

**THE WELFARE PARTY, THE JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY
AND DEMOCRACY: CHANGE OR CONTINUITY?**

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ABSTRACT

THE WELFARE PARTY, THE JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY AND DEMOCRACY: CHANGE OR CONTINUITY?

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Through this thesis, it is aimed to study the democracy understanding of the Welfare Party (the WP), which was closed down in 1998 by the decision of the Constitutional Court, and the Justice and Development Party (the JDP), which leaved the November 2002 general elections as the leading party and has still been running the country as the single party, in a comparative way. Since the foundation of the JDP, the founders have presented the JDP as a new political formation, which is different from the WP, with which it shares the same political legacy of a tradition (National Outlook Tradition). In that context, through this thesis, the change of claim of the JDP's founders is tried to analyze by settling democracy understanding of these two parties to the center of the study and clarifying the points of change and continuity. The comprehension is tried to do by studying these two parties' understanding of society and politics and analyzing how these two parties define and discuss the term of democracy and related concepts such laicism, human rights, participative democracy, pluralist democracy in their discourse. The internal and external factors that affected the parties' both the understandings of society and politics; and definition of the term of democracy and related concepts have also been studied. The official party documents, the statements of party authorities and the books of Milli Görüş

and Muhafazakar Demokrasi are referred as the primarily resources and the main relevant studies of the Turkish political history literature about the political Islam, state-religion relation, National Outlook have also referred as the secondary resources.

Key Words: National Outlook, The Welfare Party, The Justice and Development Party, Understanding of Democracy, Conservative Democracy

ÖZ

REFAH PARTİSİ, ADALET VE KALKINMA PARTİSİ VE DEMOKRASİ:DEĞİŞİM Mİ DEVAM MI?

Gelir, Fatma Senem

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Bu tezde, 1998 yılında Anayasa Mahkemesi kararı ile kapanan Refah Partisi (RP) ile Kasım 2002 seçimlerinden lider parti olarak çıkan ve o zamandan günümüze (2006) halen iktidarda olan Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisinin (AKP) demokrasi anlayışlarını karşılaştırmalı bir şekilde incelenmeye çalışılmıştır. AKP'nin kurucuları, partinin kuruluşundan itibaren AKP'yi, siyasal mirası itibariyle aynı gelenekten geldikleri (Milli Görüş Geleneği) RP'den daha farklı ve yeni bir siyasal oluşum olarak tanıtmaktadırlar. Bu bağlamda, bu tezde; bahsi geçen değişim iddiası, demokrasi anlayışlarının karşılaştırmasının merkeze alınması; ve değişim ve devam noktalarını ortaya çıkarılmaya çalışılması suretiyle tartışılmaktadır. Karşılaştırma, her iki partinin toplum ve siyaset anlayışları ile söylemlerinde demokrasiyi ve ilgili kavramları (laiklik, insan hakları, katılımcı demokrasi,çoğulcu demokrasi,vb.) nasıl tanımladıklarını ve tartıştıklarını açıklayarak yapılmaya çalışılmıştır. Gerek toplum ve siyaset anlayışlarında gerekse

demokrasi ve ilgili kavramların tanımlanmasında ve tartışılmasında meydana gelen deęişimin iç ve dış dinamikleri de ayrıca incelenmektedir. Çalışmada, parti programları, parti yetkililerinin verdikleri beyanlar, Necmettin Erbakan'ın 1976 yılında yayınlanan ve Milli Görüş'ün ilkelerini açıkladığı Milli Görüş kitabı ve Yalçın Akdoğan'ın AKP'nin muhafazakar demokrat kimliğinin temel prensiplerini açıkladığı Muhafazakar Demokrasi kitabı temel kaynaklar olarak kullanılmıştır. Türk siyasi tarihi literatürünün siyasal İslam, Milli Görüş Hareketi, din-devlet ilişkisine dair temel kaynaklarına ikincil kaynaklar olarak başvurulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Milli Görüş, Refah Partisi, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, Demokrasi Anlayışı, Muhafazakar Demokrasi

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Although more than eighty two years passed since the attempts of the early republican ruling elite, to secularize the polity and society of Turkey, the religion- Islam- did not loose its effect on political and social life in Turkey. In that context, it is never considered as only a matter of private realm. Throughout the republican history, there have been political and intellectual attempts to consider Islam and Islamic values as matters of political realm and social life. Thus, Islam as a religion has been considered as a political force by some circles in the society; and a threat to established political order by other parts in the society. These attempts are generally called and studied under the heading of Islamist movements in Turkey. These movements can be categorized under three headings; political ideology, political organizations, organized illegal actions (i.e. terror groups). These movements are studied under the title of Islamism or Political Islam.¹ Through this study, political parties in Turkey, which are religiously oriented and considered as Islamists, will be focused.

From 1969 to the present there have been few religiously oriented political parties. The National Order Party has been accepted as the first religiously oriented political party, which was founded in the multi-party period in Turkish political history. From then to the present, the National Salvation Party, the Welfare Party and the Virtue Party and the Felicity Party have been its successors. Because of the fact that they were all from the same

¹ Instead, from different viewpoints these terms do not refer to the same meaning. While political Islam is described as a doctrine or movement, which contends that Islam has a theory of state, Islamism is concerned with Islamic principles as the basic values of any polity instead of a theory of politics and state. (Duran, Burhanettin. "Transformation of Islamist political thought in Turkey from the empire to the early republic (1980-1960) : Necip Fazıl Kısakürek's Political ideas", Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Bilkent University, p.23)

political root and had the similar value-systems and aims, they have been generally considered as the representatives of political Islam in Turkey. This value system and ideology is called as the National Outlook (*Milli Görüş*) and the movement, evolved in the aim of realizing the NO is named the National Outlook Movement (the NOM).

Although there had been religiously oriented parties founded before, it was in the 1990s that the political Islam (especially the NOM) has become a challenge to the basic principles of Kemalist Republic. In the mid-1990s political Islam was considered as one of two threats to the existence of Turkish Republic and liberal democratic system by some circles in Turkish society. This situation was firstly unfolded after the local elections of 1994, in which the Welfare Party had won the municipalities of big cities of Turkey such Istanbul and Ankara. Moreover, in the 1996, Necmettin Erbakan, who had been the leader of the NOM for more then twenty years, and became the first Islamist Prime Minister of Turkey. The WP was ousted from power in June 1997 and was outlawed by the Constitutional Court in March 1998 as a consequence of the sensitiveness of Turkish Army Forces on issue which is known as process of February 28 (1997). After the ban, the Virtue Party was founded as the successor of Welfare Party. Related to the consequences of the process of February 28, there had been a significant change in the discourse of successor of the WP about the political stance of the VP and it began to give place terms such democracy and respect to the political choices of people in its discourse frequently. However, Constitutional Court also banned the Virtue Party in June 2001. This closure has been a breakpoint for the future of political Islam (the NOM) in Turkey. After that, the members of the VP founded two different parties, one of which were the Justice and Development Party (JDP) and the other was the Felicity Party. The NOM had gone into a dissolution process, not only that there founded two different political parties, but also that the founders of the JDP strongly presented the JDP as a new political formation, which had left the Islamist political stance behind, broke off the NO past.

Moreover, just 5 years after the process of February 28 lived, the JDP, founders of which are the old members of the NOM, remained as the leading party in the general election of November 2002 and since then it has been running the country as single party. Starting from its foundation, the members of the JDP defined the party in such a way that the JDP had no reference to their old Islamic past. In fact, the JDP defines itself as conservative democrat rather than Islamist. The JDP began to make emphasis on the concepts such as democracy or human rights more then ever and declared accession of Turkey to European Union as its primary target, which is considered as the ultimate step of Turkish modernization. In that context, it presents itself as the proponent of democratization in Turkey. This claim of the JDP has raised the problem whether they (Islamists) have really changed, or they have been engaged in the practice of dissimulation in the sense that they still intend to put the Islamic values into the agenda of politics.

