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Turkish Election of November 2002 and the Rise of “Moderate” Political Islam

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Turkish general election of November 3, 2002 seems to open a new page in Turkish political landscape. It is the first time, since 1954, that only two parties have succeeded to share the seats in the parliament. Despite the Proportional Representative System, which renders possible the representation of even small parties in parliament, sixteen parties failed to pass the 10 percent national threshold. This means that almost 45 percent of votes have not been represented in the parliament due to the 10 percent national threshold. One of the most surprising results of this election is the erosion in the voter support of the political parties that had taken part in governments in the last two decades of Turkish politics preceding the elections. Another significant result of this election is the Justice and Development Party's (*Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi-AKP*) astonishing triumph with 34.2 percent of popular vote and 363 seats out of 550 in the parliament.

The question concerning the principal characteristics of this party constitutes the central theme of this article. It is argued that the AKP's political ideology seems to belong to a “moderate” type of modernization perspective, which has been evident throughout the twentieth century. This paradigm, stemming from the Ottoman style of modernization, seems to be the product of a synthesis of modern and traditional values. The modern political values are assumed, in this study, to be such issues as human rights, civil liberties, de-centralized political

structure, constitutional government, secularism and free market economy. However, traditional values are a combination of these issues with Islamic and traditional way of life. I will analyze how the so-called “moderate” modernization perspective has risen in Turkey and constructed the AKP’s political ideology.

The Descent of Nationalism and the Rise of Global Politics

Nationalist parties gained a great victory in the last election of the twentieth century held on April 18, 1999 in Turkey. Two nationalist parties, one from the right and one from the left, succeeded in coming to power with an unexpected landslide victory. The right-wing Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi-MHP*) received 18.1 percent of total votes, while the left-wing Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti-DSP*) ranked first with 22.1 percent of the votes cast. It was the first time that both of these parties got such high level support from Turkish voters.¹ Even though they had come from different political spectrums and had different constituencies, their discourses mostly overlapped. The common point explaining the reconciliation between the two was their advocacy of centralization and nationalism as opposed to individual rights and liberties. Moreover, as a matter of foreign policy, they gave priority to the regional countries rather than to the European Union (EU). During the election, both parties declared that they were in favor of privatization program. This was not however due to their concern for free market economy, but a consequence of their desire to attain economic productivity.²

What was the reason behind the victory of the nationalist parties during the 1999 general election? Perhaps two factors are of note worth mentioning here. First, DSP was in power during the months preceding the election with the support of two center- right parties. A short time before the 1999 general election, the leader of the terrorist organization, Kurdish Labor Party

(PKK), Abdullah Ocalan, was arrested. This meant the ultimate defeat of the PKK by the Turkish government. The credit of this victory was given to the DSP's leader Bulent Ecevit, who was immediately presented by the media as a "victorious commander". This was a prime factor behind the rise of the DSP. Second, the 1999 general election was held under the shadow of the February 1997 soft-military intervention in Turkey. This intervention exerted heavy pressure on traditional-religious masses. The two parties which relied on these constituencies were the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi-RP*) and the True Path Party (*Dogru Yol Partisi-DYP*) whose image, in the eyes of the public, had been tarnished given the military's fury when they had been in power. Therefore, religious-traditional constituencies saw MHP as a key Party that could "normalize" the political process as it had committed itself to removing pressures over these voters. This gained the party important votes in the 1999 elections.

The seats won by the DSP and the MHP --267 out of 550-- were not sufficient to establish the government. Therefore, they made a coalition with the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi-ANAP*) as the third partner. It is noteworthy to remark that the ANAP came to the political scene after the 1980 military coup. As soon as it was seen in the political landscape, it filled the vacuum, emptied by the military regime, from the center-right parties. Coming to power by the general election of November 1983, it committed itself to the politics of liberalization, close connection with the West and to the free market economy under Turgut Ozal's leadership. Ozal's election as President in 1991 gave a chance for Mesut Yilmaz to take the leadership of the party. ANAP thus gradually shifted towards a pro-status quo line during Yilmaz's leadership. Therefore, the discursive structure of the ANAP was not too distant from that of the DSP and MHP, in respect to the centralization, when they convened to establish a coalition government in the aftermath of the 1999 general election. It was then a coalition

government of a “nationalist-left” leaning to a great extent under the influence of the DSP as the dominant party. This coalition governed Turkey until the 2002 general election.

