanization in order to enhance human rights and democratization in Turkey for their own interests. Welfare Party (Refah Partisi-RP), Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi-FP), Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi-SP) have taken a more positive stance to the EU and in this sense it will be discussed to what extent the AKP has distanced itself from the MGH with regard to the EU issues.

MGH emerged as an Islamic political movement under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan in late 1960s. The movement mainly adopted an Islamic discourse. Erbakan joined to the parliament after 1969 elections as an independent parliamentarian. Under the leadership of Erbakan four political parties were established until 2000s; MNP, MSP (Milli Selamet Partisi-National Salvation Party), RP and FP. All these parties emerged within from MGH were banned by the Constitutional Court on the grounds that they became the focus of anti-laicist activities. And after the closure of each party, another political party was established by the leaders of MGH. Today MGH is represented by SP[242]. One of the main

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[239] Ibid.

[240] Ibid, pp. 216-217.

[241] Verney, 2011, op. cit, p. 12.

[242] Saadet Partisi, Saadet Partisi, Milli Görüş'ün Tek Temsilcisidir!, 04.03.2011, available from http://www.saadet.org.tr/haber/saadet-partisi-milli-gorusun-tek-temsilcisidir, accessed on 06.01.2012.

characteristics of the movement was its anti-Western Outlook[243]. As a result of this anti-Western outlook Islamist groups have been traditionally among the Eurosceptic groups in Turkish Politics until the late 1990s when the paradigmatic changes occurred in the MGH. MGH perceived the Western World "as the source of problems in all Muslim states, and regarded the Western culture as danger for Muslim and Turkish culture"[244]. With regard to Europe, MNP, established under the leadership of Erbakan in 1970s as the first political party of MGH, clearly opposed to close relations with the EU. According to Necmettin Erbakan Turkey's social structure and its identity was not compatible with those of Europeans. In fact Erbakan perceived the application for European Community membership as betrayal to Turkish and Muslim history, culture and sovereignty and argued that close relations with Europe would lead to Turkey's colonization[245]. Rather he proposed a common market with the Muslim states[246]. According to National Outlook leaders Turkey should position itself as the leading country of all Muslims, rather than being a subordinated partner to Europeans. Erbakan was so sceptical of EU membership that according to him in case of Turkey's membership to the EU, Israel would also join EU and in the end Turkey and the Israel would become the same country[247]. As for Erbakan the EU refers to a single state and the main aim is to create Great Israel with the membership of Turkey[248].

Another political party that stemmed from the MGH was the RP (1983-1998) which was established under the leadership of Erbakan after the 12 September 1980 military coup. Before coming to power RP was against Turkey's integration with the EU and establishment of the Customs Union in 1995. Abdullah Gül who was one of the leading figures in RP had criticized the Customs Union agreement in 1995. In his famous speech in the Turkish Grand National Assembly Gül praised his party as being the unique political party in Turkey opposing to the Customs Union

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[243] Duran, op. cit., p. 282.

[244] Usul, op. cit., p. 176.

[245] Erbakan, op. cit.

[246] Çayhan, op. cit., pp. 70-73.

[247] Özbudun and Hale, op. cit., p. 35.

[248] Ibid, p. 36.

Agreement. Gül also stressed that EU wanted to use Turkey for its own interests. Most interestingly Gül openly claimed that EU is a Christian Union and would not accept Turkey. For him Customs Union would not bring any advantages to Turkey and the government signed the Customs Union Agreement just because to prevent pious people to live in a more Islamic way in Turkey[249]. This is very interesting in understanding of Political Islamists because Gül who is the current president and was one of the founders of AKP has become one of the most supportive politicians of Turkey's EU membership with the foundation of the AKP. Moreover, Gül acted as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister respectively, in years when EU-Turkey relations were booming and the AKP government was ambitiously engaged in active policy making toward the EU accession process.

After the RP became the first party in the elections of 24 December 1995, it started to adopt a more tolerant approach to the EU and Customs Union. According to Usul, RP changed its policy "mainly because Erbakan suspected that the president would not call him to form a government because of the rigidity of his arguments on Turkish politics and the EU"[250]. As Usul claims Erbakan tried to convince Turkish statist elites and the public for not changing the traditions in Turkish Foreign Policy[251]. After the elections RP formed a coalition government with the DYP (Doğru Yol Partisi- True Path Party), which was clearly a pro-EU party and supported the Customs Union[252]. Despite the general tendencies of the RP on foreign policy, the coalition government's program stated that they would further enhance the relations with the EU. As Doğan points out, the government program reflected a balance and was referring to a conditional support to the EU, because EU policies of these two parties were not fully compatible[253]. In this program it was stated that the government would seek to progress the relations with the EU

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[249] Abdullah Gül, TBMM Genel Kurul Tutanagı, 8 Mart 1995, available from http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tutanak_b_sd.birlesim_baslangic?P4=618&P5=T&PAGE1=58&PAGE2=72 , 12.11.2011.

[250] Usul, op. cit., p. 177.

[251] Ibid.

[252] Çayhan, op. cit., p. 429.

[253] Doğan, op. cit., p.426

By considering cost–benefit balances within the framework of relations among equal states, without sacrificing the principles of national sovereignty, state integrity and Turkey's national interests.[254]

Katz and Mair argue that to be in power leads to constraints and limitations on political parties' policies[255]. This argument fits well with the RP case in Turkey because as can be seen above there was a clear shift in RP's EU policies after becoming coalition partner following the 1995 elections. In other words being in power limited the anti-EU and anti-Western stances of the RP. In that respect, it is also worth referring to Sitter's argument which suggests that there is no cost for an opposition party opposing to the EU membership so "Euroscepticism is mainly the politics of opposition"[256]. RP was much critical in opposition because anti-EU approach had not brought any cost to the party. However, as mentioned above, the party could not maintain its hard anti-EU stance while staying in power.

It should also be noted that it is very difficult to change all directions of Turkish foreign policy. Thus it is quite understandable for RP to moderate its rigid policies towards the EU. Although RP decreased its tone towards the Western world, it should not be forgotten that Erbakan did not visit any Western country during his government. Moreover he did not participate in the EU summit meeting in Dublin in 1996[257]. Furthermore Erbakan launched the D-8 (Developing 8) initiative consisting of Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey when in power. Although this initiative could not create great effects in world politics, it matters in Turkish foreign policy which had traditionally been tied with the Western World[258]. Obviously these developments display that Erbakan aimed to increase relations with the Muslim world but could not totally reject the Western world and

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[254] Ibid.

[255] Richard S. Katz, and Peter Mair, "The Evolution of Party Organizations in Europe: The Three Faces of Party Organization", *American Review of Politics Vol.* 4, 1993, pp. 593–617.

[256] Sitter, 2002, op. cit., p. 3.

[257] Hasret Dikici Bilgin, "Foreign Policy orientation of Turkey's Pro-Islamist Parties: A Comparative Study of the AKP and Refah", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2008, p. 411

[258] İlhan Uzgel and Bülent Duru, AKP Kitabı: Bir Dönüşümün Bilançosu, Phoenix Yayınları: Ankara, 2009, p. 15.

the EU due to the traditional Turkish foreign policy discourse and the potential pressure coming from the statist elite.

Tanıyıcı correctly points out that although the RP like other Islamic Parties was an "ideology-seeking party" and aimed to transform the Turkish foreign policy, it also aimed to get power in order to implement its policies[259]. Therefore it was logical to tone down the severe critiques towards the EU[260]. There is also another factor for the policy change of the RP. Although the RP was not a pro-EU party, Erbakan and his friends

> Welcomed the pressures from the EU concerning the human rights abuses in Turkey and the non-democratic nature of the Turkish political regime, in particular the position of the National Security Council and the military in general.[261]

This was mainly the result of an overlap between EU conditionality and the party's efforts concerning the transformation of the Turkish politics and society. Here we see the pragmatic/opportunist views of the Erbakan and his friends towards the EU.

4.2 28 February Process and its Effects on EU Policies of Political Islam

28 February 1997 is one of the most important dates in Turkish democratic history. At the regular meeting of National Security Council on 28 February 1997 the government in which Erbakan was the Prime Minister was given a list of proposals aiming to "prevent what the Council saw as Islamization of the country"[262]. After the National Security Council summit harsh discussions on the secularist structure of the state were made in political and public level. For some circles Erbakan and his party were accused of being against secularism. As a result of these pressures the Erbakan government resigned in June 1997. This period was called *28 February Process* and *post-modern military coup* in Turkish democracy literature. The 28 February process

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[259] Tanıyıcı, op. cit., p. 465.

[260] Ibid.

[261] Usul, op. cit., p. 177.

[262] Tanıyıcı, op. cit., p. 474.

not only affected Turkey's democratic structure but also its foreign policy discourse and relations.

In post-28 February period regarding the Turkey-EU relations, Islamist politicians and intellectuals started to perceive the EU membership more positively because they thought that democratic structure and human rights could not be improved with internal dynamics of Turkey without any foreign pressure. As one of the members of parliament from the AKP stated they acknowledged with the February 28 that in Turkey they could not achieve some things on their own so EU can be a helpful anchor in decreasing the role of military or enhancing individual liberties[263]. Islamist politicians aimed to transform politics and society in Turkey in order to enhance their own fundamental rights and freedoms. In this context perceiving the difficulties of transforming the society as an Islamist party, Erbakan and his friends changed their policy and started to use European norms in order to gain legitimacy in Turkey. As Tanıyıcı points out the party leaders realized that their problems could only be solved if Turkey would be a member of the EU[264]. They realized that there was a convergence between the Copenhagen Criteria and their wishes to transform Turkish politics and social structure. In order to enhance fundamental rights and freedoms and to limit the role of military in Turkey, EU norms and values were perceived as an anchor and the unique peaceful way to transform Turkey[265]. Because the basic promise of the RP to its voters was to enhance religious liberties such as lifting the ban of headscarf, they started to use EU norms in order to enhance the individual liberties. Following the 28 February process many Islamists started to think that "religious rights in Turkey would be better protected under the EU[266].

RP leaders comprehended that it is pragmatic and logical to use a more positive discourse on EU-Turkey relations in order to put pressure on government for

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[263] Senem Aydın and Ruşen Çakır , "Political Islam in Turkey", *CEPS Working Document* No. 265/April 2007, p. 5

[264] Tanıyıcı, op. cit., p. 475.

[265] Doğan, op. cit., p. 428.

[266] M. Hakan Yavuz, "Cleansing Islam from the Public Sphere", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54, N. 1, 2000, p. 40.

individual and political freedoms. With the 28 February post-modern military coup the Political Islamists had suddenly became pro-EU because they discovered the EU as a shield against the pressure of secularist circles[267]. In other words, as Dağı pointed "universal norms and values have been discovered to be protective of Islamic groups and their identity"[268]. After a closure case for the RP was launched in 1997, party leaders referred to the EU process criticizing the democratic deficits of Turkey. Moreover Erbakan claimed that the Council of Europe would suspend Turkey's membership if the Constitutional Court banned the RP[269]. While in opposition RP had severely criticized the EU in accordance with the general ideology of the MGH, it became less critical after getting power in 1995 and more positive after 28 February 1997 in order to gain legitimacy and to guarantee its sake. Abdullah Gül's speech in the parliament after the 1997 Luxembourg Summit, where Turkey was not included in the enlargement process, was one of the cornerstones in that sense. In his speech Gül criticized the current and previous governments for not meeting the necessary criteria[270]. Recalling Gül's speech of 1995 in which he overtly criticized the EU, it is interesting to record a tremendous change within two years. In that sense political parties' reactions to that EU decision were remarkable. After the Luxembourg Summit while almost all mainstream political parties in Turkey criticized the EU's decision, leaders of MGH used this decision for making pressure on governments to focus more on human rights and democratization. In other words, according to RP leaders EU did not grant Turkey the candidate status rightfully because Turkey did not improve its democratic standards[271]. This ironic situation clearly showed MGH's instrumentalist approach on the EU issue.

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[267] Özbudun and Hale, op. cit., p. 69.

[268] İhsan Dağı, "Rethinking Human Rights, Democracy, and the West: Post-Islamist Intellectuals in Turkey", *Critical Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol. 13/2, 2004, p. 141.

[269] Usul, op. cit., p. 177.

[270] Abdullah Gül, TBMM Genel Kurul Konuşması, 20.12.1997, available from http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/d20/c040/tbmm20040032.pdf, accessed on 13.01.2012.

[271] Tanıyıcı, op. cit.,p p. 477-478.

RP was banned by the Constitutional Party on 16 January 1998, and almost 150 deputies of the RP transferred to the Virtue Party (FP) which was established just a month ahead of judgement. As Özbudun and Hale suggest although almost all cadre of the RP were transferred to the FP, the new party was more moderate and deliberate[272]. With regard to foreign policy, unlike its predecessor FP was more positive towards to the Western World in general and the EU in specific. For example Recai Kutan, the leader of the new party as Erbakan was banned, focused on the importance of democratic standards of the EU and demanded a new constitution which would meet the Copenhagen Criteria[273]. Although the EU policy of the Virtue Party was close to the RP[274], in compliance with the general understanding of MGH, it decreased its negative tone to the EU and the Customs Union mainly because of two reasons. First reason is mainly economic and related with the advantages getting from the Customs Union. "The growing class of middle-sized Anatolian businessmen, organized under Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (MUSIAD),"[275] had started to use opportunities of the Customs Union. According to Dağı realizing the economic benefits of the Customs Union was also one of the reasons why the RP modified and moderated its discourses towards the EU in last years of its political life[276].

Another reason for the FP's moderate stance to the EU was political and related with the future of Islamist parties in general. 28 February post-modern military intervention has made two great effects on political Islamists' policies. Firstly, they understood that if they did not make their discourses more moderate, their political future would be at risk under the pressure of Kemalist establishment. Therefore they modified their rigid stance on some issues including the relations with the EU[277]. Secondly, they became more supportive of human rights and democracy.

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[272] Özbudun and Hale, op. cit., p. 33.

[273] Ibid, p. 42.

[274] Doğan, op. cit., p. 427.

[275] Ibid, p. 427.

[276] İhsan Dağı, Kimlik, Söylem ve Siyaset: Doğu-Batı Ayrımında Refah Partisi Geleneği, Ankara: İmge Yayınevi, 1998

[277] Doğan, op. cit., p. 427.