The emergence and rise of Islamism in Turkey has been considered as a threat to democratic regime and secular republic. Thus, political Islamist movements have been criticized for being anti-democratic with their privilege on Islam. In other words, Islam as a religion has been presented as a worldview, which is unable to be in harmony with modernity and democracy. Moreover, this consideration presented democracy and Islam as mutually exclusive concepts. On the contrary, in Turkey, parties of the NO and the JDP have developed their own conceptions of democracy. At least, the term has been used in various areas by the authorities of the National Outlook Movement.

Apart from Islamist usage of the term, there have been ongoing debates on the concept of democracy in western political thought and theory. In the west, these debates on whether democracy is a tool or means; or whether it should be asserted as a only a form of government or a value system, if there should be limits on the choices of people forms the agenda of the political studies in one dimension. In other dimension, the relation between

democracy and recognition and representation of diversities in modern societies forms the agenda. In that context, how ethnical, religious or gender identities can be recognized, and what kind of a role democracy can play for political representation of these diversities has become issue in political agenda. Especially with the historical developments in the modern world, there have been changes in the definition of democracy; moreover in the definition of a democratic political system. For instance, while the existence of certain principles and institutions such as sovereignty by the people; majority rule; constitutional/legal protection of the basic human rights and freedoms; several political parties; free elections; a competitive environment for the different ideas and political parties, were accepted as the main characteristics of a democratic system in the 1960s or 1970s. Especially with the developments started in 1980s new quantities have been added to these features for the definition of a democratic political system. These new quantities are described on the level how these political system firstly recognize the diversities and minorities which are formed on ethnical, religious or gender identities, then give change to these identities to gain rights which spring from their difference. In that context, concepts such as recognition of identities/diversities, minority rights in modern societies have been used for the definition of democratic political system.

Therefore, it may be said that all these external and internal factors have formed a new kind of conception of democracy for both Islamists and other groups in Turkey like other part of the world. Since the political and social factors in Turkey are considered, it seems that that while the internal factor has been the process of February 28, the external factor has been the process of full membership of Turkey to European Union. Especially Robert Dahl's theory, which argues that each state will need to strength their democracy and democratic institutions to be able to settle and continue a democratic system in transnational organizations², supports the idea that the external factor in the change has been the aim for full membership to European Union.

² Dahl, Robert.(1989) *Democracy and Its Critics*, Yale University Press, New York, p.395

In the light of all these debates revolving around the concept of democracy, the major question to be addressed in this study will be how does the Welfare Party and the JDP conceptualize democracy in their discourses? In other words, how do these political stands, which are considered to be a threat to democracy, utilize the term democracy in its discourse? Moreover, How did the National Outlook Movement conceptualize democracy? Have there been changes in democracy understanding of National Outlook Movement, especially during the WP period? What kind of traces from idea of National Outlook Movement did the WP and does the JDP carry to their understanding of democracy? It is thought that comparing understanding of democracy of these two parties can help to see the changes or continuities of the JDP from its National Outlook roots. One other important question that will be tried to dares through this study is that what kind of factors have affected the transformation/change- if there has been- of understanding of democracy of the NOM starting with the WP and continue in the JDP. To summarize, it may be said that the main aim of this study is to define and analyze the understanding of democracy in National Outlook Idea in general, and the WP and the JDP in particular in a comparative perspective. By doing this, it is aimed to see the transformation and change in the democracy consideration of the NOM at the level of discourse starting from the WP period and continued with the foundation of the JDP. Furthermore, it is aimed to find the main differences in the conceptualization of democracy of the JDP from the WP's conceptualization of democracy.

To be able to make such an analysis, the party programs of these two parties, the statements and speeches of the party leaders and authorities—especially given after the important events and issues according to the agenda of Turkish political life, publications about the National Outlook (especially the one titled National Outlook and written by Necmettin Erbakan); and Conservative Democracy (which is authorized by Yalçın Akdoğan and presented as the source for the JDP's new political stance) as the primary sources. That the JDP has still been in the power on the days

these thesis is written, thus the number of the statements/speeches of the party authorities of the JDP, those can be considered as relevant to the subject of this study, is increasing day by day. Related to this reason, it needed to determine a period, during which the relevant speeches/statements of the JDP's party authorities will be referred. The period starts by the time when it had come to power and ends with the end of the year of 2004.

The relevant statements/speeches of Necmettin Erbakan are sustained through a search over selected Turkish Newsletters those belong to the years of 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998. Furthermore, the statements/speeches of Tayyip Erdoğan and other party spokesman; and the party program of the JDP are sustained from the web site of the JDP, which is available on <http://www.akparti.org.tr>.

Along with these primary resources; texts, the basic studies of Turkish politics those are dealing with the relation between state and religion in Turkey, the emergence and rise of political Islam, parties of NOM will be studied to be able to understand the historical developments, reasons and conditions that had shaped the contemporary political Islam in Turkey.

To be able to make such analysis to the aim and research method introduced above, the thesis is divided to into five chapters first of which is the introduction and fifth of which is the conclusion section. The second chapter will discuss the historical development of political Islam in Turkey within the context of state-religion interaction. While giving brief information about the NOM's political parties, the dynamics behind the politicization of Islam in Turkey will be explained by following the basic arguments claimed by scholars of Turkish politics.

In the third chapter, the WP's historical background and understanding of democracy will be focused. The WP's understanding of democracy will be analyzed in two dimensions. While the description and usage of democracy

and concepts such freedom, laicism, human rights, sovereignty will be studied through a descriptive dimension, it will also tried to answer the questions of how the WP consider the structure of Turkish society and politics as an other dimension. In the same way, through the fourth chapter, the dynamics behind the dissolution and/or separation in the NOM and founding of the JDP will be discussed. Also, the JDP's new political stance and consideration of democracy will be studied. And finally, through the conclusion chapter, it will be tried to answer the question that what kind of ruptures and continuities consideration of democracy of the JDP carries since it is compared with the democracy conceptualization of the WP.

CHAPTER 2

POLITICIZATION OF ISLAM IN TURKISH POLITICAL HISTORY

The role of religion -Islam- in politics has always been an important issue in Turkish political life and the issue of political Islam has interested the scholars of Turkish politics. Thus, before starting to study and analyze the democracy understanding of the Welfare Party and the Justice and Development Party in a comparative way, giving the historical developments on the emergence and rise of political Islam in Turkey; and how political Islam is discussed in the studies of Turkish politics can provide a beneficial and meaningful background for this study. For this reason, during this chapter, the historical development of political Islam, especially the emergence of the National Outlook Movement in Turkey before 1990s will be tried to discuss by referring to the basic studies in Turkish political life literature, which are dealing with the emergence and rise of political Islam in Turkey.

As the literature on Turkish political life is generally examined, it is realized that studies about the role of Islam in Turkish politics and society are generally concentrated on explaining and/or discussing the following questions:

- What kind of a religion -Islam- consideration, had the ruling elite got during the establishment of the Turkish Republic?
- How has the religion-Islam- consideration of the ruling elite of the early republican period affected Turkish politics and relations between the state and the society (relations between the center and the periphery) during whole republic history?