The incumbent government was responsible for the failed and ineffective policies the like of which had been unseen since the 1920s. A number of factors played a role in the failure of the government to overcome economic and political problems of the country. First, the incumbent government proceeded with the February 1997 soft-intervention policies. In other words, the government remained in strict control of religious communities, particularly their economic activities, contrary to expectations that it could perhaps normalize the political process in Turkey. Eventually many owners of capital began to leave the country, while foreign capital considered Turkish markets to be insecure and repulsive. Second, the government failed to take adequate steps to bring about democratization and liberalization. Despite some fundamental legal regulations along with the need to integrate Turkey into the EU, the government displayed a lack of desire to practice them. According to the opinion polls, a high majority of Turkish population, about 75 percent, demand integration with the EU and the political values connected with this integration. Government’s vague policies in that respect resulted with the loss of much of its credit in the eyes of the masses. Third, political corruption, particularly connected to the politicians and bureaucrats, has become one of the hot topics occupying the Turkish agenda during the last decades. Despite the high level of social sensitivity on this issue, the government had not taken any serious measures to grapple with the problem. On the contrary, some members of the government, including some of the leaders, had come to be associated with illicit relations.

The nationalist parties, either from the right or the left, seem to be the greatest losers of the November 3 general election. Both parties of the coalition failed to cross the 10 percent national threshold. The most dramatic decline has been seen in the DSP, whose vote decreased

from 22.1. to 1.1 percent. The MHP fell from 18.1 to 8.5 percent, and similarly the ANAP diminished its vote from 13.6 to 5.1 percent. The greatest opposition party, the DYP also witnesses the fall of its vote from 12.6 to 9.5 percent and failed to pass the 10 percent national threshold as a result. The dark horse of the November 2002 election was indeed a newly established Young Party (*Genç Parti-GP*). The GP was founded under the leadership of a famous young businessman, Cem Uzan, just some months before the election. Uzan started preparing for the election as early as three months before the election. He seemed to use a rather assertively reactive language against the government's agreement with the IMF, and the EU adjustment package which had demanded from the government some fundamental changes in the field of human rights and liberties. The GP received 7.3 percent of the votes in the election. Its success is deemed, by most of the commentators of Turkish politics, to derive from the rage of the masses directed towards the government. It has been evident that the support for the GP came overwhelmingly from unemployed young and female generations.

Beside the AKP, the other party that succeeded to pass the 10 percent national threshold with 18.2 percent of the votes and 179 seats in the parliament is the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi-CHP*). Compared with its past twenty years, it seems that CHP has not gained a great success. By the general election of the 1983, the Populist Party (*Halkçı Parti-HP*), substituted for the CHP, had a share of the 30.5 percent of total votes. Its rate had gradually fallen until November 2002. The Social Democratic Populist Party (*Şösyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti-SHP*), the chief party established then over the CHP's heritage, received 24.8 in the 1987 general election and 20.8 in the 1991 general election. The CHP came to the scene once in Turkish politics after 1993 and it received 10.7 percent in the 1995 general election. The CHP continued to decrease its voter support in the 1999 general election with receiving 8.7 percent of

overall votes. The CHP failed to enter the parliament after the 1999 general election since it failed to pass the 10 percent national threshold.³ It is worth noting that the center-left electoral support in Turkey is about 30 percent. It seems that about 10 percent support for the left-wing party went somewhere else in the 2002 election.

One should remember that both the DSP and CHP are left-of-center parties. But the DSP has come to represent the nationalist left constituency, in the last years, while the CHP has come to represent a socialist-oriented left.⁴ In the last few years, the DSP has started to emphasize such issues as the importance of centralization, the state-based policies, the necessity to limit the religious-based human rights, and the necessity of a nationalist outlook. However, the CHP, particularly during the November election, stressed the importance of the integration into the EU, the development of human rights, including those of the religious groups, the struggle against political corruption and civil liberties. Deniz Baykal, CHP's leader, started to use the term "Anatolian left", designed address the religious sensitivities of Turkish society. He particularly gave reference to the Sufi leaders such as Mavlana, Hacı Bektas and Yunus Emre who had lived during the reign of the Seljukian Empire. The former State Minister and CHP's new figure, Kemal Dervis, depicted by the Turkish media as a "savior", developed the term "left liberalism" which implied the defense of free market economy as well as of human rights and civil liberties. The result of the November election clearly indicated that a politics that gives priority to the domination of the state authority over society failed in the example of the DSP. On the other hand, a political discourse open to liberalization, democratization and integration with the EU has come to be accepted by the CHP.