They realized that they could survive in politics if only Turkey would be a more democratic state. These pro-Islamists considered that fundamental problems of Turkish democracy and human rights issues would only be solved by adopting Western values. So, membership of the EU was seen as the best way. Therefore EU's criticisms of the undemocratic structure of Turkish politics and the dominant role of the military over civil politics reflected the main concerns of the FP[278]. They considered that if Turkey became more democratic and respectful to human rights, it would be more difficult to ban Islamist parties. In sum they believed that Copenhagen Criteria "represent a solution for their long-lasting political problems and insecurities"[279]. In other words "Because the end of RP-DYP coalition within the 28 February process taught them much about the difficulties of staying in power without having a working democracy with proper institutions"[280], they considered the EU as a solution for their sustained problem of insecurity in Turkish political structure. In this conjuncture the Virtue Party gradually transformed its stance on the issue of EU membership in a more open and supportive way[281].

As a result of the 28 February process, as Doğan stated, a "dynamic young reformist" group comprehended the "realities of government and the real world"[282]. This is also one of the factors that led FP to adopt a more moderate approach towards the EU. Following the 28 February process the "modernist faction began to redefine itself in order to become compatible with the realities of a secular political system"[283]. This reformist group in which Gül and Erdoğan were leading figures would also become the leaders of new party, AKP.

Although the FP was formed and ruled by the same cadre of the RP, it did not consider the EU as "Christian Club but as an institution embodying universal

[278] Ibid.

[279] Ibid.

[280] Ibid, p. 428.

[281] Ibid.

[282] Ibid.

[283] Hasan Turunç, "Islamicist or Democratic? The AKP's Search for Identity in Turkish Politics", *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, April 2007, p. 81.

democratic values".[284] Considering the continuous changes in MGH's understanding of democracy and relations with the EU, I argue that FP's policies on EU issues did not reflect any divergence from the MGH but a result of transformation process occurred within MGH.

As an explanation for the changes of their EU policies, National Outlook leaders stated that EU had also changed in 1990s and started to give more importance to democratization and human rights. According to Gül EU now "represented human rights and democratic standards"[285]. Asserting this argument, in my opinion, Islamists tried to justify their transformation and to declare that there was no inconsistency with their previous views on the EU.

As a conclusion it can be argued that in 1990s Islamist politicians changed their discourses on the EU in time mainly because of pragmatic reasons. According to Yavuz, the 28 February Process created an opportunity for Political Islamists to discover Europe as an area which protects and strengthens human rights and democracy. Therefore they became the main supporters of Turkey's EC membership[286]. Üzgel also stated that the 28 February process did not end the problem of reaction in Turkey but led to the transformation and renewal of political Islamists in Turkey[287]. They started to view EU as a tool in order to transform Turkey in economic, political, and social terms. In other words the problems that Turkey faced would only be solved if Turkey joined the EU[288]. However one important idea of MGH did not change until the establishment of AKP. Despite the transformation of the Islamist parties and their approaches to the EU, they were still against political integration with Europeans. Although they acknowledged the economic benefits of the Customs Union and the EU's democratic conditionality, they opposed to full membership and political integration.

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[284] Tanıyıcı, op. cit., p. 464.

[285] Ibid, p. 477.

[286] Özbudun and Hale, op. cit., p. 42.

[287] İlhan Uzgel, "AKP: Neoliberal Dönüşümün Yeni Aktörü", in İlhan Uzgel and Bülent Duru (eds), *AKP Kitabı: Bir Dönüşümün Bilançosu,* Phoenix Yayınevi, 2009, p. 16

[288] Tanıyıcı, op. cit., p. 475.

Lastly, in 2002 elections both the SP and the AKP adopted a pro-EU approach[289]. However since 2002 SP started to adopt a hard Eurosceptic approach[290] while the AKP has continued its support to the EU[291]. In my opinion by changing its tolerant EU approach to a hard Eurosceptic approach SP aimed to differentiate itself from the AKP and to get Islamist anti-Western votes in Turkey. In brief Islamists have become more positive to the EU in time. In sum, today political Islamists are still hard Eurosceptic and the AKP which was established by former Islamists is supportive for the EU membership in my opinion.

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[289] Ayata, op. cit., p. 217.

[290] Saadet Partisi, Program, available from http://www.saadet.org.tr/kurumsal/v-dis-politika/687 , accessed on 01.11.2011

[291] Justice and Development Party, Party Programme, available from http://eng.akparti.org.tr/english/partyprogramme.html, accessed on 15.10.2011.

CHAPTER V

JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY AND THE EUEOPEAN UNION

AKP was formed in 2001 under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who was one of the important figures of MGH and former mayor of İstanbul between 1994 and 1998. The majority of the founders and leaders of AKP were members of the FP until 2001. In 2000 two camps were emerged within the FP; reformists and traditionalists. In the congress of the FP in 2000 Abdulah Gül, as the candidate of reformist group, competed for presidency of the party against Recai Kutan who was the candidate of traditionalist and supported by Erbakan. This election competition was the sign of dissolution of the party. As a result, the reformist group established the AKP in 2001. And the traditionalist group formed SP after FP was closed by Constitutional Court in 2001.

As Karlsson states when AKP came to power in 2002 many people feared that the party would pursue a secret agenda and transform Turkey into an Islamic society[292]. However, contrary to the Third World and Muslim World oriented foreign policy of the MGH, "AKP does not equate globalization with Western imperialism"[293]. They have implemented a Western-oriented foreign policy and perceived the EU as a union not to remain outside of it[294]. AKP is also in the opinion of globalization and Europeanization being the guarantee for political and economic stability in Turkey[295].

In this chapter AKP's EU policy will be analyzed in two sub-periods. The first period begins from the 3 October 2002 elections when the AKP came to power or even from the establishment of the AKP in 2001, ends in 2005 when the

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[292] Karlsson, op. cit., p. 11.

[293] Menderes Çınar, "Turkey's Transformation Under the *AKP* Rule", *The Muslim World*, Vol. 96, July 2006, p. 475.

[294] Bilgin, op. cit., p. 414.

[295] Duran, op. cit., p. 286.

negotiations started and the Cyprus issue became a crucial problem. This period can be called *the Golden Age of Europeanization in Turkey*[296] because EU was the main policy agenda in Turkey and as a result of the reform process negotiations started in 2005. The leaders of AKP, as a result of 28 February process, realized that they "needed the Western values of democracy and human rights in order to build a front against the Kemalist/secularist center and to acquire legitimacy through this new discourse"[297]. That is why they adopted a pro-Western and pro-EU stance. In this period AKP combined domestic and foreign policy issues in order to use the external factors for the transformation of Turkey. In other words domestic politics in Turkey were Europeanized in this period.

On the contrary the second period can be called *loss of EU enthusiasm* which "corresponds to a certain loss of enthusiasm and commitment on the part of the government to what was previously the focal point of Turkish foreign policy, namely joining the EU as a full member"[298]. In this period there has been growing criticisms to the EU and loss of enthusiasm for EU membership in AKP. In the next part I will try to explain the reasons behind AKP's pro-EU position between 2002 and 2005.

5.1 Early Years of AKP and its EU Enthusiasm

In general elections of 3 October 2002 AKP got 34 % votes and formed a single-party government under the Prime Ministry of Abdullah Gul[299]. Ever since its foundation, in parallel with its multidimensional foreign policy agenda in which the close relationship with the West is one of the priorities, AKP has chosen a rather different way than the MGH. The EU issues constituted a significant position in AKP's foreign and also domestic policies[300].

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[296] Öniş and Yılmaz, op. cit., p. 13.

[297] Dağı, 2006, op. cit., p. 92.

[298] Öniş and Yılmaz, op. cit., p. 13.

[299] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who was the leader of the AKP could not run in the elections due to his sentence. Hence the president Ahmet Necdet Sezer gave Abdullah Gul the right of forming the cabinet. After the sentence of Erdogan was lifted he won a by-election in Siirt and became a member of parliament. After that the cabinet resigned and Erdoğan formed a new govermnent in which he became Prime Minister and Gul became the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

[300] Usul, op. cit., p. 190.

One day after the general election, Erdoğan clearly declared that their first priority would be EU issues[301]. As Uğur and Yankaya stated, adopting a strong pro-EU stance "the AKP distanced itself not only from other parties with an EU-skeptic approach but also from its predecessors" namely MNP, RP and FP[302]. As Karlsson states AKP was so enthusiastic for the EU membership that the

> Government did more in two years than all Kemalist postwar predecessors to bring Turkey along the route to Europe through a reform package which lead to the decision at the EU-summit in Copenhagen in December 2004 on starting negotiations with Turkey[303].

AKP paid much attention to the EU process that Erdoğan became the first prime minister of Turkey who visited all member states of the EU[304].

The founders of AKP were coming from MGH and experienced the 28 February process. Because the 28 February process had shown that Islamic parties may be suppressed by the secularist state elite, AKP leaders declared that they abandoned their National Outlook shirt[305]. AKP leaders declared that they were not the successor of National Outlook Movement but that of the Democrat Party which had been a central right party[306]. As Eralp indicates the conservative AKP government, even before coming to power, abandoned the traditional Islamist foreign policy understanding based on antagonism to the Western world and accepted the

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[301] Radikal, Erdoğan: İlk iş AB, sonra ekonomi var, 4 November 2002, available from http://www.radikal.com.tr/index.php?tarih=04/11/2002, accessed on 30.11.2011.

[302] Uğur and Yankaya, op. cit., p. 592.

[303] Ingmar Karlsson, Turkey in Europe but not out of Europe?, TESEV Yayınları, May 2009, p. 11.

[304] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, *Türkiye Bülteni*, Şubat 2004, Sayı 9.

[305] Milliyet, Gömlek Kavgası, 22 Mayıs 2003, available from http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2003/05/22/siyaset/asiy.html, accessed on 01.11.2011.

[306] Zaman, Milli Görüş'ün değil Demokrat Parti'nin devamıyız, 17.05.2003, available from http://arsiv.zaman.com.tr/2003/05/17/politika/h2.htm, accessed on 30.11.2011; Milliyet, Milli Görüşü terk ettiler, 17.05.2033, available from http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2003/05/17/siyaset/siy01.html, accessed on 30.11.2011.

"EU anchor" as well as the "IMF anchor" "as the backbones of economic and political stability in Turkey[307].

The party officials stated that the new party would not be based on Islamic values but on conservative and democratic ones[308]. The AKP's party program namely "The Development and Democratization Programme" did not include any reference to Islamic values but embraced market economy, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. In foreign policy it clearly pointed to the aim of full membership to the EU[309]. Although the leader cadre of the AKP was generally composed of previous pro-Islamist parties, AKP had defined itself as a "conservative democrat"[310] so that there would be no suspicions about their pro-EU stance and reformist identity. Unlike MGH the party declared that they perceive the EU not as a Christian Union but a civilization and peace project and an alliance of values[311]. The party labeled itself loyal to market economy, democracy and to EU membership like almost all center-right parties in Turkey[312]. In this sense as Posch noted AKP has tried to define itself as the heir of Özal who was the leader of central rightist ANAP[313]. Regarding the foreign policy AKP, according to party leaders, would not be an anti-Western or anti-EU party unlike the MGH.

AKP was so pro-EU that as Çarkoglu states there was no party before the 2002 general elections declaring a clear support to EU process and attaching importance to Copenhagen Criteria[314]. Çarkoglu also argues that it was very rational

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[307] Eralp, 2009a, op. cit., p. 159.

[308] Radikal, Erdoğan. İlk iş AB, sonra ekonomi var, 4 November 2002, available from http://www.radikal.com.tr/index.php?tarih=04/11/2002, accessed on 30.11.2011

[309] Justice and Development Party, Party Programme, available from http://eng.akparti.org.tr/english/partyprogramme.html, accessed on 15.10.2011

[310] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "Muhafazakar Demokrasi", *Türkiye Bülteni*, Sayı 3, ss. 29-31, Ağustos 2003.

[311] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "Tarihi Zirvede Tarihi Karar", *Türkiye Bülteni*, Ocak 2005, sayı 20

[312] Özbudun and Hale, op. cit., Önsöz.

[313] Walter Posch, Crisis in Turkey: Just another bump on the road to Europe, Institute for Security Studies Occasional Paper, 2007, No. 67, p.13, http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/occ67.pdf

for the AKP to adopt a pro-EU and a liberal stance because in general elections the party aimed to get floating votes which were mostly liberal votes[315].

Since its establishment AKP placed the EU process at the centre of its domestic and foreign policy agenda and this characteristic made AKP different from other political parties and its predecessors[316]. While almost all political parties in Turkey have clauses for EU membership, AKP was the only mainstream party declaring an open support to the EU membership. Even before coming to power in 2002, AKP had supported the reform process during the Ecevit-led coalition government. AKP regarded Turkey's EU membership as a causal result of Turkey's modernization process by arguing that Turkey will be a more democratic and modern country when the EU reforms are adopted[317]. In this sense as Uğur and Yankaya stated AKP together with the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSIAD) are unique actors in Turkey that adopted a clear pro-EU stance and they viewed EU process as a "window of opportunity"[318] in order to transform Turkey in a more democratic and economically strong country. They also differ from other political actors "who refrained from the reforms due to high political costs".[319] Similarly Çarkoğlu claims that the AKP was the unique political actor behind the EU project[320]. This is the most important reason for the widespread support to the AKP government in 2002. Liberal and central media, business organizations like TUSIAD, civil society organizations, and people who were dissatisfied with previous governments appreciated the pro-EU stance of the AKP and supported the party in the 2002 elections. For the liberal circles in Turkey such as TUSIAD, AKP was a chance for Turkey to realize economic, social and political transformation within the EU

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[314] Çarkoğlu, 2003, op. cit., p. 188.

[315] Ibid, p. 190.

[316] Uğur and Yankaya, op. cit., p. 592.

[317] Tanıyıcı, op. cit., p. 479.

[318] Ibid, p. 592.

[319] Ibid, p. 581.

[320] Ali Çarkoğlu, "A New Electoral Victory for the 'Pro-Islamists' or the 'New Centre-Right'? The Justice and Development Party Phenomenon in the July 2007 Parliamentary Elections in Turkey", *South European Society and Politics,* Vol. 12/4, 2007, p. 502

process. Therefore as Dağı states as long as it remained loyal to the EU process, AKP government would get the support of media and liberal and social democrat intellectuals and civil society which are the main actors shaping the public opinion[321].

AKP presented EU conditions as a requirement for Turkey's political and economic structure, and objected to arguments which claim that this conditionality is interference to Turkey's domestic affairs[322]. AKP also rejected the claims that EU conditionality would damage the unity of Turkey. Rejecting these nationalist arguments AKP leaders stated that promoting the democracy and human rights in Turkey would make positive effects to the unity of Turkey[323].

With regard to the historical and cultural characteristics of Turkey, unlike the Muslim world oriented foreign policy of MGH, AKP in the first years of its reign emphasized the European character of Turkey. Erdoğan argued that the Ottoman Empire was one of the important parts of European history and had played an important role in the emergence of today's Europe. Moreover, Turkish citizens have identified themselves as European since the Republican revolutions led by Ataturk. And finally, Turkey is a founding member of almost all European organizations and institutions. According to Erdoğan the factor that makes Turkey as European is the adoption of principles represented by Europe such as participatory democracy, pluralism, rule of law, human rights, secularism and, freedom of thought and conscience[324].