- What factors have been effective firstly on the emergence and then the rise of Islam as a political actor and/or as a challenge and/or a threat to the existing political system? In other words, how Islam, which has been assumed as only one of the components of forming elements of Turkish society, has been politicized?
- What kind of ideology, action plan, and constituency have the religiously oriented parties –so called the parties of National Outlook Tradition- had?
- Could Islam as the founding component of a political identity contribute to democratization process in Turkey?³

2.1 Religion-Islam- Understanding of the Ruling Elite of the Early Republican Period

As it is always mentioned, the early years of the Turkish Republic were also the years for the ruling elites to establish and/or construct a nation, which would base on a secularized, westernized and homogenous nation-state. Thus, since the 1920s the republican elite aimed to westernize and secularize every aspect of social, cultural and political life to create a modern nation.⁴ This new establishment processes required a new definition for the role of religion-Islam- in both the administration and the social life of the new

³ It should also be mentioned that adding to these four themes, of course there have been different studies those are investigating different aspects of interrelation between religion and politics and role of Islam in Turkish society, those are generally intensified on Islamist political thought and Islamist intelligentsia in Turkey; the role of Sufi paths in Turkish society and politics; the political-economy of Turkish political Islam. However, it is thought that these four themes, mentioned above are more relevant to the subject of this study and thus the discussion about the historical developments of Turkish political Islam will be tried to be continued in the context of these themes.

⁴ Yavuz, Hakan. “ Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Party in Turkey”, *Comparative Politics*, October 1997, 63-82, p. 64

nation-state, which had been the dominant factor in the social and political life during the whole Ottoman history.

As Sencer Ayata⁵ mentions, Islam had both positive and negative aspects for Mustafa Kemal and his closer associates, the ruling elites of the new Turkish republic. According to Ayata, they were aware of the significance of Islam in Turkish society and also that religious faith was important for national unity and mobilization, thus it could contribute to social and moral welfare. On the other hand, they also considered Islam as a traditional force and a source of conservative influence, superstition, false ideas, and dogmas. Moreover, they assumed that Islam had responsibility for Turkey's backwardness, and had features which had been obstacles to the achievement of national ideals.⁶ To eliminate the influence of Islam over politics and also over the society, they adopted a secularization program and process, which has been criticized by some scholars thinking that it alienated the Turkish society from the state and widened the cleavage between the state and the society. Feroz Ahmad defines the aim of this secularization process, as: "The aim in adopting secularism was to create a modern, rational state with institutions and laws which would facilitate the developments of capitalism in Turkey."^{7/8}

In the same way, Mardin explains the reasons for this secularization policy by Atatürk's and his associates new concept of state, the modern state.⁹ He argues that Atatürk had believed that the modern state could be shored up

⁵ Ayata, Sencer. "Patronage, Party, and the State: The Politicization of Islam in Turkey", *Middle Eastern Journal*, vol.50, Winter 1996, 40-56, p.41

⁶ Ayata, *ibid*, p. 42

⁷ Ahmad, Feroz. "Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol.27, Winter 1991, 3-21, p.3

⁸ Here, it may be mentioned that his emphasis on capitalism is interesting because that almost each study discuss the secularization program of the ruling elite of the republic on their demand to create a new society instead of a new economic system.

⁹ Mardin, Şerif. (1983) "Religion and Politics in Modern Turkey" in J. Piscatori, ed. *Islam in the Political Process*. Cambridge, 138-59, p.142

‘civic religion’. Here, again for Mardin, religion had a secondary or marginal role to play; it was relegated to the role of a personal value. Moreover, that the new modern state would base on the responsibilities of the citizens, there needed to create institutions, which would encourage the growth of civic religion and promote the individual responsibility on which civic religion rests.¹⁰

This secularization program had gained impetus with series of legal and institutional changes implemented by the government in the years of early republic period. From 1922 to 1924, the new regime introduced drastic measures that included abolishing the Sultanate, the Caliphate, the office of Şeyh-ül-Islam (the highest religious authority in the Ottoman Empire), Islamic schools, Islamic law (sharia) courts, and the Ministries of Seriat and Evkaf (pious foundation). In 1925, sects and orders were banned and monasteries were closed. In the same years a unified educational system under a secular Ministry of Public Instruction had been established, Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA) was formed to replace two previously mentioned ministries. Furthermore between the years 1925 and 1930, Swiss civil codes, Italian penal codes and the Latin alphabet were adopted. The new legal system was complemented by reforms as voting rights for women (1926), the outlawing of traditional and religious customs, and the adaptation of metric system of measurement and the Gregorian calendar. Moreover, in 1928 the second article of 1924 constitution –which declares Islam as the religion of the state– was annulled and the principle of secularism was added into the constitution in 1937.¹¹

Although this secularization process is attributed to the efforts of ruling republican elites to create a rational, westernized and homogenous nation, some scholars discuss that the secularization as one of the aspects of the re-

¹⁰ Mardin, *ibid*, p.142

¹¹ Ayata, *ibid*, p. 41 and Sakallıoğlu-Cizre, Ümit. “Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996):231-51, p.233-234

construction of the state- had been started by Tanzimat period(1839). For instance, Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu defines early republican era as heir to Ottoman past and says that Turkey's early republican era was the immediate heir to many institutional and intellectual structures and traditions of the 19th-century Ottoman Empire, in particular the secularizing influence of the Tanzimat period. In that context she discusses that the reforms of Tanzimat period in the spheres of civilian and military bureaucracy, judiciary and education had strengthened the central state while weakening the religious establishment.¹² This was also because of the attempts of the ruling elites to keep the state free from the influence of ulema and also tariqat leaders.¹³

Many scholars have interpreted establishment of the Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA) as one of aims of the ruling elite to control of the religion- Islam- instead of directly separating religion and politics.¹⁴ For instance, Sakallıoğlu defines the creation of the DRA as the unique feature of Turkish secularism and argues that Ankara government never intended to separate the temporal and spiritual realms; instead it institutionalized Islam in the form of a government structure.¹⁵ Similarly, Ayata asserts the establishment of the DRA as an attempt of the government to control the religion and says that the attempt to control religion was manifested both by the establishment of an office, the DRA; and by the repression of Islamic activity undertaken by private organizations.¹⁶ Ayata also claims that the government not only tried to contain the role of Islam in society, but also took steps to reform Islam according to its own vision; moreover he relates government's this efforts with its plan to create a society which is composed

¹² Sakallıoğlu-Cizre, *ibid*, p. 233

¹³ Mardin, *ibid*, p. 141

¹⁴ For a detailed information what kind of function the DRA have had over the administration of religious organizations see Toprak, 1998, p.122

¹⁵ Sakallıoğlu-Cizre, *ibid*, p. 234

¹⁶ Ayata, *ibid*, p. 42

of nationalist, scientifically minded, and anti-traditionalist individuals.¹⁷ Thus, the foundation of the DRA should also be interpreted as forming a public agency to present the “right” interpretation of Islam against heterodox beliefs and practices prevailing among the Muslim population.¹⁸

The policies for secularization have intensified during the single-party period. While this secularization process has become strict; the gap between the state and the society has expanded. Ahmad states this relation in the following:

“They (Kemalists) tried to remove Islam from political discourse, though not always successfully. Turkish society as yet undifferentiated in the single-party regime, tended to use Islamic discourse to challenge the legitimacy of the state. The state responded by limiting the space in which this discourse took place by extending secular laws and becoming more and more militant against Islam.”¹⁹

Yavuz also argues that this secularization policy of the early republic has constructed an internal other, which is based on being Muslim and he claims that in spite of the state-led secularization policy, Islam has remained a depository for regulating day to day social life for masses and secularization imposed from above alienated Turkish society from the state. According to him, while this secularization policy has become one of the determining features of Turkish Republic State, politicization of Islam has gained impetus. He defines the whole history of Turkish politics as the story of a complex tension between two worldviews and identities; which are the followers of the ruling republic elite (with his words, secularists) and the Muslims. For him, because secularism did not separate religion and politics, but rather subordinated religion to political realm, it promoted the