The November 3 election marks a stunning defeat for the center-right unforeseen before. The cleavage between the center-right and the center-left dates back to 1950 when, for the first

time in the republican era, a genuine multi-party election was held in Turkey. In this election, as the only center-right party, the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti-DP*) received 53.3 percent of votes and 83.8 percent of the seats in the parliament against the CHP's 39.8 percent and 14.2 of the seats respectively. This victory was to be repeated in the general elections of 1954 and 1957 on account of the DP's impressive performance in the field of economic development and democratization. When the military coup of the 1960 called a halt to the DP's presence, the center-right politics came to be represented by the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi-AP*), established in 1961, in the period between 1961-1980. The AP, as a center-right party, continued to receive a great deal of support from Turkish voters and succeeded to hold to power for more than fifteen years until 1980. In the aftermath of the 1980 military intervention, the two new parties that were seen in the center-right landscape on the AP's skeleton were the ANAP and DYP. The center-right parties demonstrated a striking performance in the 1983 election, the first election after the normalization of politics in Turkey, with 68.4 percent of the popular vote.⁵ Unfortunately, the graphic of the center-right has fallen consecutively in the following elections. The center-right parties received 55.4 percent in 1987, 51 percent in 1991, 38.8 percent in 1995, 25.4 percent in 1999 and 14.6 percent in November 2002.⁶

“Where have the votes of the center-right gone?” is a critical question. This question is indeed a key to understanding the ideological structure of the AKP. Surveys conducted for this purpose have indicated that the new address of the center-right votes is now the AKP. The transfer of the key names from the center-right parties to the AKP made it easy for public to channel their votes to the AKP. The AKP seems to be the chief address of traditional conservative constituency. Even though some of the AKP's founders came from the National Outlook (*Milli Gorus-MG*)⁷ tradition and that there is an obvious connection between the

organizational structures of the two, leaders of the AK party have insisted that they are not an Islamic party. Instead, they have declared themselves to be a “conservative-democratic” party. In order to understand as to whether the AKP is an Islamic or a democratic party, we need to analyze the party’s program as well as the discourse of its leaders. This will be done in the following part.

The AKP’s leader R. Tayyip Erdogan was prevented from becoming prime minister or member of the parliament because of a court verdict banning him from politics. Despite the ban on his candidacy, he prepared his party for elections almost one year before the election. It is commonly agreed that the victory of the AKP was the endorsement of Erdogan who, during the campaign, ran on the issues of human rights, liberties, economic development and integration into the EU. Public opinion polls had indicated before the election that Erdogan was accepted as a “savior” by the public at large. What made him so familiar to the public were his successful performance in solving the enormous problems of Istanbul when he was the mayor of this city between 1994-1997.

Alongside Erdogan’s charisma, which is supposed to play a crucial role in the election, two other factors are important for an explanation of the AKP’s victory. The first was the ongoing serious economic crisis and the other was widespread political corruption. When Ozal came to power in 1983, there was likewise a deep economic recession in Turkey. He took steps towards the liberalization both of the economy and politics. Under his leadership, Turkey doubled its GNP per capita and launched very important political reforms. Modernization in economic infrastructure, in education, in communication and in politics fundamentally transformed the political culture in the country. Concepts such as civil society, liberty and human rights came to be advocated by a number of different social and political groups. This profound

process was soon to be countered by the state elite, and indeed the February 28 process (1997) seemed to call a halt to this newly rising political environment.⁸ After 1997, Ecevit and Yilmaz became the two important political leaders as partners of the state elite. It was not late however before an extremely damaging economic recession accompanied military's indirect control over politics in this period. The result of this has been the closure of thousands of factories and economic firms and the eventual dismissal of millions of employees. This seems to be an important factor behind the AKP's victory. The corruptions, allegedly connected to the incumbent government, were a second factor behind the huge support gained by the AKP in 2002 elections.

From National Outlook to Conservative Democracy

The principal way to understand the political ideology of a party is to analyze its program, any regulation that concerns the party, and speeches made in its name.⁹ However, it is also necessary to look at the organizational background of a given party in Turkey since political parties are closed down too frequently. AKP's leading cadre is mostly from the MG tradition. Therefore, analyzing the evolving process of this tradition has a key significance for understanding the AKP.