AKP government also focused on Turkey's contribution to the EU and the common characteristics of Turkey and the EU. As for Erdoğan there are mutual interests in politics and economics between Turkey and the EU. Erdoğan suggested that becoming a full member of the EU, Turkey could contribute to the re-shaping process of Europe and the global balance. Turkey becoming a member of the big European family could also protect its interests more powerfully and as a model

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[321] Dağı, 2006, op. cit., p. 101.

[322] Uğur and Yankaya, op. cit., p. 590

[323] Ibid.

[324] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "AB Perdesi Açılıyor", *Türkiye Bülteni*, Haziran 2003, sayı 1.

country could contribute to the spread of European values to its vicinity[325]. With Turkey's membership to the EU, relations between the EU and Islam countries will be more positive [326]. Furthermore, Turkey as a country where Islam and the democracy can exist together is a good model in preventing radical Islamism[327] and together with Europe Turkey could also disprove the argument of the clash of civilizations and rather construct the harmony of civilizations[328]. Gül also suggested that including Turkey the EU could be cradle of harmony among civilizations[329]. Similarly as for Erdoğan Turkey's membership to the EU is the project of this century and provide harmony to the relations among different civilizations [330]. Besides, the AKP government highlighted the demographic features of Turkey. Because Europe is ageing, Turkey's young population will bring dynamism to the Europe according to AKP officials[331]. Taking these contributions into consideration, as for AKP, Turkey will be an asset for the EU not a burden[332].

Briefly it can be said that despite the fears of the secular and Kemalist circles concerning the party's Islamist background, the AKP intended to identify itself as a moderate and reformist party and presented the EU membership as the most important policy aim.

5.1.1 The Factors that Made the AKP a Strong Pro-EU Party

In this part the factors of why the AKP adopted a pro-EU stance when it came to power in 2002 will be analyzed. There are basically two groups of factors;

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[325] Ibid.

[326] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "Röportaj: Mehmet Aydın", *Turkiye Bulteni*, Kasım 2004, sayı 18

[327] AB Haber, Bağış: Türkiye, AB üyeliğine 2014'de hazır olacak, 07.12.2010, available from http://www.abhaber.com/haber.php?id=32753, accessed on 31.01.2011.

[328] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "AB Perdesi Açılıyor", *Turkiye Bülteni*, Haziran 2003, Sayı 1.

[329] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, *Türkiye Bülteni*, Haziran 2004, sayı 13.

[330] Hurriyet, Erdoğan: Türkiye'nin AB üyeliği asrın projesi, 13.12.2004, available from http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2004/12/13/568764.asp, accessed on 16.01.2011.

[331] Adalet ve Kalınma Partisi, "Abdullah Gül: Türkiye AB için Hazır", *Türkiye Bülteni*, Temmuz 2004, sayı 14.

[332] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "Geleceğe Güvenle Yürüyoruz", *Türkiye Bülteni*, Aralık 2005, Sayı 20.

strategic factors which are related to the strategic importance of EU membership in foreign policy and domestic factors which are related to the background and the wishes of AKP.

Strategic considerations are the first group. AKP paid attention to the EU process due to strategic reasons and Turkey's possible gains within membership. Erdoğan suggests that in a globalized world it would be harmful for a country to remain outside a regional integration processes[333]. Moreover once the EU completes its enlargement process it would be the biggest economic and political bloc in the world. According to Erdoğan Turkey should not be outside of such an integration process. In this sense, Erdoğan in 2003 claimed that apart from Europe it is not possible to form strong cooperation and integration with neighbouring countries due to their chronic problems[334]. Like almost all political parties and majority of the society in 2003 AKP did not think about any alternatives to integration with Europe. Another strategic reason is about European Security and Turkey's role in this issue. AKP after coming to power acknowledged that unless Turkey becomes a full member to the EU, it would have no chance in involving to the decision making procedure regarding European security[335]. Another strategic factor is about the relations with Greece. Erdoğan was in the opinion that Greece would no longer be a threat for Turkey within the EU process. For Erdoğan as Turkey becomes EU member, the Aegean will no longer be a conflict region but a region unifying Turkey and Greece[336]. This strategic perspective of EU membership was the first reason for AKP's EU enthusiasm.

Apart from strategic reasons there are five domestic reasons which are related with the AKP's enthusiasm for the EU process. Before analyzing these domestic factors that made the EU process the primary policy priority for the AKP, it is worth

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[333] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, *Türkiye Bülteni*, Haziran 2003 sayı 1.

[334] Ibid.

[335] Ibid.

[336] Ibid.

referring to the concept of "functional Europeanism" that was developed by Conti[337].
According to Conti *functional Europeanist parties*

> Refer to parties that ascribe their support to European integration to a prior
> goal: serving domestic interests or a specific party interest distinct from
> integration. In this case pro-Europeanism is functional to a goal other than
> European integration per se.[338]

According to Conti political parties shape their EU policies with pragmatic
factors. A party may adopt a pro-European approach as if it serves to the other goals
of that party. In this sense AKP may be called as a functional Europeanist party
because as Dağı points "the needs of the AKP have overlapped with the demands of
the EU and its requirements for membership"[339]. As mentioned above there are three
reasons for the pro-EU stance of the AKP in its early years.

Firstly, as Duran argues Western-oriented foreign policy and the pro-EU
stance specifically was a tool for the AKP in order to show their differences from the
MGH and to get legitimacy within public[340]. When the AKP came to power many
people including the state elites and the Kemalist circle in Turkey feared about the
party's policies. In this sense having experienced the 28 February Process the AKP
knew well that electoral victory does not necessarily mean that the party would be
welcomed in the eyes of the secularist state elites[341]. The leader cadre of the AKP
claimed that they have transumed and abandoned National Outlook shirt and
believed in the virtues of democracy, human rights and free market economy[342]. In
this sense, as explained before, after 28 February 1997 Erdoğan and his friends
changed their rigid ideology and adopted a more liberal approach. In other words the
28 February Process has been a learning process for the Political Islam in a manner.
In this sense pro-EU stance during its early years has helped the AKP's claim of

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[337] Conti, op. cit., p. 18.

[338] Ibid, p. 18.

[339] Dağı, op. cit., p. 101.

[340] Duran, op. cit., p. 282.

[341] Ibid.

[342] Doğan, op. cit., p. 429.

removing the shirt of National Outlook. In fact with strong commitment to the EU, as Uğur and Yankaya suggest AKP distanced itself both its predecessors and other parties[343]. As mentioned earlier Political Islamists had acknowledged that it is very difficult to stay in power with an anti-Western discourse. Therefore one of the priorities of the AKP was to convince public opinion and the external world of dropping anti-Western and anti-EU stances. As Duran suggests, AKP, due to the background of its founders, "more than any other Turkish political party regards international support as a fundamental factor in attaining political legitimacy"[344]. AKP leaders also comprehend that having adopted a pro-EU and reformist character they would get the support of liberal circles that were discontent of democracy and human rights deficits in Turkey, and economic-based institutions like TUSIAD who supported EU membership for economic motives[345]. In sum AKP leaders thought that pro-EU stance and the reformist character would increase its legitimacy in domestic sphere. In that sense, public support to the EU in Turkey was a big advantage for the AKP[346]. AKP benefited from the high public support wisely and embraced the EU process to get support of different groups. The EU process was one of the common grounds of the different circles in Turkey. AKP took support from TUSİAD, liberal environments and non-governmental organizations by embracing the EU process which contributed to their success in the general elections[347].

Secondly, related with the 28 February Process, one of the main political objectives of the AKP was "to protect itself against the hard-core Kemalist or secularist establishment in domestic politics", in this sense the EU has served as a safeguard for the AKP[348]. 28 February process became a learning process for Political Islam, and the founders of the AKP realized that they needed the Western values, end the EU norms in particular, in order to "acquire legitimacy in their

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[343] Uğur and Yankaya, op. cit., p. 592.

[344] Duran, op. cit., p. 282.

[345] Uğur and Yankaya, op. cit., pp. 592-593.

[346] % 64 of Turkish citizens were supporting the EU membership in 2002; Çarkoğlu, 2003, op. cit.
[347] Marcie J. Patton, "AKP Reform Fatigue in Turkey: What Has Happened to the EU Process?", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2007, p. 344.

[348] Öniş, 2007, op. cit., p. 253.

confrontation with the Kemalist/secularist center"[349]. They thought that Kemalist elite would not allow political Islamists/conservatives to make crucial reforms on democratic structure and human rights, not least on individual freedoms such as religious liberties. "They also realised that they needed the Western values to build a broader front against the centres of radical secularism in judiciary, at high levels of the state bureaucracy, in the mainstream media and especially the military"[350].   In this sense EU process and globalization, as for Dağı, became a tool for the AKP to "break the resistance of bureaucratic state elite"[351]. Avcı also claims that "the AKP is engaged in some sort of two-level game: it strives for accomplishments at EU level to secure its position domestically.[352]" In other words as Dağı points out the AKP has cooperated with global powers to eliminate the republican elites in domestic politics[353]. Similar to Dağı and Avcı, Yilmaz also argues that "The pro-EU turn of the new generation of Islamists started as a tactical choice to seek European protection against the repressive policies of the Turkish secularist establishment"[354]. Likewise as for Öniş, AKP perceived the EU process as a guarantee to ensure itself against the hard secularist and Kemalist circles in domestic politics[355]. In this context EU appeared as a natural ally for the AKP to eliminate the role of military in politics and to establish a democratic system so that the Islamist or conservative people would no longer be regarded as threat to the established system[356].

Thirdly the EU conditionality and the AKP's wishes to transform Turkey matched each other. In this sense as Dengir Mir Mehmet Fırat, vice president of the AKP suggested the EU process and conditionality served and catalyzed the AKP's

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[349] Dağı, 2006, op. cit., p. 92.

[350] Aydın and Çakır, op. cit., p. 1.

[351] Dağı, 2006, op. cit., p. 93.

[352] Gamze Avcı, "The Justice and Development Party and the EU: Political Pragmatism in a Changing Environment", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol.16 No. 3, September 2011, p. 410

[353] Dağı, 2006, op. cit., p. 93.

[354] Yılmaz, 2011, op. cit., p. 9.

[355] Öniş, 2007, op. cit., p. 253.

[356] Aydın and Çakır, op. cit., p. 1.

own political aims[357]. EU process supplied an anchor for transformation of Turkey by emphasizing the democratic reforms in order to initiate the negotiation process. In that sense a member of the parliament expressed that

> "As a party, we wish to see a more democratic Turkey, but we have to face the fact that our internal dynamics are not sufficient enough to achieve this. The EU compensates for insufficient internal dynamism"[358].

It should also be noted that because of the negative image in Turkish secular public opinion and state elite, AKP leaders comprehended that it would not be possible to change Turkish political structure and society without external support and the EU process. In other words without EU process it would be very difficult for the AKP, whose leaders were political Islamists in the past, to provide a consensus among the society in order to achieve economic and political reforms. In this respect the EU process has become a key tool in the political agenda of the AKP. Moreover AKP gave much importance to the EU mainly because there has not been any alternative for promotion of democratization. In that sense "Erdoğan stated that the Copenhagen Criteria were not only part of the requirements for Turkey's entry into the EU but an objective to be reached regardless of EU membership"[359]. Erdoğan and his friends perceived the EU process as a tool in order to transform and normalize Turkish political structure and society. Although the AKP aimed to make Turkey a full member of the EU, they also stated that Turkey would achieve political and economic reform "even without seeking the condition of full membership"[360]. This unconditional support to the EU also shows that EU membership is not the ultimate aim. EU process is much more important than the EU membership itself according to AKP leaders. Erdoğan has repeatedly stated that Turkey will complete the reforms even if the EU will not accept Turkey as a full member. He clearly stated that they perceive the EU membership as a tool to improve the conditions of citizens not as the

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[357] Uğur and Yankaya, op. cit., p. 593.

[358] Aydın, and Çakır, op. cit., p. 5.

[359] Dağı, 2006, op. cit., p. 98.

[360] Doğan, op. cit., p. 429.

final aim[361]. The main logic in this issue is that EU process has been seen by the AKP leaders as the only way to transform Turkey. In this sense "by decreasing the political costs of controversial reforms" EU conditionality created opportunity for democratization in Turkey for the AKP[362]

To give an example, the most precise evidence that the EU conditionality overlaps with the aims of AKP is the relations between civilians and the army. The influence of the army on the civil life, jurisdiction and the other institutions was one of the main reasons for criticisms towards Turkey as stated in 2002 Progress Report for Turkey[363]. Actually reducing the impact of the army on civil politics was one of the foremost aims of AKP, a political party separated from a political tradition which was suppressed by the army on 28 February 1997. In this sense the EU clearly supported the AKP's initiatives on democratization in Turkey.

Fourthly, pro-EU stance would provide pragmatic solutions for the economic and political problems of Turkey. EU process is a pragmatic tool in order to make Turkish politics more civil and more democratic so that any Islamist or conservative party would not be suppressed by the state elites. In this sense Avcı conceptualized the period between 2002 and 2005 as "democratization via Europeanization strategy"[364]. This pragmatism has been the legacy of AKP's leaders' experiences in local governments. Tayyip Erdoğan, major of İstanbul between 1994 and 1998, is familiar with the problem-solving approach and after establishing the AKP, even before getting power, comprehended that adopting EU norms and values was the solution in order to make Turkey a more democratic country in which their political future would be safe[365].

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[361] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "AB Perdesi Açılıyor", *Türkiye Bülteni* Haziran 2003 sayı 1.

[362] Avcı, 2011a, op. cit., p. 410.

[363] European Commission, 2002 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, Brussels, 09.10.2012, available from, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2002/tu_en.pdf, accessed on 02.01.2012.

[364] Avcı, 2011a, op. cit., p. 410.

[365] Doğan, op. cit., p. 430.

Considering the transformation of Turkey and promoting democracy and human rights standards, AKP leaders also perceived the EU process as a tool in order to improve the conditions of conservative people in Turkey. As a conservative party AKP claims that the modernization process experienced in Turkey since the establishment of the Republic has been very restricting. As for the AKP modernization should be more liberal and inclusive as in the European countries. In that sense AKP tried "to make secularism re-examinable and re-definable in the political sphere"[366]. Among the conservative and Islamists people and politicians there was a common belief that religious rights would be better if Turkey would be an EU member [367]. Although the EU does not address specific problems of conservative people in Turkey such as banning headscarf or the problems in Religious Vocational High Schools the leaders of the AKP have considered that with the transformation of political, institutional, legal and social structure and the general improvement in Turkish democracy, positive effects on all groups of society including the conservatives and Islamic oriented people would be granted.