¹⁷ Ayata, *ibid*, p. 42

¹⁸ Buğra, Ayşe (2002) “Political Islam in Turkey in Historical Context: Strengths and Weaknesses” in *The Politics of Permanent Crisis Class, ideology and State in Turkey*. Balkan, N.&Savran, S. (ed.), Nova Science Publishers, NY

¹⁹ Ahmad, *ibid*, p.3

politicization of Islam and struggle between the secularists and Muslims for the control of the state.²⁰

With a similar approach, but also having a different dimension, Sakallıoğlu claims that the strategy of ruling elite of early republic towards Islam had demonstrated two trends; one of which has repressive component, and the other blending the ideals of secular nationalism with Islamic symbols. According to her, idea of secular nationalism has not gained legitimacy among the people and thus illegitimacy of secular nationalism as a historical context produced the appeal of Islam. She argues that the regime tried to cope with this problem by showing a limited concern for popular legitimacy and also by making a tactical recourse to Islam. And again, depending upon these strategies rather being banished from the public political sphere, Islam came to rest at the center stage of politics, and secularism become a politically charged concept.²¹

In the light of all these arguments and historical improvements, it may be said that during the early republican period, related to the idea of forming a modern, westernized, rational, secular nation and its state, the early republican ruling elite (military-bureaucracy bureaucrats) aimed to redefine both the role and the power of the religion in the politics by implementing a series of policies. These were not only implemented to bring the religion out of the political realm but were also implemented to control and revise the religion. Thus, religion in Turkey has always been under the control of the state. And this religion consideration of the early republican period has defined the borders of the frame of politics in which the religion can take place and has stayed as a tradition during the whole republic history. By this argument, it is not claimed that the state has always demonstrated a suppressive and eliminative stance towards the religion; it is just claimed that the state has been the main actor for the definition of the role of the

²⁰ Yavuz, *ibid*, p.64-65

²¹ Sakallıoğlu, *ibid*,p. 236

religion in politics for the whole history of the republic. Turkish Political History has witnessed the last example of this redefinition of the role of religion in politics by the process of February 28 (1997).²²

2.2 The Multiparty Period Until 1980

2.2.1 Relation between Religion- Islam- and Center Right Parties Until 1970

Although there have been attempts for the establishment of different political parties in the early years of the republic, they had short lives and Turkey was ruled by the Republican People's Party until 1950. In 1950, the Democrat Party (DP), which was founded in 1946 and claimed to present the periphery (the people) against the secular ruling elite (center) came to power after the second free elections. It stayed in power until 1960 when ousted from office by the military intervention.

One of the issues that the DP employed in its opposition discourse against the RPP was the RPP's strict secular policy. Furthermore, appeal to Islam has become a very important aspect for the DP and significantly contributed to its electoral success in 1950. Thus the Democrat Party's and then its successor the Justice Party's (JP), which was established in 1961 after the military intervention of 1960 and closed down in 1981, attitude towards Islam has been asserted as a relax position and a kind of transformation in state-religion relation. For instance, according to Ayata, one of the reasons for the rise of political Islam in Turkey has been the policies of the parties on the center right towards religion starting with the DP period.²³ Moreover, The DP's promoting religion for electoral success has been interpreted as the

²² The process of February 28 (1997) will be studied in details in following chapters.

²³ See Ayata, 1996 for his detailed discussion for the role of center right parties on the rise of political Islam in Turkey.

revival or resurgence of Islam in 1950's by some authors.²⁴ Contrary to this idea, Sakallıoğlu discusses that the DP was a party that shared the commitment of the ruling republican elite to modernization and progress and via secularization and it just tried to achieve this goal by keeping a tight religion on Islam through the civil-military bureaucracy. Thus, according to her, the relax attitude of the DP towards Islam posed neither a major nor minor political challenge to the system. She also argues that the DP's position towards Islam remained within the broad parameters set by the founding cadres of the republic. Furthermore, she discusses that for the power base of the DP, Islam did not represent a political ideology but rather a cultural tradition.²⁵

Starting with the Democrat Party, the center-right parties in Turkey have been accused to undermine the secular principles of the state and exploit people's religious sensitivity to gain votes. Although religion-Islam has played an important role in the discourse of the center right parties, their emphasis on religion has never let them to be entitled as Islamist Parties. Thus, we are not able to talk about an Islamist Party until the foundation of the National Order Party (NOP) in 1970, which is also considered as the first political party of National Outlook Movement, in Turkish political life.

²⁴ See Toprak, Binnaz (1988) "The State, Politics and Religion in Turkey" in Heper, M. & Emin, A. (eds) *Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980's*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, p. 123 for the DP's practices those are interpreted as the determiners of the revival of Islam in Turkey; and for a detailed list of studies those discuss the revival of Islam in 1950's.

²⁵ Sakallıoğlu, *ibid*, p. 237

2.2.2 The Period between 1970 and 1980; Existence of the National Outlook Movement

National Outlook²⁶ Movement is considered as the most important dependent Islamist movement in Turkish Republic political history. The most significant feature, which differs the National Outlook Movement from other Islamist movements in Turkey, is that it has organized and carried on its struggle through political parties.²⁷ The Politicians of National Outlook Tradition, the historical routes of which go back to the second half of 60's, have established the following political parties: the National Order Party (1970-1972), the National Salvation Party (1972-1980), the Welfare Party (1983-1998), the Virtue Party (1997-2001) and the Felicity Party (2001-).²⁸

2.2.2.1 Foundation of the National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi, the NOP)

First party belonging to the National Outlook Tradition had been established on 26 January 1970 under the leadership Necmettin Erbakan.²⁹ In the relevant literature, there have been different approaches, which analyze the reasons for the foundation of NOP. First approach tries to define the process

²⁶ The term of "National Outlook" had been used by Necmettin Erbakan to describe the worldview of the NSP in the seventies. Futhermore, he wrote a book, named *National Outlook*, which was firstly published in 1976. Through this book, he described the basic principles of the National Outlook as a worldview. Moreover, Necmettin Erbakan had also continued to use the term "National Outlook" as one of the most important components of the WP's worldview during his presidency. That is why the parties of NOP-FP Line are called the parties of National Outlook Movement.

²⁷ Çakır, Ruşen. (2004), "Milli Görüş Hareketi" in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce* cilt:6 İslamcılık, İletişim, İstanbul, p. 544

²⁸ At that point, it should be mentioned that although the founders of the Justice and Development Party (the JDP), which was founded in 2001, had taken effective roles in the National Outlook Movement in the past, the JDP has not been considered as a party of NOM. That is because that the founders of the JDP had declared they had left their Islamist political stance behind; furthermore they avoided defining the JDP as an Islamist party.

²⁹ For the full list of the party founders see Çakır, Ruşen (1994) *Ne Şeriat Ne Demokrasi*, Metis, İstanbul, p. 19.

with the economic structure of Turkey in sixties and establishes a link with the economic developments of the era and the foundation of the NOP. According to that approach, reason for the foundation of the NOP is related to the power struggle between the big capital of the big cities and traditional small capital of Anatolia by the end of the sixties. 1960's were the years when capitalism and industrialization had grown in Turkey. While the capital in larger cities were growing as a result of its cooperation with the west, the small capital of Anatolia had also grown and gained a dependent position to the big capital of the big cities. Thus the interest conflict between the large industrialists and businessman of the larger cities and the small merchants and businessman and artisans of smaller cities of Anatolia had become more recognizable and this conflict made a new political formation necessary and the NOP was founded. Based on this approach, Sarıbay claims that objective conditions, which made the foundation of the NOP necessary, are the consequences of functional division in industrializing Turkish society of sixties.³⁰

On the other hand, the second approach relates foundation of the NOP with the socio-cultural structure of Turkey in that period and defines the foundation of the NOP as an independence process of the present Islamist formations, which had been excluded from the central right. Çakır claims that the NOP was established because there had been a serious crisis in the relation between the right-wing party of the era, the Justice Party and the Islamic congregations in Turkey. According to him, after the foundation of the secular regime in Turkey, the basic strategy of the Islamic congregations, which had influence in administration of Ottoman Empire, has become to guarantee their entity and use the opportunities that central government provided, for the advantage of the congregations and their members.³¹ Due to that strategy, they inclined towards the right-wing parties instead of the

³⁰ Sarıbay, Ali Yaşar (2004) . “ Milli Nizam Partisi'nin Kuruluşu ve Program İçeriği” in Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce cilt:6 İslamcılık, İletişim, İstanbul, p. 574

³¹ Çakır, 2004, p. 545

Republican People's Party. There had not been an important crisis with these congregations and the Justice Party until Süleyman Demirel had become the party leader.