The MG tradition was started by the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*-MNP) under Necmettin Erbakan's leadership in 1969. The basic program of this party was based on the demand to disseminate traditional religious values and to achieve the unity of Muslim societies. Following the military memorandum of 1971 which closed down the MNP, this party was replaced by the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*-MSP) established by the same people. The MSP occupied a key role in Turkish politics from 1973 up until 1980. The ideology of the MSP can be summarized on the basis of the following three points. First, it defended

traditional religious values. Second, it started a “heavy industry program” by means of which Erbakan aimed to create a country that could stand firm against the hegemony of the Western countries.¹⁰ Finally, it envisaged establishing a “Muslim Common Market” under Turkey’s leading role. MSP found the opportunity to take part in governments as a coalition partner three times until 1980. The party is usually remembered with its rigorous resistance against Turkey’s membership of the EU together with Greece in the mid-1970s.

The 1980 military coup banned the MSP from doing politics as it did to all other parties. After the normalization of politics in 1983, the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*-RP), a relatively radical party, came into existence.¹¹ The RP entered the 1987 general election, but failed to cross the 10 percent national threshold. By the next election of 1991, it went to the ballot box in alliance with the MHP and received 16.9 percent of total votes. The greatest success of the RP since its appearance in politics, was seen in the 1994 local elections. It gained the governorship of many metropolises, including the capital city Ankara and Istanbul, the largest city. The RP ranked first in the 1995 general election after receiving 21.4 percent of the popular vote. One year after the election, it came to power in coalition with the DYP. But its policies, in particular those designed to link Turkey more closely with Islamic countries and to widen the scope of religious freedoms, upset the civil and military bureaucracy. After having mustered the support of dominant media groups and unions, chief businessmen clubs, and of the labor unions, the opposition led by the military managed to overthrow the Refah-Yol government.

The RP’s economic and political program was based on a project entitled “Just Order”, pronounced as a third way between capitalism and socialism.¹² The project, expressing a particular interest in establishing a common market with Muslim countries, was essentially a collectivist program which seemed to have a semi-socialist outlook. The Just Order, instead of

democratic pluralism, aimed at transforming the whole society upon the basis of religious values and symbols. Even though the leaders of the party did not clearly denounce a stance in favor of an Islamic order, they seemed to criticize the secular order and many values connected to it. This caused alarm among secular groups about the “true” intentions of the party and its leadership. Soon after the overthrow of the Refah-Yol government, the RP was closed down by the Constitutional Court and its leader, Erbakan, was banned from politics for five years.

With the closure of the RP, a new party was established. The Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*-FP) was built upon the RP’s organizational skeleton and the shoulder of its leading cadre. As soon as the party came into existence, a cleavage appeared between the Erbakan’s followers and those who constituted the nucleus of the AKP. The former group came to be called “traditionalists”, however, the second group, the “reformists”. Although the party’s leader, Recai Kutan, was in cooperation with Erbakan, the reformists sealed their influence on its program and regulation. The reformists competed for the leadership of the party in the 2000 General Meeting of the party. Abdullah Gül, the leader of the reformers, made a very critical speech in the meeting against the traditionalists. This was indeed the first time in the MG tradition that an opposition had emerged against Erbakan’s leadership.

When one analyses the party program of the FP, a fundamental deviation from the RP tradition can visibly be seen. In comparison to the semi-socialist program of the previous party, the FP’s seemed rather liberal. The projects envisaged in the program of the new party in respect to the economy, foreign policy and the social and cultural issues were clearly colored by a liberal outlook.¹³ The FP’s election bulletin during the 1999 election was indeed similar to a liberal manifesto. It was said in the bulletin that the FP “approved free market economy and gave special care to the integration of Turkish economy with the world economy on the basis of

private ownership, free enterprise and free competition”¹⁴ Supporting the withdrawal of the state from economic activities, it was proclaimed in the program of the party that a “producing state” should be replaced urgently by a state whose functions were constrained with supervising and maintaining free competition. The principal duty of the state, announced in the program, was only to provide security and justice. Besides, a political system based on the principle of human rights and accountability to international law was approved. As such, in order to render it possible that different cultural and political entities share the same environment, a secular system was defended as well.¹⁵ Against the RP’s demand for a common market of Muslim countries, the FP declared that the place of Turkey was in Europe; it therefore passionately supported Turkish membership in the EU. It is worthy of note that one of the reasons behind such discursive changes in this tradition was perhaps the influence of the reformists in the party.