Fifthly, in early 2000s there was a huge public support for the EU membership in Turkey and it was rational for the newly-established AKP to adopt a pro-EU stance. In Carkoglu's survey conducted in 2002 EU support was stated as 64 percent[368]. Taking a pro-EU approach AKP also aimed to get support of liberal and central media, business organizations like TUSIAD and civil society organizations. In this sense as for Patton EU membership was so popular among the public that pro-EU approach helped to the electability of the AKP.[369] As Avcı argues EU goal has been very important in sustaining political reforms and uniting different groups

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[366] Menderes Çınar, The Justice and Development Party and the Kemalist Establishment, in Secular and Islamic Politics in Ümit Cizre (ed), Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party, Routledge: Oxon, 2008, p. 117.

[367] Hakan Yavuz, Cleansing Islam from the Public Sphere and the February 28 Process, *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54, Fall 2000, pp. 21-42.

[368] In his detailed survey Ali Çarkoğlu determined how the public support fort he EU membership change according to education, sex, party preferences etc. For more detail of the characteristics of Turkish public support for EU membership see; Çarkoğlu, 2003, ibid.

[369] Marcie J. Patton, "AKP Reform Fatigue in Turkey: What Has Happened to the EU Process?", *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2007, p. 344.

around reform[370]. And the AKP comprehended this atmosphere in Turkey and embraced the EU process. As the majority of public was enthusiastic about membership, it would have been irrational for the AKP to adopt a Eurosceptic approach. In this sense Patton has argued that "as the tide shifted in favour of the EU, the AKP not only rode the wave of growing public support for membership, but it also tied its political survival to the EU anchor"[371]. In other words, the EU project served as a tool for the AKP, as for Çınar, to increase its internal and external credibility[372].

AKP government as a result of these reasons focused on the EU process with great enthusiasm. AKP was so ambitious that after coming to power the party immediately focused on getting a negotiation date from the EU in the 2002 summit. Although Turkey was not given the negotiation date in 2002 and the decision was delayed to 2004, the government did not give a harsh reaction to the EU. Prime Minister Abdullah Gül softly criticized the EU but he also stated that Turkey would continue its reform process to get the negotiation date in 2004[373]. AKP's stance after 2002 summit is important in terms of explaining the instrumental approach of the party to the EU. Because the EU process is more important than the EU membership and the membership is not the final aim for the party leaders, AKP government does not want to end or to suspend relations despite some negative policies or decisions of the EU. In my opinion due to the factors mentioned above AKP has made use of the EU process for its own strategic and domestic interests so the party has never wanted to break relations with the EU. In general it can be argued that in its first period between 2002 and 2005 AKP was the most enthusiastic party for the EU membership because the party had became successful to use the EU as a catalyst to implement its policies and to transform Turkey[374]. In this sense, as mentioned earlier the AKP can

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[370] Avcı, 2011a, op. cit., p. 409.

[371] Patton, op. cit., p. 342

[372] Çınar, 2008, op. cit., p. 123.

[373] Hurriyet, Gül: Tarih geç ama yola devam, 13.12.2002, available from http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2002/12/13/220296.asp, accessed on 21.11.2010

[374] Çarkoğlu, 2003, op. cit., p. 191.

be called a functional Europeanist party because the EU process served the AKP's other priorities in domestic politics.

5.1.2 Reform Process

In the previous part the question of why the AKP adopted a strong pro-EU stance in its early time of reign was discussed. In this part the EU reform process under the AKP rule will be summarized.

Even before coming to power, AKP supported the reforms during the Ecevit-led coalition government. In this sense Sitter's argument of opposing to the EU membership is a policy of being opposition[375] is not totally compatible with the AKP case. While even in opposition AKP gave a strong support to the EU process due to the reasons mentioned in the previous part. Before the AKP government, the coalition government which consisted of DSP, MHP and ANAP prepared three harmonization packages which were passed in the parliament between February and August 2002. With these reform packages freedom of thought was expanded, new measures were taken to fight against ill-treatment and torture, right to broadcast in languages other than Turkish was granted, and death penalty was abolished except in times of war.

AKP after coming to power in October 2002 accelerated this reform process and initiated crucial reform packages. Karlsson claims that AKP was so enthusiastic for the EU membership that between 2002 and 2004 the government did more than all previous governments to align Turkey with EU standards through a series of reforms[376]. Although getting a date to start negotiations was the main motivation for the reform process, AKP leaders stated that they will fulfill the economic, political, and social reforms even if the EU will not accept Turkey as a full member. In other words AKP announced that the party would try to fulfill the economic and political criteria regardless of membership[377]. AKP initiated the reforms with this unconditional support to the process.

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[375] Sitter, 2001, op., cit.

[376] Karlsson, op. cit., p. 11.

[377] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, *Türkiye Bülteni*, Haziran 2003 sayı 1.

Between 2002 and 2004 in parallel with its pro-EU character, the AKP government has sent several packages of reforms to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in order to align Turkish laws with EU standards. During its first years in office, the main objective of AKP was to start negotiations, so they initiated many constitutional amendments. In this period the Parliament, in which the AKP had a great majority, acted in a bi-partisan attitude and several important reform packages were adopted[378]. As for Öniş this post-2002 period was the "Golden Age of Europeanization" and there was a Europeanization process in domestic politics, in foreign policy and also in economics[379].

Between October 2002 and July 2004 five harmonization packages were passed in the parliament and they were generally supported by the opposition party, CHP. In this sense Erdoğan acknowledged the positive contributions of the CHP[380]. In this period the AKP, as for Çınar, pursued the reform process "without clashing with the guardians of the Republic directly"[381] which means that there was no initiative which directly challenged the founding principles of the Republic. This is one of the factors for the opposition party's support to the reform packages.

The main motivation of the AKP was to get a negotiation date in the 2004 EU Summit. AKP was so optimistic, as stated by Verheugen, who was the former EU Enlargement Commissioner, that they thought it was excessively realistic to become EU member in 2011-2012[382]. Lastly in 2006 the ninth harmonization package was adopted in the parliament. Moreover a new civil code and penal code were adopted in the AKP government period. These reform packages included amendments in law of property ownership of non-Muslim religious groups, law of political parties, press law, law of associations, diminishing the role of military by changing status of National Security Council, abolishment of National Security Courts, recognizing the

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[378] For the details of reform process in Turkey see: Republic of Turkey Ministry for EU Affairs, Political Reforms in Turkey, Ankara, 2007, available from http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/pub/prt.pdf, 12.11.2011.

[379] Öniş, 2009a, op. cit., pp. 7-9.

[380] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, *Türkiye Bülteni* Haziran 2003 sayı 1.

[381] Çınar, 2008, op. cit., p. 121.

[382] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "AB Perdesi Açılıyor", *Türkiye Bülteni* Haziran 2003 sayı 1.

superiority of international agreements in the area of fundamental rights and freedoms, abolishment of Article 8 of the anti-terror law, and permission for broadcasting in languages other than Turkish. According to Cemil Cicek, Minister of Justice, the EU reform process is the second revolution in the area of law following the foundation of the Republic of Turkey[383]. In reply to the criticisms that AKP government accepted the reforms immediately and did not react properly against some impositions Erdoğan stated that attempts to achieve harmony with the EU should not be considered as submission policy or giving concessions[384].

In sum the AKP government focused on the EU process and initiated significant reforms between 2002 and 2005. In the next part I will try to analyze to what extent the AKP's pro-EU stance has continued after the accession negotiations started in 2005.

5.2 Second-Term of AKP's EU Policy: Stagnation in EU-Process after 2005

Although the AKP government focused on EU reforms in post-2002 period and managed to get the negotiation date, it "relegated reformism to a secondary place"[385] once the negotiations started at 3rd of October 2005. It is very interesting and paradoxical that after the negotiations started, AKP government has decreased its reform effort and "displayed signs of reform fatigue"[386]. Having analyzed the Türkiye Bülteni, monthly journal of the AKP, it can be evidently seen that after 2005, domestic political considerations have become the main agenda of the AKP. Since the EU was the main priority of the AKP in its early years of government many articles about the EU process were published in the journal between 2003 and 2005. However the number of these articles significantly decreased since 2005[387]. This also displays the AKP's decreasing enthusiasm towards the EU. For example after 8 chapters had been frozen due to the Cyprus issue in 2006, no articles or news were

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[383] Cemil Cicek, Legal Reforms in the EU Process, *Türkiye Bülteni*, 2004, p. 24, cited in Duran, ibid, p. 298.

[384] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "AB Perdesi Açılıyor", *Türkiye Bülteni* Haziran 2003 sayı 1.

[385] Çınar, 2008, op. cit., p. 120.

[386] Patton, op. cit., p. 340.

[387] In total 66 journals from June 2003 to October 2010 were analyzed.

published in the Türkiye Bülteni for one year. Although the AKP leadership repeatedly stated that they were still committed to EU reforms and there was no change in the membership perspective, AKP government was mainly criticized by the EU for a significant slowdown in the reform agenda over the last few years[388]. In the Turkey 2010 Progress Report EC stated that "the declared commitment to EU accession was not sufficiently reflected in the implementation of the national programmes"[389].

Some analysts such as Öniş[390] and Özbudun & Hale[391] also claim that the reformist character of the AKP declined since 2005 and the reform process lost its initial pace. According to Özbudun and Hale there are basically three reasons for the loss of EU enthusiasm of the AKP government; firstly it is possible that once negotiations started the reform process lost its urgency in the eyes of the government. Secondly exclusive signals from Merkel and Sarkozy have increased nationalist sentiments among Turkish public and created a Eurosceptic stance. Thirdly and the most important one in my opinion the Cyprus issue occurred as an urgent and difficult problem in Turkey-EU relations[392]. It is very difficult for a political party in Turkey to solve the Cyprus problem by giving concessions because of its traditional value as state and national policy of Turkey. Because it is politically costly and risky to implement an assertive policy on Cyprus due to the sensitivity of the issue it seems that the government has lost its enthusiasm on the EU membership. In this sense Avcı calls the AKP's EU policy after 2005 as *passive activism* and argues that "the AKP has reverted to a passive activism in its approach to the EU due to the high cost of passing high-stake reforms"[393]. It should also be kept in mind that between 2002

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[388] European Commission, Turkey 2010 Progress Report, Brussels, 9.11.2010, p. 10, available from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/tr_rapport_2010_en.pdf, accessed on 15.10.2011

[389] European Commission, Turkey 2011 Progress Report, Brussels, 12.10.2011,available from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2011/package/tr_rapport_2011_en.pdf, accessed on 15.10.2011

[390] Öniş, 2009a, op. cit., p. 31.

[391] Özbudun and Hale, op. cit., p. 120.

[392] Ibid, p. 120.

[393] Avcı, 2011a, op. cit., p. 409.

and 2004 there was a support for the EU process outside the government. For example the main opposition party, CHP, supported the EU reform process in that period. However as Eralp indicates, after 2004 "the accession process lost its bipartisan nature as the opposition parties became increasingly skeptical"[394]. With a non-supportive opposition party, the leading party found itself in a more complicated situation than it had faced in the period of 2002-2004.

Regarding the loss of AKP's zeal for the EU project, as Öniş suggested, "There was no single turning point, but several interrelated turning points"[395]. In my opinion there are mainly six factors why the AKP slowed down the reforms and adopted a more critical approach towards the EU. These factors are as follows: Cyprus Issue and EU's Policy on Cyprus; EU attitudes to Turkey and mixed signals from the EU; Rising nationalism and declining public support to the EU; Divergence between EU and the AKP in terms of perception of democracy; Domestic politics in Turkey and Kemalist resistance to AKP; and finally AKP's foreign policy and Davutoğlu's vision. In the following parts I will analyze these reasons which lead to slowing down of the reform process and make the AKP less enthusiastic towards the EU.

5.2.1 Cyprus Issue and EU's Policy on Cyprus

Today "Turkey-EU relationship is increasingly linked to the settlement of the Cyprus problem.[396]" The Cyprus issue is both one of the most important obstacles for the Turkey's EU membership and loss of AKP's EU enthusiasm. Therefore it is need to look at AKP's policies regarding the Cyprus issue and how this issue affects both Turkey's EU process and AKP's EU policy.

Cyprus issue is so important in Turkey-EU relations that as Eralp claims Turkey-EU relations can proceed more stable and efficiently unless the Cyprus issue

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[394] Eralp, 2009a, op. cit., p. 163.

[395] Öniş, 2010, op. cit., p. 364.

[396] Atila Eralp, "Temporality, Cyprus problem and Turkey-EU Relationship", *Centre for Economic and Foreign Policy Studies (EDAM) Discussion paper Series*, 2009/02, available from http://www.ces.metu.edu.tr/docs/eralp_discuss_paper.pdf, accessed on 06.10.2011.

negatively affects this relationship[397]. It is also one of the reasons which causes to criticisms to the EU in almost all political parties including the AKP government[398].

After getting into power in 2002 AKP acknowledged the importance of Cyprus issue in foreign policy specifically in Turkey-EU relations so the party tried to solve the problem. AKP after coming to power tried to bring a new understanding to Turkish foreign policy and its efforts to solve the Cyprus issue is one of the reflections of this new understanding. As for Sözen "perhaps the best example of the changing foreign policy discourse of Turkey is in the case of Cyprus"[399]. In this sense AKP government sought to change the traditional Cyprus approach of the Turkish foreign policy and abandoned unconditional support to the Rauf Denktas who is the founding president of KKTC (Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti-Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus). AKP government supported the politicians and groups who opposed Denktaş rigid nationalist policy regarding the Cyprus issue. In other words, as Gülmez and Gülmez point out "the criticisms against the uncompromising position of Denktaş were backed by the new Turkish government."[400] In compatible with its foreign policy vision, AKP acted according to the principle which they termed as "being always one step ahead" in the Cyprus issue and despite massive opposition at domestic level supported the Annan Plan which sought the EU membership of the island as a single state. These two examples evidently indicate the different approach of the AKP to the Cyprus issue. Contrary to the traditional Turkish foreign policy, "in line with the EU approach AKP formulated a new approach to the Cyprus issue by supporting the Annan Plan which proposed a united Cyprus"[401]. According to Erdoğan, Turko-Greek rapprochement would bring benefits to the both sides which have a common ground which is the EU. Therefore

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[397] Ibid., p. 1.

[398] For the "link between Euroscepticism in Turkey and the EU's conditionality strategy towards the Cyprus problem" see Seçkin Barış Gülmez and Didem Buhari-Gülmez, "The EU Conditionality in the Cyprus Problem: Catalyzing Euro-Scepticism in Turkey?", *Journal of Cyprus Studies, Vol. 14, 2008.*

[399] Ahmet Sözen, "A Paradigm Shift in Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2010, p. 117.