The crisis between the JP and Islamic congregations had occurred after Süleyman Demirel had become the party leader. Nationalist-conservative faction of the JP had been discharged from the party following the leadership of Süleyman Demirel. Thus in 1967 a number of M.P from the JP and a senator, namely, A. Tevfik Paksu, Hasan Aksay, Arif Hikmet Güner, Osman Turan had begun to oppose these new events in the party and begun to search for a new political formation that would have been based on conservative and religious features. Necmettin Erbakan, who latter became the leader of the National Outlook Movement, had also taken part in that new political formation. In 1968, Necmettin Erbakan had been elected as the presidency of the *Odalar Birliđi* as the representative of the small and middle businessman with the support of these businessmen, traditional artisans and merchants of Anatolia. During his campaign for presidency, he had harshly criticized the JP as being dependent on big and especially foreign capital, being the servant of the Zionists and Freemasons.³²

The JP government, as a result of the rejections of Istanbul and Izmir Trade Unions did not confirm Erbakan's presidency to *Odalar Birliđi*. Moreover, Erbakan was removed from office by the minister of Trade with the support of police power.³³ This event encouraged the opposition group within the JP to stimulate the preparations for the foundation of the new party. However, the preparations could not have been completed before the general elections of 1969. Thus, the members of the new political formation participated in the elections as independent candidates. This participation is later called the independents' movement in Turkish political life and considered as the very

³² Alemdarođlu, Ayça. (1999), " Rethinking the Welfare Party: Analysis of the 1991 Election Campaign", Unpublished Master Thesis , Bilkent, p. 12

³³ This event is considered as the reason event by which the NOP has taken its place in Turkish political life.

early formation of the National Outlook Movement.³⁴ However, among these members only Erbakan who was elected as Konya deputy succeeded in the elections.

As the consequences of ongoing efforts for a new political formation, which would base on conservative and religious features; and election of Necmettin Erbakan as a deputy, the NOP, which is considered as the first Islamist political party in Turkish political life, had been founded under the leadership of Erbakan in January 1970. With the join of two deputies of the JP, the NOP came to be represented with three deputies in the parliament.³⁵

2.2.2.2 Ideology of the NOP

The NOP was offering both material and moral progress programs, which would be based on the rejection of Western cultural programs and recovery of the potential of the Turkish nation for morals and virtue.³⁶ Moreover, the party was defending the idea that the Western influence or western way of worldview should only be adapted to technical field.³⁷ In other words the party used a discourse that made emphasis on tradition and moral values and displayed a distant and critical stand towards the west. Thus, Ertürk defines the ideology of the NOP as “a product of reconciliation of rational socialist-positivist science and technology view with traditionalist discourse.”³⁸ On the other hand, Çakır defines the ideology of the NOP as an ideology, which is consisted of Ottomanist, national independentist, Islamist

³⁴ Çakır, 1994, p. 19

³⁵ It may be mentioned that the free atmosphere, which has been provided by 1961 Constitution, has also facilitated the foundation of the party.

³⁶ Landau, Jacob.(1976) “ The National Salvation Party in Turkey”, Truman Institute Reprint from Asian&African Studies 1, p. 1-57, p.13-14

³⁷ Toprak, Binnaz.(1981) *Islam and Political Development in Turkey*. Ledien: E. J. Brill, p. 99 and Sarıbay, Ali Yaşar. (1985) *Türkiye’de Modernleşme, Din ve parti Politikası: Milli Selamet Partisi Örnek Olayı*, Alfa Yayınları, p. 61

³⁸ Ertürk, Ahmet “Türkiye’de İslami Hareketin Gelişim Süreci”, *Dünya ve İslam* 4, 1990, p. 123

and modernist features, with references to the concepts that are used in Foundation Declaration of the NOP.³⁹

The most significant feature that differed the NOP (and other parties of the National Outlook Tradition) from other right-wing parties has been its understanding of the West and Turkey's relation with it. According to the NOP, there were two types of problems that Turkey had faced: the material and moral problems and these were all related to the western worldview in Turkey. The party listed material problems as the economic dependency of Turkey on foreign markets and capital, a weak financial position, a low level of income per capita, unjust wealth and loose of autonomy in the foreign policy as the consequence of economic weakness. Besides the material problems, the NOP complained about the education system in the country. The party claimed that there was failure in the education system that was based on the Western ideology and this western ideology was the cause of the moral problems.⁴⁰ The NOP was based upon three social layers: 1) New self-employed elitists, who were from the religious families of the provinces (*taşra*) and were educated through the secular schools of the Republic; 2) Religious small and middle entrepreneurs of the province who deal with trade and industry; 3) low-income Sunni religious people living both in city and provinces.⁴¹ Moreover, Islamic congregations, which are known as tariqats, especially *Nakişbendi community*⁴², supported the NOP during and afterwards the foundation of the party.

2.2.2.3 The NOP's Understanding of Democracy

³⁹ Çakır, 2004, p. 546

⁴⁰ Toprak, 1981; p.98-99

⁴¹ Çakır, 2004, p. 545

⁴² It is claimed that Mehmet Zait Kotku has named the party and the party was founded with the permission of him. For more detailed information about the influence of Mehmet Zait Kotku on the foundation of the party, see Yalçın, Soner (1994). *Hangi Erbakan?*, Öteki Yayınevi, Ankara, p.58-60 and Yavuz , Hakan. (2003), *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, Oxford University Press, New York, p.199.

Because that it is aimed to analyze the democracy understanding of the WP and the JDP in that study, it is convenient to investigate how democracy was conceptualized by the NOP, which is considered as the first party of the same tradition. For this purpose, when the party program is read, it is seen that there had been a separate section that has been subtitled “Our Democracy Understanding”. In that section, democracy is defined as a free opportunities ground, which enables the most intellectual, wise and respectful people to serve the nation. Moreover according to the NOP, democracy should provide authority of right and reality that searches for the right and realization of the right, to rule the nation with the fairest, most appropriate and scientific methods. The NOP states that it believes that democracy should only be realized in societies where morality and virtue are prevailing and while these features lose their effects and their regulator power in the society, democracy might be degenerated and become a tool of anarchy. Furthermore, according to NOP, evolution of democracy should be considered as the consequence of the evolution, which the people reach in the path of virtue. Thus, it should not be used a means for the evolutions of fleshly and aimlessly freedom. ⁴³

As it is understood from the section “Our Democracy Consideration”, for NOP democracy is directly related to morality and virtue, which it offers as the final solution to the current problems in Turkish society. In that context, it may be said that for the NOP democracy is accepted throughout it serves the evolution of the morality and virtue in society. In other words, democracy should only serve in the societies where morality and virtue are dominated and stand as the main regulators. Thus democracy in any society, over where morality and virtue has lost their effect should be limited or controlled. In that context, it may be claimed that for NOP, the will of people (the basic feature for the evolution of democracy in any society) may be directed or limited for again the sake of the people.