The Constitutional Court banned the FP from doing politics in 2001, on the ground that it was the continuation of the RP. Upon the closure of the party, each group started to go its own way. The traditionalist group established the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi-SP*) under Erbakan’s *de facto* leadership although his proscription from politics had not been terminated. Erbakan was on the stage during the 2002 election campaign and gave speeches in the name of the SP. The reformists, on the other hand, established the AKP under Erdogan’s leadership. As soon as the party came to the scene, it rejected any ideological liaison with the defunct FP. It declared its political identity as being “conservative-democrat”. Erdogan frequently ran on the issues of human rights, liberties, economic development, integration into the EU, as well as on the reasons behind his dissociation from the MG tradition. In many of his speeches, he felt it necessary to explain why he had departed from the MG tradition.

It is evident that most of the leaders of the party are conservative in respect to their life style. But the economic and political targets of the party seem to be formulated within a liberal framework. The party speakers have frequently proclaimed that the AKP is a center-right party. With that aim in mind, the leaders of the party are planning to apply for membership of the European Association of Conservative Parties. They have frequently stated that they are to give priority to the solution of economic and social problems of the country, rather than that of religious issues. It is declared by the party chairman that such urgent problems as economic recession, unemployment, unequal income distribution, political freedoms, social security and health problems are to be handled first. Erdogan has strongly stressed that they welcome a democratic and even a Western type of secular system. On television programs, he has explained that they would not scratch sensitive topics like the headscarf problem, the prohibition of female students to attend universities with headscarves. Although during the election campaign, he admitted that this was a serious problem, he has time and again emphasized that this should not be a matter for his own party alone. In other words, all of the political parties had a share of responsibility for the resolution of the problem.

The AKP's program shows that the party recognizes as desirable the overlapping between traditional and modern values. It clearly proclaims that "the party approves of a politics which is a blend of tradition and past with modern democratic values".¹⁶ The party program then states that the party is to be a platform for secularization and democratization, civilization and rule of law, freedom of faith and thought, and equality of opportunity. The party program thus demonstrates that the AKP would embrace the modern values attained during the Republican era in Turkey. The AKP welcomes social differentiation on the basis of ethnic, cultural and religious peculiarities, and considers them as indispensable for democracy.

In the light of the analysis about the political views of the AKP, we can say that it endorses a “social liberal” politics. The party program asserts that “one cannot attain liberty unless everybody enjoys it”.¹⁷ Although a collective understanding of liberty becomes clear in the program of the party, it declares that the philosophy of the party is to be based on basic human rights. The measures framing the party’s understanding of human rights are the criteria put forth in international treaties such as the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights, Paris Provision and the Helsinki Final Act. The AKP seems to frame its political understanding according to the international political and legal norms on the one hand, and to the need to protect the local institutions that serve democracy on the other. I think the three sources which frame the AKP’s identity are international norms, traditional values, and the official institutions, particularly secularism, brought to life by the Republican regime.

It is clearly seen that the AKP’s program approves neo-liberal economy. The party program stresses the importance of the withdrawal of the state from economic activities not out of pragmatic reasons, i.e. to bring about a productive economy, but of the desire to provide economic bases for democracy. A free market economy cannot develop if the state takes part in economic activities. Nor does a democratic regime develop in such a situation. Instead of becoming an economic actor, the state should play the role of an order-obtaining and competition-inspecting actor. The chief duty of the state is to provide security. This is the only way that the Turkish economy can be integrated into the international economy.

The priority in AKP’s foreign policy is given to Turkey’s membership of the EU. It is said that the party perceives Turkey as part of Europe; therefore, it should take place in a Europe-constructed club. The second place is given to the Islamic countries, while the third to the Turkic

republics in the party's program. Ataturk's idea "peace at home, peace in the world" is strongly shared by the party. As soon as it was understood that the AKP won the election, Erdogan started a tour of European capitals in order to obtain a date for the start of accession negotiations in the Copenhagen summit on December 12, 2002. His visits to the member countries of the EU has been understood by the media as a manifestation of the AKP's pro-EU foreign policy.