[400] Gülmez and Buhari-Gülmez, op. cit., p. 15.

[401] Dikici, op. cit., p. 413.

this new approach is called "win-win approach" by Erdoğan[402]. AKP's active and solution-seeking policy on Cyprus issue and its explicit support to the Annan Plan were also appreciated by the European Union[403].

On 24 April 2004 Annan Plan was presented in referendum simultaneously on the both sides of the island. Despite of the 65% positive votes of the Turkish Cypriots, Greek Cypriots rejected the plan with a great majority, 76%. As a result the island remained as divided and GCA (Güney Kıbrıs Rum Yönetimi-Greek Cypriot Administration), just one week after the failure of the Annan Plan, was included to the EU as the representative of the island under the name of Cyprus Republic.

After the accession of the GCA to the EU, a new conjuncture emerged and under new conditions it was clear that the Greek Cypriots would become less willing to negotiate for the unification of the island[404]. Here the most striking point is that, as Eralp stated, "a country who said 'no' to the Annan Plan in a referendum was a member of the EU and would have veto power over Turkey's accession process"[405]. The AKP government strived at the reunification of the island both before and after the referendum for Annan Plan. However it was realized that it would become more difficult to compromise with the Greek Cypriots which was the EU member henceforward. In other words after the Greek Cypriots became EU member on behalf of the whole island, they had an opportunity to make pressure on Turkey with the support of some other EU members through the EU conditionality[406]. Since Turkey does not recognize the Cyprus Republic, the main claim of the Greek Cypriots is that Turkey should apply the Additional Protocol and open its airspace and ports to the Cyprus. In 29 July 2005 Turkey, as a requirement of Ankara Agreement, signed the

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[402] Mustafa Aydın and Sinem A. Acıkmese, Europeanisation Through EU Conditionality: Understanding the New Era in Susannah verney and Kostas Ifantis (eds), *Turkish Foreign Policy, in Turkey's Road to EU Membership: National Identity and Political Change*, Routledge, 2008, p.57

[403] Commissin of the European Communities, 2004 Regular Report on Turkey's progress towards accession, Brussels, 06.10.2004, p.19, available from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2004/rr_tr_2004_en.pdf, accessed on 15.10.2011

[404] Gülmez and Buhari-Gülmez, op. cit., p. 16.

[405] Eralp, 2009b, op. cit.

[406] Gülmez and Buhari-Gülmez, op. cit., p. 2.

AP (Additional Protocol) to extend Customs Union to the new EU member states including the Cyprus. With this protocol, Turkey stated that it will open its ports and airspace to the new member states. However Turkish government just after the signing of the protocol announced with a declaration that this does not mean recognition of Greek Cypriot by Turkey[407]. EU members and institutions have repeatedly criticized Turkey for not applying the AP. Despite of these critiques Turkey did not open its ports and airspace to the Greek Cypriots. In consequence, on 11 December 2006 the Council of the European Union approved the Commission's recommendation for suspending negotiations in eight chapters in order to punish Turkey for its failure to comply with the requirements of AP[408]. The Council also decided not to close any chapters unless Turkey applies AP and open its airspace and ports to the Greek Cypriot. AKP leaders assessed this decision as unjust and declared that Turkey would not give concessions for the sake of EU membership[409].

This issue has been included in EU documents regarding Turkey-EU relations, not least in annually progress reports. In all Progress Reports after that date, EC has warned Turkey for applying to the AP. In the last Progress Report published in October 2011, it was stated that 7

> Despite repeated calls by the Council and the Commission, Turkey still has not complied with its obligations outlined in the declaration by the EC and its Member States of 21 September 2005 and in Council conclusions, including the December 2006 and December 2010 conclusions.[410]

Similarly Stefan Fule, European Commissioner responsible for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, expressed after the publication of Turkey 2010

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[407] Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Declaration by Turkey on Cyprus, 29 July 2005, available from http://www.mfa.gov.tr/declaration-by-turkey-on-cyprus_-29-july-2005.en.mfa, accessed on 02.02.2012.

[408] Council of the European Union, Press Release of Council Meeting of General Affairs and External Relations, 11 December 2006, Brussels, available from http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/92122.pdf, accessed on 02.12.2011.

[409] Milliyet, Erdoğan'dan AB'ye ilk yanıt, 12.12.2006, available from http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2006/12/12/son/sonsiy06.asp, accessed on 14.01.2012.

[410] EC, Turkey 2011 Progress Report, op. cit., p. 36

Progress Report that Turkey had to implement the requirements of the AP in order to prevent a train crash in Turkey-EU relations[411].

According to Turkish government, EU made two important mistakes regarding the Cyprus dispute. Firstly EU's decision to accept Greek Cypriots as the whole representative of the island was a big mistake. Erdoğan argues that EU awarded the Greek Cypriots by accepting as member although they rejected Annan Plan which sought a peaceful solution for the reunification of the island. Furthermore, emphasizing the international aspect of the dispute Erdoğan claims that the "EU has imported an international dispute"[412]. Above all as for Egemen Bağış, the Minister for EU Affairs and the Chief Negotiator, "accession of the Greek Cypriots in the EU has been an historical mistake of the EU, a mistake that was against international law and EU legislation"[413]. Other mistake of the EU, according to the AKP, is the European Council decision of suspending negotiations in eight chapters in 2006. The AKP officials have always stated that Turkey's EU process should not be overshadowed due to the Cyprus issue in which the Turkish side is the enthusiastic side for the compromise[414]. AKP officials also suggested that some EU members have used the Cyprus issue in order to prevent Turkey's membership. In this sense Bağış just after the publication of the progress report in October 2011 expressed that "some member states should stop hiding behind the Greek Cypriots"[415].

AKP has criticized the EU for putting forward the Cyprus issue as a condition for membership. Although some EU members and officials have acknowledged the efforts of the AKP for the solution, Cyprus issue is one of the most important obstacles on the Turkey's EU membership. In current situation AKP government declared that Turkey will not give one sided concessions and take a step on Cyprus

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[411] Milliyet, AB'den tren kazası uyarısı, 10.11.2010, available from, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/ab-den-tren-kazasi-uyarisi/dunya/sondakika/10.11.2010/1312718/default.htm, accessed on 06.10.2011

[412] Speech by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, "Why the EU Needs Turkey", Oxford, 28 May 2004, available from http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/esc/docs/Erdogan1.pdf, accessed on 12.07.2011

[413] Ministry for EU Affairs, Press Statement of H.E. Egemen Bağış Mınıster for European Unıon Affaırs and Chıef Negotiator Turkey's 2011 Progress Report, 12 October 2011, available from http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/sn__bakan_in_2011_ir_degerlendirmesi__eng_.pdf, accessed on 15.10.2011.

[414] Erdoğan, Why the EU Needs Turkey, op. cit..

[415] Ibid.

issue and the AP unless the isolations applied to the Northern Cyprus are lifted[416]. Here it should be kept in mind that EU after the referendum for the Annan Plan had promised to abolish the isolationist measures against Turkish Cypriots but this has not been realized that due to the Greek Cypriot's objections. Erdoğan stated that the priority of the government is "to ensure that the Turkish Cypriots should no longer be punished"[417]. In this sense as for Erdoğan mutual steps should be initiated concurrently[418].

With regard to the effects of Cyprus issue on Turkey's accession process one of the most important turning points is the EU term presidency of the Southern Cyprus in the second half of the 2012. In this sense Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, has currently declared that if Southern Cyprus gets the EU term presidency unilaterally without any resolution on the island, Turkey will suspend its relations with the EU[419]. Although Egemen Bağış, Minister for EU Affairs, modified and softened the discourse of Davutoğlu by saying that Turkey will continue its negotiation process and its relations with the EU institutions such as the EC but will not get into direct relations with the term presidency, this assertive expression of Davutoğlu shows the strict position of the government on Cyprus issue[420].

To sum up, today it is evident that unless Turkey meets the requirement of Additional Protocol, it is technically impossible to complete the negotiations because of the suspended chapters. According to the AKP, having accepted the Cyprus as an EU member and not lifting the restrictions on the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, EU punishes the Northern Cyprus who supported the peaceful settlement

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[416] Usul, op. cit., p. 184.

[417] Speech by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, "Why the EU Needs Turey", Oxford, 28 May 2004, available from http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/esc/docs/Erdogan1.pdf, accessed on 12.07.2011

[418] AB Haber, Tayyip Erdoğan, ABHaber.com, 22.11.2010, available from http://www.abhaber.com/ozelhaber.php?id=8056, accessed on 23.11.2010.

[419] Milliyet, Davutoğlu AB'ye rest ekti, available from, http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/davutoglu-ab-ye-rest-cekti-/dunya/dunyadetay/13.07.2011/1413844/default.htm, 13.07.2011, accessed on 15.07.2011

[420] Milliyet, Bağış: İliskimiz Yok ki Donsun, 14.07.2011, available from http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/bagis-iliskimiz-yok-ki donsun/siyaset/siyasetdetay/14.07.2011/1414167/default.htm, accesed on 15.07.2011.

and awarded the Greek Cypriots who are the uncompromising part. In this sense as Öniş summarizes one of the main reasons for the loss of EU enthusiasm of the AKP is the failure of the EU "to fulfill its promises to end the isolation of Turkish Cypriots and to reward them for their positive vote in the referendum over the Annan Plan[421]"

Attitudes of the Greek Cypriots and the EU on the Cyprus issue have also led to nationalist reactions in Turkey. As the AKP does not get a response to its initiatives, the party has adopted a more nationalist approach and decelerated its active policy on the issue. Giving a strong support to the Annan Plan was a political risk for the AKP due to the sensitivity of the Cyprus issue for the nationalists in Turkey. And currently "in the absence of credible incentives from the EU[422]" the AKP government has not been willing to move one sided initiatives and to take political risks in this issue.

As a result, because of the EU's policy regarding the Cyprus issue especially after the December 2006, AKP has started to criticize the EU and this is one of the reasons for the loss of enthusiasm for the reform process. Moreover as Eralp suggest that due to the developments about the Cyprus issue both the governing and the opposition parties have started to embrace the EU process less comparing 2002-2005 periods[423].

5.2.2 EU Attitudes towards Turkey: Mixed Signals from the EU

In order to make an exact analysis for the change in the EU policy of the AKP after 2005, some practices and discourses of the EU institutions and some of its members has to be mentioned. There is a common belief in Turkish public opinion and political elite that Turkey has been exposed to a double standard during the negotiation process. In this sense according to Bilgin, "EU's reluctance to treat Turkey on equal terms with other candidate countries" is the main reason why AKP's enthusiasm towards the EU diminished and reform process has slowed down

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[421] Öniş, 2010, op. cit., p. 365.

[422] Ibid., p. 365.

[423] Eralp, 2009b, op. cit.

since 2005[424]. While the Turkey's EU membership was discussed within the context of Copanhagen Criteria before 2005, as Turkey fulfills the required criteria Turkey's identity and its Europeannes have become the main agenda in the negotiation process after 2005. In this sense Abdullah Gül, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, in 2004 claimed it is not Turkey that is not ready for Turkey's EU membership, but the EU itself[425]. EU had not believed that Turkey would fulfill the necessary criteria thus they put forward different criteria apart from Copenhagen Criteria after the reforms performed by Turkey[426]. Accordingly as stated by Düzgit, despite the membership commitments given to the candidate states, the debates regarding Turkey's membership have been centered on whether Turkey could be an EU member or not[427]. The main discussion within the previous EU enlargement process was the date and the way how the candidate countries were to become EU members. Paying regard to this fact İçener criticized that the main question regarding to the Turkey's accession is whether Turkey should be a member state or not[428]. Similarly Karlsson rightfully states that as Turkey achieved great reforms, the EU officials and some member states turned their criticisms towards identity debates and discussions on Turkey's Europeanness, and absorption capacity of the EU[429]. While the negotiation process of former candidate countries were pursued on technical criteria as Eralp states Turkey-EU relations especially after 2005 has become politicized and it became difficult to maintain the negotiation process with objective criteria. As a result of this politicization ironically as Turkey started negotiations, the EU lost its leverage and its transformative power on Turkey and EU-enthusiasm has declined in

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[424] Bilgin, op. cit., p. 413.

[425] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "Röportaj: Abdullah Gül", *Türkiye Bülteni*, Aralık 2004, sayı 19.

[426] Ibid.

[427] Senem Aydın Düzgit, AB'nin Türkiye ile İlişkilerinde Kant'ı Aramak, TESEV Yayınları, Aralık 2006, available from www.tesev.org.tr/UD_OBJS/PDF/DPT/AB/Kant%20(12.06).pdf, p. 4, accessed on 15.11.2011

[428] İçener, op. cit., p. 421.

[429] Karlsson, op. cit., p. 13.

Turkey[430]. As Turkey showed its capacity to achieve the criteria for membership alternative scenarios instead of full membership have been suggested to Turkey[431].

Even before 2005 AKP government had criticized the EU and specifically two member states France and Germany. In 2002 Copenhagen Summit Turkey was not given the negotiation date and according to Gül, prime minister, this was mainly because of the domestic political considerations of Germany and France. Erdoğan, leader of the AKP but not the prime minister due to his sentence, also claimed that in this summit it was understood that the EU has failed and the Christian Democrats displayed xenophobia against Turkey[432].

AKP leaders have repeatedly stated that Turkey will not accept a secondary type of membership and specifically criticized two points; proposals for privileged partnership and double standard policies against Turkey which are related with each other.

Regarding the privileged partnership, AKP leaders have criticized some EU leaders' statements proposing alternatives to full membership. Some European leaders such as Merkel in Germany, Sarkozy in France, and Schussel in Austria have questioned the Europeannes of Turkey and proposed privileged partnership rather than full membership[433]. With Öniş's words "Turkey-skeptics in Europe, strongly embodied in the personalities of leaders like Sarkozy and Merkel, claim that Turkey is not natural insider in a culturally bounded vision of Europe"[434]. In this sense according to Gürsel and Dedeoğlu privileged partnership has been used since 2002 by central right politicians in Europe but it has not been included in formal documents of the EU. In fact the proponents of privileged partnership for Turkey

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[430] Eralp, 2009a, op. cit., p. 163.

[431] Gürsel and Dedeoğlu, op. cit., pp. 49-50

[432] Milliyet, Yolumuz Değişmez, 14 Aralık 2002, available from
http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2002/12/14/guncel/gun03.html, accessed on 21.11.2010

[433] Today's Zaman, Merkel to rip open an old wound in Turkey: privileged partnership, 23 March 2010, available from
http://www.todayszaman.com/news-205159-merkel-to-rip-open-an-old-wound-in-turkey-privileged-partnership.html, accessed on 16.10.2011

[434] Öniş, 2009a, op. cit., p. 29.

insisted on inserting the privileged partnership in the negotiating framework in 2005 but they did not achieve this.