⁴³ MNP/Milli Nizam Partisi/Program, <<http://www.belgenet.com>>, 23/02/2005

One another important point that indicates the NOP's democracy understanding in this section is the definition of the person who may be charged with serving the nation. For the NOP, the main characteristic of these people again must be based on their search for morality and virtue. In that context, anyone who wishes to serve nation should declare his/her commitment to the evolution of morality and virtue in the society. Furthermore these people have to be the ones who are the most intellectual, respectful, and virtuous. Depending upon this consideration, it may be said that the NOP has an imagination of ruling elite.

Depending upon the NOP's assumption of the virtue and morality as the basis of a society, it may be claimed that the NOP demonstrates a conservative stance about the nature of the society and thus the politics. The conservative understanding of society considers 'the collection of people' as homogenous structures, members of which have common values and seek for the evolution of the best for community.⁴⁴ These common values are generally described by the norms of morality and virtue. Moreover for the conservative understanding, the politics means to describe 'the common good' and make it permanent in the ethical life of the community. In that context, NOP's claim to settle the morality and virtue as the main regulators of Turkish society could be asserted as the 'common good' definition of the NOP. Moreover, NOP's consider the political arena to serve the nation and revelation of national will is directly related to this understanding of society which again shows us that the NOP has a conservative logic about the nature of the society and politics.

Western worldview was not the only subject, which Erbakan- so the NOP- was criticizing in his speeches. He was also criticizing the laicist politics of the Republic and Atatürk's reformations. All these speeches resulted in

⁴⁴ Burke, Edmund. (1975) *On Government, Politics and Society*, ed. B.W.Hill, Fontona, London, p. 191

closure of the party on May 21, 1971⁴⁵, just after the 1971 military intervention, the NOP was outlawed by the Constitutional Court as a result of the prohibition of the Political Parties Law forbidding the use of religion for political purpose, in other words it was closed down- like all other closed parties of National Outlook Tradition- being the center of the anti-laicist actions.

2.2.2.4 The National Salvation Party (the NSP)

The National Salvation Party (NSP), which is considered to be the second party of the National Outlook Tradition, was founded on October 11, 1972. Although none of the founding members were from the NOP⁴⁶, the program and worldview of the party were exhibiting the continuity with the NOP's. First chairman of the NOP was Süleyman Arif Emre. Erbakan became a NSP member in May 1973 and after the national elections of October 1973, the NSP's administrative board appointed Erbakan as the chairman of the party. About the leadership of Erbakan, Yavuz claims "Although the Turkish constitution did not allow a person to become chairman if his previous party had been banned by the Constitutional Court, the generals wanted Erbakan to lead the new party because they hoped to weaken the AP in the next elections."⁴⁷ In the same way, it is argued that there had been a generals group, who intended to weaken the Justice Party while integrating Islamic opposition to the system, thus encouraged the foundation of the NSP.⁴⁸ One other reason for the military allowance to the new party is determined as the Green Belt project of the USA. With this project, Turkish military had a

⁴⁵ The NOP was officially closed in January 14, 1972. It was because that the verdict of the Constitutional Court was published in the Official Gazette on that date. (Çınar, 1999:231)

⁴⁶ For the list of founding members and general administrative board see Ağırbaş, 2002: 19

⁴⁷ Yavuz, 2003,p.210

⁴⁸ Çakır, 1995, p.22 and Çalışlar, Oral (1997) Refah Partisi Nereden Nereye?. İstanbul: Pencere, p. 43, and Yavuz, 2003, p.209

tendency to see religion as an impediment to expansion of communism and leftist ideas in Turkey.⁴⁹

In its first elections (general elections of October 1973), the NSP won 48 seats in the Parliament and received 11.8 percent of the vote in the parliamentary election and 12.3 percent in the senatorial election, winning three seats in the Senate. With these results, the NSP came out of the elections as the third largest party after Republican People's party (the RPP), which was considered as a center-left party and the Justice Party (the JP), which was considered as a center-right party. The electoral success of the NSP could not only be explained by the effect of the religion in the political choices of the Turkish electorate. The discourse of the NSP on the economy and industrialization can be asserted as the main factor for the success of the party. Thus, Yavuz argues that the fact that the NSP' program called for the "rapid industrialization" rather than Islamization may be seen as evidence that many people in effect voted for electricity, not sharia.⁵⁰ The voters of the NSP were the conservative groups vulnerable farmers, small merchants or artisans especially from the rural areas and less developed regions of Turkey such eastern and southeastern provinces. Mardin asserts that this is Kemalism's failure in solving economic and social problems, which made people turn to religion as an alternative reference point.⁵¹

The NSP joined the coalition government with the Republican People's Party on January 24, 1974. But the life of the coalition was short and the coalition government dissolved on September 18, 1974. However, the NSP joined to two so-called National Front Coalitions formed by the JP;the Nationalist Action Party (the NAP); the Republicanist Reliance Party (the RRP);from April 1975 to December 1977. The period ended with the military coup in

⁴⁹ Alemdaroğlu, *ibid*, p.17

⁵⁰ Yavuz, 2003, p.210

⁵¹ Mardin, cited in Toprak, 1981, p. 105

1980 and the NSP was closed by the military government on October 16, 1980 along with all other political parties.

2.2.2.5 Ideology of the NSP

The NSP is considered as a powerful party with a clerical worldview, which reflects the Islamic awakening in the history of Turkey after the Second World War best.⁵² In that context, Yavuz⁵³ claims that the main ideological contribution of the NSP was the revitalization of the Ottoman-Islamic liberal reformist tradition that had been dominant in Turkish society until radical Kemalist-positivist revolution of the 1920s. He relates the NSP with the Ottomist-Islamic tradition on the bases of their aspect on the Western technology and culture. Familiar with the Ottomist-Islamic Tradition, the NSP had argued that the Western technology could be adapted to Turkish society until many vital and positive aspects of its cultural heritage, which is based on Ottoman-Turkish norms and associations, were preserved. The NSP leaders were claiming that Turks took the Western culture, what they needed least, but failed to take what they needed most, the Western technology.⁵⁴ They linked the loss of power and strength for Turks to the degenerating influence of Western culture.⁵⁵ According to the NSP leaders, this was also the result of Turks' alienation from their cultural heritage. Thus, the NSP was claiming that the only way of the development for Turkish nation was to re-appreciate its own history and culture and to regain its Muslim Consciousness as a society.

⁵² Mardin,1983, p.105

⁵³ Yavuz, Hakan. (2004) " Milli Görüş Hareketi: Muhalif ve Modernist Gelenek" in Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt:6 İslamcılık, İletişim, İstanbul, p. 212

⁵⁴ Toprak, 1981, p. 100

⁵⁵ Çınar, 1999, p. 232

It classified the world's political regimes into capitalist and socialist and described them both as materialist and selfish and they lacked a moral basis.⁵⁶ Thus, it argued that the present parties, the leftist, that of the Republican People's Party and the liberal, a colorless one of the Justice Party, both materialist and money-oriented, were all far from being responsive to Turkey's national need because they gave primacy to material development while neglecting moral development of the nation.⁵⁷ In Contrast to these material worldviews, the NSP defined itself morals-oriented and offered a third, alternative, a superior way, which is formulated as National Outlook-NO(*Milli Görüş*).