AKP and The Rise of "Moderate" Political Islam

What is the reason behind the transition of AKP from National Outlook to a conservative democratic line? One should remember that the single reason behind this transition is not the change in the viewpoint of the AKP's leading cadre. One needs also to consider the sociological and political background of the whole issue. There is no denying that the factors playing a part in the political outlook of the AKP goes back to the Ottoman modernization of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In other words, the AKP's moderate Islamic understanding, which is essentially open to modern political values, seems to be a by-product of one of the approaches to modernity which proliferated in the last century of the Ottoman Empire.

The Ottoman Empire entered the twentieth century with two different modernization approaches. One was rooted in the approach of the Young Ottoman intellectuals that clearly manifested itself during the 1860s, which was moderate in character. The other approach stemmed from the outlook of the Young Turks which entered the Ottoman political landscape after 1879, which was essentially fundamentalist. Young Ottoman intellectuals envisaged synthesizing modern values with the traditional local values. They demanded a constitutional government, a parliamentary regime and a political system based on human rights; they were not necessarily opposed to local values. They made reference to the Anglo-Saxon system and tried to adapt it to the Ottoman state.¹⁸ However, the Young Turk movement, which was

founded the anniversary of the French revolution, tried to make a radical change which included the replacement of local values with modern ones.¹⁹ As they were inspired by the French tradition, they were hostile towards all traditional and local values. They wanted to get rid of all traditional and religious values and institutions, and to follow a French-like modernization pattern. These intellectuals, to use one of Hayek's terms, had a "constructive rationality", and tried to design the state and society from top to bottom.²⁰

The Jacobean intellectuals soon converted their ideology into a political movement, namely the Union and Progress Party (*Ittihat ve Terakki Firkasi-ITF*), and succeeded to seize power following the multi-party election of 1908. Political opposition and democratic dynamics came to be oppressed in the aftermath of the ITF's authoritarian reign which lasted about ten years. The Republican regime, built in 1923, was founded on this tradition and the CHP, its follower in many respects, ruled in a similar vein until 1950. During its rule, the CHP, through the so-called reforms, sought to replace all traditional and religious values and symbols with the western-oriented ones, and oppressed those who defended traditional values. During the single-party rule of the CHP in the period between 1923-1950, the opposition was cleansed from both political and social arenas. The founding ideology, Kemalism, declared its aim as the integration of Turkey into the "contemporary civilization". Unfortunately, Kemalism, then and still today, seeks to impose a single truth dogmatically, although the Western civilization, which it strives to emulate, relies on a critical mind.²¹

Indeed, "Kemalism in practice" became quite different from "Kemalism in theory" during the single party regime. Kemalism in theory stressed on issues of "reason", "science", "high ethics", "development", "integration with Western civilization" etc. However, Kemalism in practice was to unite society through the state by means of an authoritarian, and sometimes

totalitarian, politics. Kemalism in theory seems to be a progressive step in the course of the modernization process which began in the last century of the Ottoman Empire. However, Kemalism in practice came to the scene during a time when totalitarian ideology dominated Europe. As a revolutionary ideology, Kemalism set out to realize its goals by authoritarian methods. The two sides of Kemalism overlapped until 1950. But with the development of the multi-party system after 1950, they came to be separated from each other and represented by different political parties.²²

The DP, which gained the support of more than half of the Turkish voters in the 1950 election and won the following two elections, defended Kemalism in theory. The DP tried to pursue a politics which emphasized three points: integrating Turkey into Europe, bringing about a free market economy, and developing a secular system that respects religious rights and values.²³ As a consequence of that politics, religious groups, forced to go underground by the single party rule, started to appear in the public life. The DP thus made religious values and symbols an important reference for political motivation and integrated religious groups into the democratic system.²⁴ Following the DP's way, the center-right parties always stood close to the religious groups. This served, as a matter of fact, the democratization and moderation of religious groups.²⁵

The radicalization of religion, indeed, was an outcome of the MG-like politics. The MG movement separated society into "we" and "others" and condemned others as being in the wrong way. The MG developed a political discourse that implied the total transformation of the system. What was the reason behind this is a matter of deep sociological analyses. For now, we can say that if one factor which shaped the world view of the MG was the radical movements which had developed in the Arab world against socialism and capitalism, the other one is Kemalism in

practice. The critical language of the MG seemed as a reaction to Kemalism's authoritarian politics.