Sarkozy focused on the geography by claiming that Turkey does not belong to Europe because it is in Asia Minor[435]. Sarkozy also suggested that Turkey could be "included in Mediterranean Union but not part of the EU"[436]. He also proposed that Turkey-EU relations should be strengthened within the context of privileged partnership but the full membership should never be in the agenda[437]. The speech of Sarkozy that "if Turkey had been European we would be aware of that[438]" reflects his strict views on Turkey's EU membership.

In the meantime Merkel has insisted on privileged partnership[439]. She wrote a letter to the head of governments of all EU members and to the members of European Commission. In this letter she defended that privileged partnership is a better option for Turkey[440]. Although Merkel and Sarkozy share similar opinions on Turkey's EU membership, there is a clear difference. Sarkozy declared that he would prevent five negotiation chapters from opening on account of the fact that they are directly related to full membership[441]. On the other hand Merkel declared that they are attached to the pacta sunt servanda and opened three negotiation chapters during their term presidency even if she is critical about the EU membership of Turkey[442]. The jeopardy for Turkey at this point regards the influence of the politicians on the public opinion and the increasing opposition of the European public opinion against

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[435] EUbusiness, Turkey does not belong in Europe: Sarkozy, 23 September 2007, available from http://www.eubusiness.com/europe/turkey/1190317621.45, accessed on 16.10.2011

[436] Patton, op. cit., p. 345.

[437] Gürsel and Dedeoğlu, op. cit., s. 21.

[438] Düzgit, op. cit., p. 4.

[439] Deutsche Welle, Merkel Calls For Petition Against Turkish Membership, 11.10.2004, available from http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,1356052,00.html, accessed on 16.10.2011

[440] Gürsel and Dedeoğlu, op. cit., p. 24.

[441] These chapters are; Agriculture and Rural Development, Economic and Monetary Policy, Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments, Financial and Budgetary Provisions, Institutions

[442] Deutsche Welle, Erdoğan ve Merkel'den Birlik Mesajı, 08.02.2008, available from http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,3116038,00.html, accessed on 15.01.2012

Turkey[443]. For example, in 2009 the percentage of people who supported Turkey's membership was % 16 in Germany and % 12 in France[444]. In this context increasing Turco-scepticism in Europe is a point to take into consideration. As İçener stated these leaders "have to respond to the views of their public"[445] so they have used the Turco-sceptic discourse in order to gain support in domestic sphere.

At this point it would be of avail to explain the concept of Turcoscepticism briefly. As for Sokullu;

> Turcoscepticism is based on a limited perception of Turkey as a poor and populous Islamic country with economic, social, cultural and political problems related to adopting and effectively internalizing the values of the European state system.[446]

According to Sokullu Turcoscepticism in Europe is much related with Islamophobia. Fears of Islam and Islamic fundamentalist threat encourage the Turcoscepticism especially among the ordinary citizens in Europe. 11 September 2011 events also triggered this perception[447]. While public in Europe do not differentiate the Turcoscepticism and Islamophobia, elites and politicians do not make a correlation between them[448]. Rather Turcoscepticism, for the elites and politicians, is much more related with cultural factors. While some EU leaders such as Valery Giscard d'Estaing, the former French President, claimed that Turkey's EU membership will put an end to the EU project, others such as former United

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[443] For a detailed analysis of the concept of privileged partnership and its impact on Turkey-EU Relations see Gürsel and Dedeoğlu, ibid.

[444] Gürsel and Dedeoğlu, op. cit., p. 8.

[445] İçener, op. cit., p.423.

[446] Ebru Ş. Canan-Sokullu, "Turcoscepticism and Threat Perception: European Public and Elite Opinion on Turkey's Protracted EU Membership", *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 2011, p. 483.

[447] For the further readings on the relationship between Islamophobia and Turcoscepticism see: Sokullu, op. cit.

[448] Sokullu, op. cit., pp. 492-493.

Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair claim that it will bring advantageous to the multiculturalist character of Europe[449].

Reminding that all the EU member states gave signatures for the decision to start full membership negotiations with Turkey Erdoğan stated that to discuss Turkey's Europeannes contradicts both with the reality and pacta sunt servanda despite the initiated negotiations[450].

As a response to the discussions on Turkey's Europeannes, Erdoğan asserted that EU should be defined by the values not by the borders. Inclusion of the Cyprus is the best example that the EU can not be defined by borders[451]. As for Erdoğan Turkey "always found itself in a position of having to prove why it was European"[452]. This is mainly because, according to Erdoğan, Turkey's capacity and its strength were not correctly understood by the Europeans[453]. As for Erdoğan these leaders have prejudices against Turkey[454]. Opposing the privileged partnership and other alternatives to the full membership Erdoğan stated that at the end of the negotiations there will be either full membership or nothing. He clearly opposed privileged partnership arguing that there is no such an example in EU history[455]. Egemen Bağış, the Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator, has recently warned the EU officials by saying that for the first time in EU history negotiation process of a candidate country has been prevented by political games. He suggested that "Turkey-EU relations are too important and strategic to be evaluated in terms of unjustified

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[449] Ibid,p. 484.

[450] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "Türkiye'nin Avrupalılığını Tartışmanın Zamanı Geçti", *Türkiye Bülteni*, Sayı 63, s. 36, Mart 2010.

[451] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Mohamad Mahathir, *"European Union Should Be About Values, Not Borders", New Perspectives Quarterly,* Volume 20, Issue 2, pp. 58–60, May 2003

[452] Speech by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, "Why the EU Needs Turey", Oxford, 28 May 2004, available from http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/esc/docs/Erdogan1.pdf, accessed on 12.07.2011

[453] Ibid.

[454] The Guardian, 'Iran is our friend,' says Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 26 October 2009, available from
http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/oct/26/turkey-iran1, accessed on 14.10.2011

[455] Hurriyet, Erdoğan: Türkiye'nin AB üyeliği asrın projesi, 13.12.2004, available from
http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2004/12/13/568764.asp, accessed on 21.11.2010

obstacles or disputes"[456]. Bağış also argued that EU has to give a decision for Turkey because Turkey is not a country to keep waiting in front of the door[457]. As a result, as Avcı suggested "discussions about offering Turkey a privileged partnership rather that full membership have diminished the credibility of EU membership" and this led to the erosion of EU-enthusiasm of the government[458]. İçener also criticized the concept of privileged partnership due to its uncertainty. For him the concept of privileged partnership is developing and there is no any exact definition. İçener is also critical to this alternative proposal because it does not bring any change to the current situation[459].

AKP also criticizes the EU due to the double standard applied to Turkey. Bağış stated that Turkish public opinion has run out of patience regarding the EU due to the double standards and deadlock in negotiation process[460]. The first example of double standard is about the absorption capacity of the EU[461]. It was stated in Negotiating Framework that "While having full regard to all Copenhagen criteria, including the absorption capacity of the Union, if Turkey is not in a position to assume in full all the obligations of membership it must be ensured that Turkey is

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[456] Ministery for EU Affairs, Egemen Bağış, Statement by H.E. Egemen Bağış, Minister for European Affairs and Chief Negotiator, on the New Term, available from http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=46264&l=2, accesses on 09.07.2011

[457] AB Haber.com, Bağış AB'yi Uyardı, 03.10.2010, available from http://www.abhaber.com/ozelhaber.php?id=7534, accessed on 21.11.2010

[458] Avcı, 2011a, op. cit., p .411.

[459] For further readings about the concept of privileged partnership see Erhan İçener, "Privileged Partnership: An Alternative Final Destination for Turkey's Integration with the European Union?", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 8, No. 4, 2007, pp. 415-438.

[460] Radikal, Bağış: AB konusunda Türk halkının sabrı tükenmek üzere, 12.01.2011, available from http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=1036183&Date=12.01.2011&CategoryID=81, accessed on 20.07.2011.

[461] The term of absorption capacity was first used in the conclusions of 1993 Copenhagen Summit as: "The Union's capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration, is also an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and the candidate countries". See; European Council, Conslusions of the Presidency, Copenhagen, 21-22 June 1993, available from http://ec.europa.eu/bulgaria/documents/abc/72921_en.pdf, accessed on 12.11.2011.

fully anchored in the European structures through the strongest possible bond.[462]"
The argument of "absorptive capacity" has not been used against any other candidate
country. For example there was no such a statement in Negotiating Framework for
Croatia[463] but it "has become a vocal argument in the case of Turkish accession"[464].
As for Emerson et al. because the term of absorption capacity is ill-defined it is not
proper to include the term in to the official documents of the EU which "should have
precise legal, economic or political meaning"[465].

Another example for the double standard is the debates on minority rights. As
mentioned by Düzgit, Turkish public opinion and the government have thought that
EU demanded certain conditions from Turkey that it had not demanded from any
other candidate or member states. At this point Erdoğan draws attention to the
problems of the Turkish minorities living in the Western Thrace region of Greece. As
to him if the EU expects respect from Turkey for the minorities, likewise it can't
ignore the problems that the Turkish minorities have in Greece which is an EU
member state[466].

According to AKP, EU policies on the Cyprus issue is another example of the
double standard applied on Turkey. Since the negotiation process has been in a
deadlock due to the Cyprus issue, AKP government is very critical to the EU. AKP
has complained the EU for blocking the negotiations, essentially a technical process,
mainly by the political reasons. On this issue Bağış argues that it is not fair that the
EU highlights the Cyprus issue as a bloc for the Turkey's accession negotiation while
the issue was not debated during the accession process of Greek Cypriots. Bağış also

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[462] European Commission, Negotiating Framework, Luxembourg, 3 October 2005, available from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/st20002_05_tr_framedoc_en.pdf, accessed on 13.11.2012.

[463] Düzgit, op. cit., p. 6.

[464] Öniş, 2010, op. cit., pp. 365.

[465] Michael Emerson et al., "Just what is this absorption capacity of the European Union?", Centre for European Policy Studies, No. 113, September 2006, available from www.ceps.eu/ceps/download/1219, accessed on 01.02.2012., p. 1.

[466] Radikal, Erdoğan: Yunanistan azınlığa saygı göstersin, 17 Eylül 2006, available from http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=198951, accessed on 14.01.2012.

claims that some EU members are hiding behind the Cyprus issue so as to prevent Turkey's accession to the EU[467].

With regard to the mixed signals from the EU, as Usul argues, Brussels Summit in 2004 is a very critical cornerstone in Turkey-EU relations because "The summit included many controversial provisions that had not been introduced to any EU candidate before"[468]. In this summit although it was decided that negotiations would start with Turkey in 2005 there are basically five points that led to suspicions in Turkey:

> The issues of permanent derogations, extension of the 1963 Ankara Agreement to Cyprus, absorption capacity of the EU, statement in the agreement that negotiations would be open-ended, and the issue of maintenance of good relations with Turkey's neighbors with particular focus on the Aegean issue.[469]

As Eralp suggests these points have led to the perception in Turkey that negotiation process with Turkey would be different from those with CEEC[470]. Although AKP leaders thought that this decision was problematic and could lead to a disadvantageous status for Turkey, they preferred to change this unfavorable situation during the negotiation process rather than suspending or canceling the relationship totally[471].

Regarding this issue it is worth to refer to Uğur's argument of "anchor-credibility dilemma"[472]. According to Mehmet Uğur one of the most crucial problems in Turkey-EU relations is the "anchor-credibility dilemma" which refers to the lack of strong commitment on both sides. Regarding the EU's policies towards Turkey, Uğur points out that unless the EU gave a strong signal for the full

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[467] AB Haber, Bağış: Türkiye, AB üyeliğine 2014'de hazır olacak, 07.12.2010, available from http://www.abhaber.com/haber.php?id=32753, accessed on 31.01.2011

[468] Usul, op. cit., p. 182.

[469] Ibid., pp. 182-183.

[470] Eralp, 2009a, op. cit., p. 162.

[471] Usul, op. cit., p. 183.

[472] Mehmet Uğur, Avrupa Birliği ve Türkiye, Agora Kitaplığı, İstanbul, 2004.

membership, it is very unlikely for Turkey to commit itself for the reform process[473]. In this sense the EU gave sufficient motivation to Turkey for the reform process between 1999 and 2005. However since 2005 the EU has not been a strong anchor for the reform process in my opinion. Accordingly the AKP's commitment to the reform process has been eroded. In this sense Erdoğan claims that "Turkey's enthusiasm for the EU is often hampered by the EU's attitudes rather than a decline in Turkey's commitment"[474]. Erdoğan stated that the EU negotiation process has some rules, which are the Copenhagen Criteria, and the rules of the game should not be changed during the game[475]. Similarly, Bağış claims that the reason why the Turkey-EU relations came to a stagnation is that some of the EU member states and leaders are using the issue of Turkey's accession for their own domestic policy and they are trying to prevent its' membership. There isn't any hint of motivation decrease for the AKP. As to Bağış Turkey has the capacity to open 20 chapters in 18 months and it is working through this aim. However 17 of 20 chapters can't be opened because of political blockages. Considering all these explanations it may easily be said that the attitude of the EU towards Turkey caused AKP to be more critical against the EU.

5.2.3 Rising Nationalism and Declining Public Support towards the EU

Related with the previous factor, declining Turkish public support to the EU is another factor that led to erosion of EU enthusiasm of the AKP. Because there has been a growing Euroscepticism in Turkish public mainly due to the uncertainty of accession process[476], AKP started to use a more critical language towards the EU in order not to lose its public base.

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[473] Ibid.

[474] Avcı, 2011a, op. cit., p. 416.

[475] Radikal, Erdoğan'dan Üç Şart, 09.12.2004, available from http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=136788, accessed on 20.10.2011; Vatan, Maç başladıktan sonra kurallar değişmez, 03.04.2008, available from http://haber.gazetevatan.com/Ama_ancak_eger_bunlardan_170941_1/170941/1/Haber, accessed on 20.10.2011; Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, *Türkiye Bülteni*, Sayı 61, Mayıs-Haziran 2009.
[476] Taraktaş, op. cit., p. 249.

While assessing the pro-EU stance of the AKP in 2002 it was mentioned about the huge public support to the EU in that period. While the public support was a motive force for the pro-EU stance of the AKP, this situation has changed recently. As can be seen in part 3.1, public support to the EU has been dramatically decreasing since 2005. People in Turkey have started to think that Turkey is treated differently from other previous or current candidate countries. In this sense Dinan argues that the majority of Turks who were prone to entering to the EU at the beginning has begun to suspect if Turkey should continue to effort for entering to the club which does not want to see Turkey as a member[477].