Yavuz⁵⁸ defines the National Outlook with four pillars: culture, industrialization, social justice, and education. As we mentioned before, the NSP was offering the cultural revival and/or reconstruction of Ottoman-Turkish norms and associations. In addition to its focus on culture, the NSP stressed the material dimension of society and brought the issue of industrialization to the front. Thus, the years between 1975 and 1978, the Party claimed to initiate "The Heavy Industry Effort" and forced the JP to speed up the heavy industrialization.⁵⁹

Another pillar of NSP ideology was invoking of Islamic motifs in society, especially those relating to the concept of social justice.⁶⁰ The party was loudly criticizing rising inflation and unemployment rates, lack of social security and medical insurance, misuse of governmental credits, unjust taxation system and unequal distribution of wealth.⁶¹ It offered three

⁵⁶ Landau, *ibid*, p. 10

⁵⁷ Erbakan, 1975, p. 28

⁵⁸ Yavuz, 2003, p. 212

⁵⁹ Sarıbay, 1985, p. 68

⁶⁰ Yavuz, 2003, p.213

⁶¹ Sarıbay, 1985, p. 71

principles to provide social justice, which were stopping waste, abolishing the taking of interest (according to the NO, which was making rich richer and the poor poorer) and changes in the tax laws (imposing on capital and wealth, not on profits)⁶². Moreover, the party defended small merchants and producers against big corporations that benefited from high tariffs and asked the state to regulate the economy to protect the interests of the common people and small merchants. Education was also stressed by the NSP as the main actor in reinstalling traditional values.⁶³

Besides its emphasis and interpretation of Islamic norms, which were based on the concept of culture rather than religion, the party was offering a modernist economic program, which was based on rapid industrialization and populist economic distribution.⁶⁴ With references to its critics on the westernization of Turkey and emphasis on religion and modernist economic program, Toprak asserts the world view of the NSP as a third world view of modernization (other than the leftist and the liberal ones) within Turkish political spectrum.⁶⁵

Mehmet Metiner⁶⁶ argues that the originality of the party lies in its political identity, which bestows on Muslims within politicization process. Similar to this evaluation, Yavuz claims that the NSP expanded the boundaries of political debate in society and integrated Islamic discourse into political sphere and this in turn fueled the democratization of society by integrating the previously marginalized voices of the periphery that could claim to represent the bulk of the country's population.⁶⁷

⁶² Landau, *ibid*, p. 13

⁶³ Yavuz, 2003, p. 213

⁶⁴ Mardin, 1998, p.106

⁶⁵ Toprak, 1981, p. 104

⁶⁶ Metiner, Mehmet.(1987) *Yeni Bir Dünyaya Uyanmak*, Seçkin Yayınları, İstanbul, p. 63

⁶⁷ Yavuz, 2003, p. 212

2.2.2.6 The NSP's Understanding of Democracy

Contrary to the fact that there had been a separate section titled “Our Democracy Understanding” in the text of party program of the National Order Party, there had not been a separate section in the text of party program of the NOP that is directly written to explain the democracy understanding of the NSP. In that context, it may be said that it is hard to discuss the democracy understanding of the NSP just analyzing the party program of the NSP. On the other hand, there had been another source that may be considered as the primary resource to study the democracy understanding of the NSP, which is the book, named “National Outlook”, authorized by Necmettin Erbakan and firstly published in 1975. Through the book of “National Outlook”, Necmettin Erbakan had tried to systemize the existing principles and arguments of the NSP. Thus, this book should be studied to analyze the democracy understanding of the NSP.

In the book of National Outlook, Necmettin Erbakan bases the idea of National Outlook on the principle of brotherhood of the same nation and same history. Thus, he considers the Turkish society as one nation, who lives together on the same land. In other words, Turkish society is described as a homogenous society, which is consisted of the children of the same nation and history. According to Necmettin Erbakan, it could only be divisions among the children of the same nation and this could never cause separation in the society.⁶⁸ He accepts diversity in society in the context of thought and opinion instead of culture or cultural community. He considers and determines Turkish society as a community and sets the target of the National Outlook to form a society that would base on moral and spiritual values; and in which every member of the society share the pain and happiness of the other.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Erbakan, Necmettin. (1975) *Milli Görüş*, Dergah Yayınları, İstanbul, p. 29-30

⁶⁹ Erbakan, 1975, p. 49

Depending upon these arguments of Erbakan, it may be claimed that the NO has communitarian and conservative logic towards the nature of the society that consider societies as homogenous organic entities. Classical traditional conservative ideology considers societies as organic wholes which is considered of parts. In this sense, the whole is more important than the parts. For the NO, the Turkish society is an organic homogeneous entity which is integrated around common values/good.^{70/} For the NO, this common value has been the morality and virtue, which can be asserted as the product of religious/cultural heritage. Furthermore, in that context, it may also be said that the NO has also an image of ideal society, and for the NO, this ideal society should only be established through leaving the “imitating mentality”⁷¹, moral and spiritual development; and fusion of state and nation (*devlet-millet kaynaşması*).⁷²

That there has been ideal society to be constructed and thus a definition of common good for the society for the NO, the politics has got the function to enable to reach this goal. That there is a defined ideal for society, homogenizing people in the line of NO, politics is considered as a process of firstly reaching and then continuing this ideal. In the same way, democracy is considered as a tool for the establishment of this ideal. In that context, it may be claimed that for NO, the democracy is a means to express the will of nation and since the will of nation is the National Outlook, democracy is expected to result in reproduction and revelation of the National Outlook. ⁷³

Thus the main aim of the NO is to construct an ideal community, the community itself gets a primacy over each individual in the society and thus

⁷⁰ Çınar, 1999, p. 227

⁷¹ As to remember, the basic point which differs the NO from the center-right parties has been its opposition to the Western world. In that context, Erbakan makes a differentiation between the NO and the other parties in Turkey and calls the other political parties of the period as the imitators of the west.

⁷² Erbakan, 1975, p. 30

⁷³ Çınar, 1999,p.273

for NO the community should take the necessary measurements for the protection of its order, which is for NO is the moral/ religious order. In that context, the decision-makers in this society has to have some characteristics which for NO is supposed to be virtuous, because only virtuous people can use their political liberties in the general benefit of the society.⁷⁴ Depending upon this envision of virtuous men, who should be politician, it may be said that for the NO, the participation of people in politics is limited to vote for these ‘virtuous men’. Thus there has been a prerequisite for participating to decision-making process, there should not be talked about an envision of democratic plural political community in which every member of the society (with all their differentiation depending upon opinion, religion, culture, etc.) share their idea, opinion about public issues and participate to decision-making processes in the society.

One of the critical issues that Necmettin Erbakan (so National Outlook Movement) has always discussed is the established understanding and definition of laicism in Turkey. From the very early years in politics, Necmettin Erbakan has criticized the established meaning of laicism in Turkey, in other words current practice of laicism. According to him, the current practice of laicism in Turkey violates the freedom of belief. He defines laicism that everyone should have freedom of thought and conscience, freedom of worship. Moreover, he argues that laicism also means to accept that there are *others* instead of us, and they are not the enemies of us.⁷⁵ He claims that a part in Turkey, whom he calls ‘dominants’ (*tahakküm edenler*) do not define laicism in western terms and attempt to create an enemy from the *other*. In that sense, according to him, freedom of thought and belief is under pressure in Turkey and non-believers dominate believers. That one of the basic aims of the idea of National Outlook is to create a freer atmosphere for believers to live their religion, it mostly makes emphasis on the term laicism and tries to refine it. In that context, it is needed to make it

⁷⁴ Çınar, 1999, p. 270

⁷⁵ Erbakan, *ibid*, p.51-52

clear that the idea of National Outlook considers believers, as only the Muslims and demand for the real laicism is wanted for Muslims to live with accordance to the need of their religion.⁷⁶

In that sense, for the idea of National Outlook, the importance of democracy becomes more meaningful because Necmettin Erbakan determines the essence of democracy and human rights as the freedom of thought and conscience. In other words, for the idea of National Outlook democracy becomes more important since it provides appropriate circumstance for freedom of thought and conscience to realize. For the NO, since the freedom of thought and conscience actualizes with its real terms, the pressure over Muslims will disappear and Muslims will have the chance to live with accordance to their religion. That kind of laicism consideration and demand for a western consideration of laicism, which is determined in the book of National Outlook, have not changed during twenty years and stayed as one part of the backbone of the National Outlook Tradition.