It is noteworthy to remark that, despite the use of a religious discourse by MG movement, it has never been able to gain the support of dominant religious communities nor did it gain the support of some prominent Sufi orders in Turkey. The dominant religious communities such as *Suleymancis* (the follower of Sufi leader Suleyman Hilmi Tunahan) and *Nurcus* (the follower of Said Nursi, a commentator of Quran) and some brands of the Sufi orders always gave support to the center-right parties. The political attitude of religious groups demonstrates that they are willing to take part in the system rather than striving for its total conversion.

The integration of religious groups and their incorporation into the democratic process has accelerated in the post-1980 period. As the head of the new government in 1983, Ozal revived the DP's democratic tradition which had been too often interrupted by military interventions. Ozal's politics had three fundamental goals: religious and civil liberties, economic development, and integration into the EU.²⁶ Ozal thus created a political environment in which a high level of reconciliation could be seen between Islam and democracy. Most of the Islamic groups seemed to demand rights from, and participation into, the system. The female students' attempts to attend universities with their headscarves are one of the most notable examples of this attitude.²⁷ Human rights and liberty are actually the chief demands of religious groups in Turkey. This means, as a matter of fact, nothing more than the legitimization of the system in their eyes. Shortly, we can conclude that the political tradition of the center-right, particularly that of the DP and ANAP during Ozal, was to emphasize Kemalism in theory which served democratization in Turkey and thus the integration of religious groups into the system.

Another factor stimulating the reconciliation of religious groups with economic and political side of modernization might be linked to certain developments in the international environment. In the aftermath of the collapse of socialism, neo-liberalism has found a chance to proliferate across the globe. Liberalism's diffusion into the Islamic world acquainted Muslims introduce with a moderate tone of modernization which, in many ways, is in conformity with religious values. It is evident that the French-based modernization paradigm, which greatly influenced the Islamic world before the Second World War, created a kind of antagonistic sentiment in the ruling circles towards religious tenets. The encounter of Muslim societies with such a paradigm led them to combine democracy, secularism and liberty with a non-religious life style. On the other hand, neo-liberal paradigm has caused Muslims to welcome such values as liberalism, democracy, secularism, etc. Today, we see that in the Islamic world, ranging from Far East Asia to North Africa, two reactions have become manifest. These reactions may be described as Herodian and Zealot, using Arnold Toynbee's terminology, which refer to the Jewish reactions to the Hellenic civilization.²⁸ Herodian reaction is known to reflect an integration attitude into the Hellenic civilization, while the Zealot represents the rejection of this civilization.

It seems that a Herodian-like reaction is widespread in Turkey towards Western civilization and values connected to this civilization. Public opinion polls demonstrate that only about 10 percent of the Turkish people are against Turkey's integration into the EU. The political landscape in Turkey seems to be divided into two general categories. One is pro-nationalism and status quo, and the other one is pro-globalization and liberty. Those who have high regard for centralized state and nationalism belong to the first group. On the other hand, those who demand integration with the West, liberalization and democratization take part in the second camp. A

demarcation line has recently become manifest between the two fronts. It should be remarked that the second front constitutes a great majority of the Turkish society.

The voter support for the AKP seems to come from the second front. Public opinion polls indicate that less than one third of the AKP's voter support comes from the MG line, and the rest from other landscapes-- in particular center-right parties. It is noteworthy to remark that the MG votes did not go to the SP in the 2002 elections which adopted an anti-Western posture during its election campaign.²⁹ The MG's votes were inclined towards the AKP which insistently stressed issues of integration with the EU and liberalization during its election campaign. This perhaps gives an idea about the political character of this constituency.

As a concluding remark, I think two factors could be seen behind the AKP's attempts at reconciliation between political Islam and democracy. One is the traditional modernization paradigm backed by the Young Ottomans. The other is Kemalism in theory, which contributes to the creation of a moderate political environment in Turkey. Given the chief character of Kemalism in theory as integration into the contemporary civilization, it becomes easy for the defenders of democracy to make reference to the Western-based political as well as economic values. This seems to be the chief factor allowing even the state elite, including members of the civil and military bureaucracy, to give support to the integration of Turkey into the EU.

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NOTES

¹ In the 1995 election, both the DSP and MHP scored their best, with 14.6 and 8.2 percent of total votes respectively.

² For the political program of the DSP during the April 18 general election, see *DSP Seçim Bildirgesi, 1999*, and for that of the MHP see *Lider Türkiye'ye Dogru: Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi Seçim Beyannamesi, 1999*.