Actually there have always been criticisms to the EU among public even in the years when the EU support was very high. Some political groups as mentioned in part 4.3, such as nationalists, leftists and Islamists, have always been skeptical to the EU process. However as Öniş points out;

> What appears to be most worrisome, on the top of the dramatic decline in public support for EU membership in Turkey, is the loss of enthusiasm on the part of the liberal, pro-European elites for the EU membership process.[478]

In other words even people who strongly supported the EU in the past has become more critical towards the EU since 2006.

AKP, as mentioned in European Union Strategy on Turkey's Accession Process[479] which was published on January 2010, has acknowledged this rising Euroscepticism in Turkey and has sought to revive the EU enthusiasm in public level. At the same time in this atmosphere it is very difficult and not rational for the AKP to adopt a strong pro-EU stance. In this context like almost all other parties AKP started to adopt a less Euroenthusiastic approach in order not to lose its popular support in domestic sphere. In other words as Çakır and Aydın suggest;

> Decreasing levels of support for EU membership in Turkish society and the fact that explicitly Euro-sceptic positions are now coming from both the left and the right of the political spectrum suggest that the sustainability of the

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[477] Desmond Dinan, Avrupa Birliği Tarihi, Kitap Yayınevi, 2008, p. 11.

[478] Öniş, 2010, op. cit., p. 370.

[479] Ministry for EU Affairs, European Union Stragety for Turkey's Accession Process, January 2010, available from, http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/strateji/yabs_en1.pdf , 13.01.2012.

pro-European discourse within the party could be difficult to maintain in the longer run"[480].

It should also be noted that although the AKP is "grand coalition of voters from a variety of classes and interests"[481] one of the basic characteristics of the AKP is its nationalist elements. Therefore, due to the growing nationalism and anti-EU sentiments in Turkey AKP has adopted a more nationalist and critical approach to the EU.

5.2.4 Divergence between EU and the AKP in terms of Perception of Democracy

As mentioned earlier AKP had thought that EU process would lead to a total transformation of society and by advancing the liberties and freedoms all individuals and groups in society including the conservatives/Islamists would benefit from this transformation. In that sense as Öniş states AKP believed that "religious freedom would be enlarged and the interests of the religious conservatives against the secular state elites would be protected through the EU membership"[482].

However as time passes it has been perceived that EU process does not led to progress in conservatives' problems such as headscarf or Vocational Religious High School issue. Although there has been some reforms on minority rights and religious freedoms of Non-Muslims in Turkey, as Usul indicated;

> Integration process with the EU has not yet created a favorable atmosphere that provides more freedoms for conservative circles, which constitute the AKP's grassroots and cadres, in terms of their demands.[483]

There is no specific reference to Islamic liberties in any official document of the EU. As Çınar indicates EU Progress Reports for Turkey do not mention about the liberties of Sunni Islamic people while the same reports demand progress in the

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[480] Aydın and Çakır, op. cit.

[481] Paul Kubicek, "The European Union, European Identity, and Political Cleavages in Turkey", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 2009, p. 119.

[482] Öniş, 2010, op. cit., p. 361.

[483] Usul, op. cit., p. 186.

religious liberties of the Alevis and non-Muslim groups[484]. And this has created a disappointment among conservative circles in Turkey.

On the issue of headscarf ban in universities and public places the case of Leyla Şahin was an important landmark. Because she was not accepted to the university due to her headscarf she complained Republic of Turkey to the ECHR (Avrupa İnsan Hakları Mahkemesi-European Court of Human Rights)[485]. However ECHR did not give a decision as the conservatives expected and "approved the ban on wearing headscarf on university premises"[486]. This decision led to increase Eurosceptic feelings among conservative politicians and groups such as Mazlum-Der (The Association of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People) and MÜSIAD. Because AKP promised to its voters for enhancing individual religious liberties with specific emphasis on headscarf ban, they have realized that their expectations on liberties are not fully compatible with the EU norms and values. As for Öniş this decision of the ECHR is a turning point because it became clear that "the space provided by the EU for promoting religious freedoms in Turkey appeared to be more restricted than was originally anticipated"[487]. The party, with this decision, realized that within the EU it is very restricted to act with religious motivations[488]. An AKP parliamentarian mentioned in his interview with Aydın and Çakır that Europe embraced a liberal attitude towards all groups of people but it did not handle the headscarf issue in terms of human rights and did not take any supportive position in this issue. Accordingly this led the conservative groups and politicians to be disappointed in the EU[489].

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[484] Çınar, 2008, op. cit., p. 123.

[485] For the details of the case see European Court of Human Rights, Case of Leyla Sahin v. Turkey (Application no. 44774/98), Judgement 10.11.2005, available from http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/view.asp?action=html&documentId=699739&portal=hbkm&source=externalbydocnumber&table=F69A27FD8FB86142BF01C1166DEA398649 , accessed on 13.01.2012

[486] Avcı, 2011a, op. cit., p. 414.

[487] Öniş, 2007, op. cit., p. 254.

[488] Öniş, 2009a, op. cit., p. 27.

[489] Aydın and Çakır, op. cit., p. 10.

Although this decision did not change the pro-EU stance of the AKP totally it "led to a reassessment among certain segments of the party as to how far Europe could contribute to changes in Turkish secularism.[490]" It should be kept in mind that although the AKP has transformed and removed the National Outlook shirt as they claimed, one of the priorities of the party is to enhance religious liberties and the re-evaluation of the secularism. Therefore the ECHR decision has created a disappointment within the party. As Öniş suggests "this might also have been instrumental in reshaping the attitudes of the party leadership to the question of EU membership"[491].

Another issue which created dissatisfaction between the EU and the AKP officials was the issue of fornication. In 2004 Erdoğan and other AKP officials gave speeches in the direction to regulate fornication as a crime[492]. However the EU as a whole and the member countries individually opposed to this idea strongly. Guther Verheugen, former Commissioner responsible for the enlargement, stated that draft for the punishment to the fornication would become a "historical joke" and would damage to the Turkey's image in Europe[493]. Moreover Verheugen stated that negotiations for membership could not be resumed if the draft on the issue of fornication was accepted[494].

These specific examples show that the democracy and the human rights understanding of the EU and the AKP government are not totally converged. Because there is no specific reference to the problems of the Islamic liberties, EU has been criticized by the conservative of Islamic groups which are the core of the AKP ground.

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[490] Ibid., p. 9.

[491] Öniş, 2010, op. cit., p. 366.

[492] CNN Türk, Erdoğan: Zina yasası eşitsizliği giderecek, 04.09.2004, available from, http://www.cnnturk.com/2004/turkiye/09/04/erdogan.zina.yasasi.esitsizligi.giderecek/33272.0/, accessed on 13.12.2011.

[493] Milliyet, Sorunun farkına varmalılar, 10.09.2004, available from http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2004/09/10/indexmil.html, accessed on 21.11.2010

[494] Radikal, Verheugen: Değerler tartışılmaz, available from http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=128562&tarih=20/09/2004, accessed on 21.11.2010

In this sense the most important problem for Çınar is the AKP's lack of "a practical democratization agenda independent from EU membership requirements"[495]. He claims that the EU norms and the AKP's understanding of democracy do not fit each other. He also argues;

> AKP's understanding of democracy seems to be centered on strengthening the elected political class vis-à-vis the establishment dominated state, but fails to take into account the importance of state-society relationships and power relations beyond the immediate political sphere for furthering democracy.[496]

According to Çınar AKP degrades the democracy just to free and fair elections but neglects the individual liberties. In this sense AKP has been criticized both within Turkey and EU for aiming to strengthen the elected political class but ignoring the state-society relations and the rights of the people[497]. For example CHP claims that AKP is not sincere on the EU process and abusing the EU process for its own agenda[498]. The current critique about the freedom of media and freedom of thought from the EU should be thought in this context [499].

To sum up when the AKP came to power in 2002 the party used the EU process as a tool to transform Turkey because the EU criteria overlapped with the AKP's political agenda. However as time passed it was understood that the AKP's view of democracy and that of the EU are not same. As mentioned earlier although the leaders of the AKP were coming from MGH, the party "represents a broad coalition of interests"[500] including the liberals, nationalists, and even some social democrat circles. However conservative and Islamic elements were still the most

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[495] Çınar, 2008, op. cit. p. 122

[496] Ibid.

[497] Ibid.

[498] Akşam, AKP, AB'ye Üyelik Konusunda Samimi Değil, 08.01.2011, available from http://www.aksam.com.tr/akp,-abye-uyelik-konusunda-samimi-degil--10059h.html, accessed on 12.01.2012.

[499] European Commission, Turkey 2011 Progress Report, Brussels, 12.10.2011, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2011/package/tr_rapport_2011_en.pdf, accessed on 15.10.2011

[500] Öniş and Yılmaz, op. cit., p. 15.

important components of this coalition. As time passed it was understood that "in the pluralist public sphere envisioned by the EU, there is no room for the representation of Islamic identity"[501]. Therefore it is very crucial for the AKP leaders to satisfy the conservative elements of the party and enhancing the religious freedoms is the most important tool in achieving this aim. However it was understood that enhancing the liberties of the Sunni Muslims in Turkey is not possible by EU norms and values. And this is one of the factors for loosing of EU enthusiasm of the AKP.

5.2.5 Domestic Politics in Turkey and Kemalist Resistance to AKP

Apart from the reasons which have been resulted within the Turkey-EU relations and the negotiation process, there are also domestic factors such as intense domestic political debates which have caused to loss of AKP's EU enthusiasm and erosion of the reform process.

When the AKP come to power in October 2002 a stable era started in Turkey comparing to previous periods. During its first years of the reign, AKP successfully used the advantageous of being a one-party government. Unlike previous or following periods there were no intense political debates in this period. Domestic politics was stable mainly because the economic conditions were better and PKK's (Kurdistan Workers Party) terrorist attacks were minimal comparing to previous periods. In 1999 the leader of the PKK had been captured and there were no major terror events between 1999 and 2004. Within this conjuncture AKP could focus on foreign policy with specific interest on the EU process. It should also be noted that on the issue of the EU, the opposition party, CHP, also supported the government's proposals regarding the EU conditionality. And this support was welcomed by the AKP[502]. In other words the parliament worked for the EU reforms in a bipartisan manner but after 2004 it "lost its bipartisan nature as the opposition parties became increasingly skeptical"[503]. In this atmosphere it was very difficult for the governing party to give an unconditional support to the EU due to the high costs of the reforms.

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[501] Çınar, 2006, op. cit., p. 482.

[502] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, *Türkiye Bülteni* Haziran 2003 sayı 1.

[503] Eralp, 2009a, op. cit., p. 163.

Rising nationalism after 2005 is also important in explaining the loss of EU enthusiasm of the government. There are both external and internal factors that led to rising nationalism in Turkey; Iraq War and the anti-American sentiments, common belief of the EU's double standard towards Turkey, and reemerging of the PKK terror after 2004. Because the nationalist sentiments have became dominant in Turkish politics especially during the election campaign, AKP has also embraced a nationalist discourse and used a more critical discourse on the EU issues. "With increased nationalism and hardening Euroscepticism among the main opposition parties" pro-EU stance may not be seen politically rational for the AKP. The AKP has realised that passing high-stake reforms in an environment like this could be a threat to its own existence and domestic sources of political power"[504]. In other words, as the nationalism increased in Turkey as for Patton AKP "has redirected its priorities towards short-term electoral concerns"[505].

Apart from rising nationalism by 2007, the tension has intensified in domestic politics in Turkey and the political parties have focused more on party competition not on the foreign policy or the EU process. As the 2007 general election and the presidential election were coming soon AKP, similar to other parties, started to concentrate more on domestic politics in order to strengthen its power. In other words election fever, as Patton states, has become an important factor in slowing down of the EU reforms.[506] Besides the election process two important developments; debates on ban of headscarf and closure case of the AKP on Constitutional Court intensified political debates in Turkey and AKP exerted its energy more on domestic debates not on external policies and the EU issues. In this period "besides the challenge of dealing with increased political violence in the country, the AKP has also faced major political clashes with key players within Turkish society"[507]. In this sense the AKP in its second period of reign has struggled with the secular circles within the state including the army, the judiciary and the bureaucracy.

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[504] Avcı, 2011a, op. cit., p. 419.

[505] Patton, op. cit., p. 355.

[506] Ibid, p. 347.

[507] Avcı, 2011a, op. cit., p. 413.

These domestic developments had negative effects on Turkey-EU negotiation process. On the one hand the government unlike 2002-2004 period spent its energy to the domestic politics with a nationalist discourse in order not to lose its ground. On the other hand as Öniş pointed "from a European perspective, these set of events appeared to raise fundamental questions about Turkey's democratic credentials and have clearly empowered elements in Europe that are committed to the exclusion of Turkey on the grounds of culture and identity in any case"[508].

To sum up as a result of intense domestic debates in Turkey especially the closure case of the AKP on Constitutional Court, EU process has become of secondary importance for the AKP and as Çınar states the party "shift from democratizing reforms to institutional conservatism and power-sharing with the establishment"[509]. In this sense according to Çınar after strengthening its power and becoming dominant in state administration AKP has given up its reformist and pro-EU character[510].

5.2.6 AKP's Foreign Policy and Davutoğlu Vision

In order to understand the slowdown reforms it is also need to look at the general foreign policy understanding of the AKP government. In this issue AKP's foreign policy can be sub-divided into two periods because as Bilgin stated there have been differences between the AKP's "early period and later statements in foreign policy areas"[511]. While the AKP in its early period of reign implemented a Western-oriented foreign policy focusing on the EU process, in recent years especially after Davutoğlu becoming minister of foreign affairs it has been pursuing a more multidimensional policy giving more importance to the other regions of the world. The main question in this point is that whether the AKP pursues an active and multidimensional foreign policy by giving up the EU process or not. In other words whether the multi-dimensional foreign policy of the AKP has led to the loss the EU

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[508] Öniş and Yılmaz, op. cit., p. 16.

[509] Çınar, op. cit., p. 123

[510] Ibid.

[511] Bilgin, op. cit., p. 414.

enthusiasm or on the contrary the AKP government has re-shaped the foreign policy since the EU process has slowed down.

After getting power AKP government continued the traditional Turkish foreign policy maintaining good relations with the USA, EU, and the Israel. In this period AKP was mainly a pro-Western and pro-EU party. The main difference with the traditional Turkish foreign policy was on the Cyprus issue as mentioned in part 5.2.1. However in the second term of its reign, especially after Davutoğlu became Minister of Foreign Affairs, AKP government started to implement a more multidimensional foreign policy. Davutoğlu's foreign policy vision includes mainly the concepts of multidimensional foreign policy, zero-problems with neighbours and rhythmic diplomacy[512]. Davutoğlu in his famous book argued that Turkey is a central country in its region and should use its historical and geographical depths in order to implement a long-lasting, rational and strategic foreign policy perspective[513]. According to Davutoğlu Turkey should implement a multidimensional and pro-active foreign policy with zero-problems with neighbors. With these motivations especially after Davutoğlu became Minister of Foreign Affairs Turkey has implemented a foreign policy focusing not only on West and the Europe but also on Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia, Africa and Latin America. Davutoğlu argues that Asia and Europe should not be regarded as totally separate. Thus Turkey has to pursue a multidimensional foreign policy stating that Turkey should be strong and active in Asia in order to have a voice in Europe. Having pointed out of the economic importance of Asia, according to Davutoğlu, if Turkey can not use its political and economic potentials in Asia it will have no say in European politics. Turkey can only be a market and a tourism center for the Europe unless it can use its advantages in its region[514]. He claims that "integration into the EU is a strategic, historical choice of

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[512] Davutoğlu, op. cit.

[513] Ibid.

[514] Ibid, p. 562.

the Turkish nation, and it will continue. Our active involvement in other regions is an asset to our relations with the EU, rather than an alternative to the EU"[515].

According to Davutoğlu Turkey has lacked a strategic planning in foreign policy in 1990s which means that Turkey failed to adapt itself to changing parameters of the post Cold War era in the beginning of 1990s [516]. Davutoğlu argues that Turkey should abandon the single parameter foreign policy and should be a central country in its region rather being bridge between the Western World and the Islam World. Although some scholars [517] have claimed that AKP and Davutoğlu brought a new vision and a radical change to Turkish Foreign Policy, in post-2002 period despite some changes in discourses there have been no radical shifts in foreign policy. In my opinion the current changes in Turkish Foreign Policy has been resulted from the conjectural changes in world politics which is not the subject of this thesis. Indeed the Europeanization and Euro-Asian elements in Turkish foreign policy had also coexisted before the AKP rule for example during the Turgut Özal period[518]. In this sense active and multidimensional Turkish foreign policy could be regarded as the continuation of foreign policy of Özal[519]. Although the EuroAsianism had existed in Turkish Foreign Policy before the AKP government according to Öniş and Yılmaz the point "striking is a swing of the pendulum in the direction of Euro-Asianism in periods of disappointment and weakening of relations with the EU"[520].

There have been other periods when activism existed in foreign policy. However the difference between the AKP's foreign policy and the previous periods

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[515] TURKISHNY.com, Turkish FM: Turkey Must Have A Very Active Diplomacy For Global Peace, 12 March 2010, available from http://www.turkishny.com/english-news/5-english-news/26009-turkish-fm-turkey-must-have-a-very-active-diplomacy-for-global-peace , accessed on 06.10.2011.

[516] Davuoğlu, op. cit.

[517] Sözen, op. cit; Michael Rubin, Shifting Sides: The Problems of Neo-Ottomanism, Middle East Forum, 10.08.2004, available from http://www.meforum.org/628/shifting-sides, accessed on 30.01.2011

[518] Alexander Murinson, "The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 6, 2006,p. 947.

[519] Bülent Aras, "The Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No.3, 2009, p. 131.

[520] Öniş and Yılmaz, op. cit., p. 16.

is that good relations with the West and the EU have not been the main focus of the foreign policy anymore. In other words, as stated by Öniş and Yılmaz, "EU will no longer at the center-stage of Turkey's external relations or foreign policy efforts"[521]. Öniş also argues that AKP's foreign policy approach is based on "friendly relations with all neighbouring countries and with the EU no longer providing the main axis or reference point for foreign policy"[522]. In this sense according to Baç Turkey has started to look other alternatives to increase its power because of the uncertainties in EU negotiation process[523]. Joschka Fischer, the former Foreign Minister of Germany, also claimed that Turkey has recently adopted a Neo-Ottomanism in foreign policy and the EU blocking the Turkey's membership is the guilty side in this situation[524].

These debates show that AKP's foreign policy has not only been based on good relations with the West or the EU. There are other regions that the AKP has tried to achieve good relations and even economic integration with the neighbouring countries. This multidimensional foreign policy agenda has been criticized by some scholars, columnists and opposition parties as "shift of the axis". According to these people "Turkish Foreign Policy has been Middle Easternized"[525] and the AKP aims to change the traditional Western oriented Turkish foreign policy[526]. Kadri Gürsel for example, a well known columnist, has claimed that there is no shift of axis but a shift of identity during the AKP government period[527]. As a response to the claims that AKP has desisted from the EU process for improving relations with neighbouring countries, the party officials argue that these two issues are not contradictory to each

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[521] Ibid, p. 20.

[522] Öniş, 2009a, op. cit., p. 5.

[523] Meltem Müftüler Baç, "Turkish Foreign Policy, its Domestic Determinants and the Role of te European Union", South European Society and Politics, Vol. 16, No. 2, June 2011, p. 280.

[524] AB Haber, Joschka Fischer:AB yüzüne kapıyı kapattı,Türkiye Neo Osmanlı politikasını benimsedi, 28.09.2011, available from http://www.abhaber.com/haber.php?id=36557 , accessed on 19.10.2011.

[525] Tarık Oğuzlu, "Middle Easternization of Turkish Foreign Policy: Does Turkey Dissociate from the West?", Turkish Studies, Vol. 9, No. 1, March 2008, p. 3.

[526] Kılıç Buğra Kanat, "AK Party's Foreign Policy: Is Turkey Turning Away from the West?", Insight Turkey, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2010, p. 205.

[527] Milliyet, Kadri Gursel, Türkiye'nin Mecburi İstikameti AB'dir, 14.07.2011, available from http://dunya.milliyet.com.tr/turkiye-nin-mecburi-istikameti-ab-dir/dunya/dunyayazardetay/14.07.2011/1414024/default.htm, accessed on 19.07.2011.

other. Moreover, good relations with the neighbours and removing the visas with the neighbouring countries are not an alternative to the EU according to Erdoğan[528]. Turkey will be indispensable for the EU and enrich the Union as an active country in its own region having good relation with its neighbours[529]. As a result it can be claimed that the AKP's foreign policy vision is not a fundamental factor in deceleration of the reform process. However it is also clear that the EU membership is not a sine qua non aim for the AKP.

To sum up as a result of these factors although the AKP's EU position has not changed substantially, it has been influenced by the nature of negotiation process and changes in domestic politics. Avcı summarized this situation by suggesting that "AKP has verbally remained committed to the goal of EU membership but the motivation and incentive to reform have been hampered"[530].

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[528] AB Haber, Erdoğan:Vize açılımı, AB'ye alternatif değil, 12.01.2011, available from http://www.abhaber.com/haber.php?id=33103 , accessed on 31.01.2011.

[529] Ibid.

[530] Avcı, 2011a, op. cit., p. 419.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

As mentioned earlier there are many factors that affect political parties' EU policies. In my opinion, even though the party ideology has been the main factor establishing the EU policy of the parties in Turkey in the long term, the strategic considerations and the power competition between parties to gain ground in public and to pursuit office is more important and it may even change the general attitudes of the party's on EU. In other words, domestic politics "may have a more immediate impact on a party's Eurosceptic stance"[531]. On the other hand with regard to the EU issues while the ideology is more important in periphery parties, it is the secondary factor in mainstream parties. Far-right and far-left parties are much more explicit in terms of their EU policies due to their ideological positions. On the contrary in mainstream parties it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the parties in terms of their EU policies. In this sense domestic political, economic and social conditions are more influential on the attitudes of the mainstream parties towards the EU because the parties may slightly alter their approaches on the EU by tactical short-term decisions. Transformation of Political Islamists from hard Eurosceptic approach to a more tolerant approach in 1990s and the shift of CHP from pro-EU party to a soft Eurosceptic party in post-2005 period are clear examples for this situation.

As discussed earlier EU membership is a supra-party policy in Turkey and almost none of the mainstream political parties in Turkey adopt a hard Eurosceptic approach. In other words as Öniş points out "EU membership has been a goal of state policy in line with the broader objectives of Westernization and modernization"[532].Only some far-left parties such as TKP[533] or far-right and religious

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[531]Sitter, op. cit. p.23

[532]Öniş, 2007, op. cit. p. 249.

[533] Türkiye Komünist Partisi," TKP, ABD'ye ve AB'ye neden karşı?", 12.09.2011, http://www.tkp.org.tr/tkp-abd-ye-ve-ab-ye-neden-karsi-1481, accessed on 31.10.2011.

parties such as SP[534] reject the idea of European integration totally. All other mainstream parties in Turkey support EU integration in principle despite of some criticisms.

As regards to EU policy of AKP as Dağı also states that AKP's attitude towards the EU membership and globalization differs from the attitude of MGH[535]. AKP like all mainstream parties in Turkey perceives the EU membership as a national policy and the biggest modernization process of the Republic[536]. It is also indisputable that AKP has achieved the most important reform process in Turkey since 2002 and accelerated the Turkey's EU process by getting the negotiation date in 2002 and starting the negotiations in 2005. In this sense as Dişli, vice president of the AKP, claimed in 2004 that the distinctive difference between the AKP and other parties is that it took the necessary steps to meet Copenhagen Criteria[537]. However it should not be neglected that although AKP has carried Turkey's EU process in a new dimension, this has been the continuation of a forty-years process started in 1959 with the application to the EEC. What the AKP made is to comprehend the huge public support to the EU in early 2000s and to use this pro-EU wave in order to transform Turkey with EU conditionality and to acquire legitimacy in society. As stated by Uzgel having tried to re-shape the role of state, relations among state-society-individual, democratic structure and fundamental rights and freedoms with the EU conditionality, AKP aimed to guarantee its existence and political life[538]. In this sense Conti's conceptualization of "functional Europeanism" fits with the AKP. The AKP has been in favor of the EU membership with the motivation of

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[534]Saadet Partisi, Program, available from http://www.saadet.org.tr/kurumsal/v-dis-politika/687 , accessed on 01.11.2011.

[535] Ihsan D. Dağı, "Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and Westernization", *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2005, p. 30.

[536] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "Recep Tayyip Erdogan: Avrupalı Türkiye", *Türkiye Bülteni*, Ekim 2004 Sayı 17.

[537] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "Şaban Dişli: Türkiye Avrupa Birliği'ne Girmeye Hazır", *Turkiye Bulteni*, Haziran 2004, sayı 13.

[538] İlhan Uzgel, "Dış Politikada AKP: Stratejik Konumdan Stratejik Modele", *Mülkiye*, Vol. 30, N.252, p. 70.

transforming Turkey into a more liberal and respectful to the individual liberties where the conservative people will live better. In my opinion the AKP embraced the EU process as long as it served to its domestic political aims. During its first years in office the basic aim of the AKP was to enhance individual liberties, to eliminate the domination of military on politics, to make politics more civil and above all to ensure its survival and legitimacy. In this context EU conditionality served as a functional tool for the AKP.

The EU membership is not seen as the final aim or the unique aim for the AKP[539]. Rather AKP has tried to use the EU process in order to transform Turkey. In this sense it is not rational to classify the AKP according to the Taggart and Szczerbiak's concept of Euroscepticism. AKP in my opinion is basically an opportunist and pragmatic party and modify its EU policies according to the conditions. While the party strongly supported the EU process and strived for the reforms until 2005, it has adopted a more critical approach recently. Interestingly as Patton has stated after the government started the EU negotiations, the EU process has fallen off the AKP's political agenda[540]. As for Uğur and Yankaya sudden change in AKP's EU policy was mainly because of its "policy-opportunist character" adopting "short time horizons"[541]. As mentioned earlier between 2002 and 2005 there were some motivations for the AKP to give importance to the EU process; to differentiate itself from National Outlook Movement, to guarantee its political survival in turkey, to find a foreign anchor against the Kemalist circles in Turkey, and to gain legitimacy among the Turkish public. However as the AKP strengthen its political power in Turkey especially since 2007 elections, these factors have not been crucial for the AKP. It is currently the strongest party in Turkey. From now on AKP needs new motivations to focus on the EU process. This is also one of the reasons of the slowing down of the reform process. Cyprus Issue and the negative signals from some EU members also triggered this tendency. National sentiments and Euroscepticism have increased and state-centric, nationalist and security-oriented discourses have become popular in Turkey after 2005 and AKP has adopted a more

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[539] Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, "AB Perdesi Açılıyor", *Türkiye Bülteni* Haziran 2003 sayı 1.

[540] Patton, op. cit. p. 339.

[541] Uğur and Yankaya, op. cit. pp. 594-597.

nationalistic discourse which would bring higher returns in domestic politics[542]. Nowadays AKP has been making an effort to dynamize to the EU process. In 2009 Egemen Bagıs was appointed as the new chief negotiator and the structure of the Secretariat for EU Affairs was modified and expanded. This can be interpreted as the government's enthusiasm to the EU process. Furthermore "Ministry for EU Affairs" was established within the new government after the 12 June 2011 elections. The structure of the former Secretariat for EU Affairs has been transferred to the new ministry. As for Bağış, "the recent establishment of an exclusive Ministry for European Union Affairs by our Government clearly demonstrates our determination to carry forward the EU accession process"[543]. Bağış also stated that this initiative of the government is also a reply to the statements that the axis of the Turkish foreign policy has shifted in AKP government period[544].

To conclude, Political Islam and MGH have been in a transformation process since 1990s and this transformation also affected its EU considerations. While the MGH was harshly anti-Western and anti-EU in 1970s and 1980s, the movement adopted a more positive approach to the EU in 1990s especially after the 28 February Process. This transformation also affected the AKP which is the product of this movement. In other words AKP's view on the EU is not a radical shift from political Islamists rather a result of transformation in MGH in the last two decades. Having learned from the 28 February Process, Erdoğan and his friends, which were the former members of the MGH, started to look at EU with a pragmatic-opportunist approach. They realized that EU process could serve as a tool for their domestic interests. The AKP embraced the EU process and initiated the reforms between 2002 and 2005 because the EU process was compatible with the domestic political aims of the party. However after 2005 it became clear that AKP's agenda and the EU process

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[542] Ibid.

[543] Republic of Turkey Ministry for EU Affairs, Statement by Egemen Bağış, Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator on the New Term, http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=46264&l=2, accessed on 12.07.2011.

[544] Republic of Turkey Ministry for EU Affairs Statement by Egemen Bağış on the Establishment of the Ministry of European Union Affairs, http://www.abgs.gov.tr/index.php?p=46118&l=2, accessed on 09.07.2011.

became divergent. Therefore the reform process has slowed down since 2005. In that sense AKP is clearly a functional Europeanist party in accordance with Conti's terminology[545]. It follows from this that AKP not evaluate the EU process with ideological considerations but with pragmatic ones. Therefore in my opinion AKP can not be considered as a Eurosceptic or Euroenthusiastic. Rather I argue that AKP is a Europragmatic party in accordance with the terminology of Kopecky and Mudde.

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[545] Conti, op. cit. p. 18.

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