³ Since the military regime banned all the old parties from involving in politics after the 1980 coup, the CHP appeared under different names until 1993. The name of this party was Populist Party (*Halkçi Parti-HP*) during the 1983 general election, and Social Democratic Populist Party (*Sosyal Demokrat Halkçi Parti-SHP*) during the 1987 and 1991 general elections.

⁴ It is noteworthy to remark that the CHP represents Turkey in the international socialist summits which gives some idea about its non-nationalist character.

⁵ The center-right was represented in this election by two parties: the ANAP and Nationalist Democracy Party (*Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi-MDP*) the latter of which was promoted by the military, but disappeared from the political map on account of failure in gaining any meaningful support from Turkish voters.

⁶ The chief reason behind the dramatic erosion of the center-right is widely believed to be the pro-status quo stance of Çiller and Yılmaz and the fact that both were associated with political corruption and “dark” relations.

⁷ The National Outlook tradition has been based upon the idea which advocates the adoption of the Western technology, but the protection of the traditional and religious values. It was Erbakan who started the movement in 1969.

⁸ One should remember that, in the case of Turkey, there are two distinct areas of the political sphere. The core area seems to be occupied by the appointed civilian and military bureaucrats who constitute the class of the state elite. The peripheral area, by contrast, is occupied by the elected political elites. For an illuminating debate on this issue, see Metin Heper, “State, Democracy and Bureaucracy in Turkey”, *The State and Public Bureaucracies: A Comparative Perspective*, Metin Heper (ed.), New York etc.: Greenwood Press, 1987.

⁹ Arend Lijphart develops about eight different criteria to explain the identity of a political party. See *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984.

¹⁰ The MSP tried to synthesize the local values with the technology of the West. For an illustrative study, see A. Yasar Sarıbay *Türkiye'de Modernleşme, Din ve Parti Polilitasi: Milli Selamet Partisi Örnek Olayı*, Istanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1985.

¹¹ For the transition of the MG from the MSP to the RP tradition, see Ahmet Yıldız, “The Evolution of Islamic Politics in Turkey Along the NSP-PP Line: Change or Continuity”, Ankara: Bilkent University, Unpublished M.A. Thesis, 1991.

¹² For an original analysis of the RP, see Rusen Çakır, *Ne Seriat Ne Demokrasi: Refah Partisini Anlamak*, Istanbul, Metis, 1994.

¹³ See Fazilet Partisi, *Parti Programı*, 1999.

¹⁴ Fazilet Partisi, *Günisiginda Türkiye: 18Nisan 1999 Seçim Beyannamesi*, p.56.

¹⁵ *Günisiginda Türkiye*, p. 38.

¹⁶ AKP, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Ak Parti) Programı*, 2001, p. 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 3.

¹⁸ For a detailed analysis of the Young Ottomans, see Seif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000.

¹⁹ See M. Sükrü Hanioglu, *Bir Siyasal Örgüt Olarak Osmanlı İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti ve Jön Türklük*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1989.

²⁰ See F. A. Hayek, "The Errors of Constructivism," *New Studies in Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and the History of Ideas*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978.

²¹ For a critical argument in that respect, see Resat Kasaba, "Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities", *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, eds. Sibel Bozdoğan and Resat Kasaba, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997.

²² Kemal Özden, "Türkiye Cumhuriyetinde Kimlik Politikaları", *Yönetişim*, 1.1 (Winter 2002)

²³ It should be remembered that Turkey joined NATO when the DP was the government. The DP also developed cordial relations with America and other Anglo-Saxon countries.

²⁴ Binnaz Toprak argues that, after 1950, religion came to influence politics and religious groups came to be integrated into the democratic process. See *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*, Leiden : Brill, 1981.

²⁵ The edited book by Richard Tapper highlights the interconnection between religion and politics with a number of articles stressing different aspects of Islam and religious groups. See *Islam in Modern Turkey: Religion, Politics, and Literature in a Secular State*, London and New York : I.B. Tauris, 1991.

²⁶ For a detailed analysis of Ozal's liberal politics, see Ahmet Helvacı, "The Influence of Liberalism on Turkish Economy, Politics and Civic Culture with Particular Reference to Ozal Era", Sheffield: University of Sheffield, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, 1998.

²⁷ For a brilliant argument on the issue, see Nilüfer Göle, *Modern Mahrem: Medeniyet ve Örtünme*, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1992.

²⁸ Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 231-236.

²⁹ SP received only 2.8 percent in the November 2002 election, against the background of the 15.4 percent which it received in the general election of 1999.