Furthermore, Erbakan defines democracy to obey to will of the nation. He claims that democracy should only be realized with the existence of freedom of thought.⁷⁷ According to him, function of democracy is to provide everyone appropriate circumstance to offer their ideas to nation without getting under any pressure and giving the nation the chance to choose among these different ideas. He also argues that since there has been only one idea offered to nation, there should not be talked about democracy. He calls that kind of democracy as controlled (*güdümlü*) democracy.⁷⁸ The authorities of National Outlook Tradition continued to use this term of controlled democracy in every condition when the parties of the National Outlook faced the threat of closure.

⁷⁶ Although this discourse seems to have liberationist side, the idea of National Outlook does not discuss the rights of the people who believe in other religions or who do not believe in God and religion.

⁷⁷ Erbakan, *ibid*, p. 50

⁷⁸ Erbakan, *ibid*, p.50

2.2.3 The Military Intervention of 1980 and Post-1980 Era

At 12 September 1980, government of the National Front Coalition had been outlawed by a military intervention. The military government, established after the military intervention, closed down all the political parties. The period after the military intervention of 1980 and its military and political leaders' new religion understanding has been considered as a break in the state –religion relations. It was because that military elite, who had a cautious stance towards Islam until then, started to promote the role of Islam in society. Sakallıoğlu defines this transformation on the religion consideration of the military elite as following:

“After the 1980 military intervention, which resulted in a restructuring of the state and society in line with neo-liberal ideas of economic liberalism, Islam initially was given unprecedented recognition by the military elite as a bulwark against communism and a substitute for class-based ideologies. Both military and political leaders after 1980 believed Islam could help create a socially disciplined and politically stable society ready to undergo the structural dislocations caused by the transition to popular capitalism and global patterns of life-styles.”⁷⁹

As also mentioned in the quotation, military elite considered Islam as a harmonizing feature for the Turkish society, which was divided by ideological polarization and suffered from communal violence before the military intervention of 1980. This promotion had realized by a series of events among which opening new Qur'anic Schools, making religious courses compulsory, and employing new preachers. Furthermore, in 1982 the new constitution, which restricted the activities of voluntary associations and labor unions and abolished the autonomous status of the state-run radio and television and universities, has been implemented.⁸⁰ Adding to the 1982 Constitution, other post-1980 legislation are asserted as the representatives of the state's attempt for a significant depoliticization and control over both

⁷⁹ Sakallıoğlu-Cizre, 1998, p. 17

⁸⁰ Yavuz, 1997, p. 67

the legal arena and the institutional framework in Turkish Politics Literature.⁸¹

In the light of this new religion consideration of the ruling military bureaucrats and state's pressure over different political organizations, Islam has gained a new role for being a new political actor; furthermore Islamist groups has gained the opportunity to participate in political and economic processes. Following two decades the military intervention of 1980, Turkey has been introduced by the rise of Islamist activities in every aspect of social life. Especially in the middle 1990's, the votes that the Welfare Party gained in both municipality and general elections have increased dramatically. This increase in votes of a party that is defined as a political Islamist party has interested the scholars of Turkish Politics for studying the reasons for this electoral success. Although the WP's history and ideology will be discussed in the following chapter, it might be helpful to give a brief summary of these studies' main concerning points to have a general idea about the Turkish political life afterwards 1980.

Depending upon our analysis on the basic studies, those are investigating the reasons for the rise of political Islam in Turkey; we may classify these reasons to three different areas; the political reasons, social reasons and economic reasons. The political reasons for the rise of the political Islam depend upon both domestic and international dynamics. While the domestic dynamic were directly related to secularization policies of the early republic, policies of the center right parties towards religion; state-sponsored religious activities as the consequences of the states policies of Turkish-Islamic synthesis introduced by the military intervention of 1980; Islamist party politics.⁸² The international dynamic had been the green belt project of the

⁸¹ Toprak,1988, p. 127

⁸² Ayata, 1996;Yavuz, 1997;Sakalhoğlu, 1996 and 1997;Ahmad,1991

United States and the rapid globalization.⁸³ The social reasons are directly related to the impact of Sufi Islam by its organizational structure, emergence of a new class, which may be called as Islamist intelligentsia, their impact over society by the developments in mass media communication. And finally economic reasons are related to the consequences of economic liberalization policies introduced in 1980's. As the consequences of these economic liberalization policies, a new conservative (Islamist) bourgeoisie, which is based on the capital of Anatolia, has occurred. Furthermore these liberalization policies have also widened the gap between the poor and the rich. The WP's ideological presentation of just order as a promise to make economic conditions of the poor people better has also affected its electoral success.⁸⁴ These reasons discussed above may be evaluated as the reasons behind the rise and success of the WP.

While all these reasons are analyzed in the context of the situation of the political Islam in Turkey after the military intervention of 1980, we may say that the new state policies, those are implemented as the consequence of Turkish-Islam synthesis, has been main determiner for the rising effect of the religion in both political and social arena. Adding to these policies, the new economy policy of the Turkish State, which was based on the free market economy principles, introduced after 1980 has strengthened the conservative bourgeoisie, which based on the capital of Anatolia and thus, especially starting with the last years of the 1980's Turkey met with a new strong and independent interest group, MUSİAD (Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association) which can be asserted as one of the indicators of rising role of Islamic values in economic and thus political arena. While in the political arena these events were supporting the rise of Islam, in the social arena Turkey met a new Islamist intelligentsia, who had

⁸³ Especially during the second half of the 1970's and first half of the 1980's, the United States had developed a green belt policy, which was based upon the support of the Islamist movements surrounding the former USSR against the threat of the Soviet, as a strategy in the cold war.

⁸⁴ Ayata, 1996;Yavuz, 1997;Sakallıoğlu, 1996 and 1997;Ahmad,1991

the chance to introduce their ideas, those were depended on Islamic values and norms with the public by their own mass communication tools such dailies, magazines, TV's and radio's. 1980's and 1990's were also years that the gap between the poor and rich has widened as the consequences of the economic liberalization policies. This gap has also affected the poorest part of the society to direct to the WP, that was promising a just order for all.

CHAPTER 3

THE WELFARE PARTY (The WP):ITS HISTORY AND UNDERSTANDING OF DEMOCRACY

3.1 A Brief History of the WP

After the military intervention on September 12 1980, the military regime closed all existing political parties down. In 1983, the military regime decided to allow the foundation of political parties in order to be able to carry out elections. The Welfare Party was founded on July 19, 1983 under the leadership of Ali Türkmen in accordance with this decision. Instead, the party was not able to take part in the general elections of 1983 because the military regime had vetoed 27 members of 33 founders. The early years of 80's for the WP passed with the attempts to guarantee the continuity of the National Outlook Tradition under the leadership of Ahmet Tekdal. Despite the repressive conditions of the time, it re-voiced the idea of National Outlook and National Consciousness, which was an implicit attempt to indicate that the party was the successor of the NOP-NSP tradition.⁸⁵ However, the WP could not assure much strength in the political arena because of several reasons. First of all, large number of its experienced leaders had been prohibited from politics. Secondly, the Motherland Party, which claimed to associate four political tendencies under one roof, had recruited number of educated qualified cadres from the National Outlook Tradition.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Çakır, 1995, p.25

⁸⁶ Çakır, 1995, p. 26

In the local elections held in March 1984, the WP gained 4.4% of the votes. In 1987 general elections, the party increased its electoral strength to 7.7 % but was not able to take any seats in the parliament because of the 10% threshold of the electoral system. 1987 was also the year in which the politicians, who had been prohibited from politics by the former military regime, were allowed to make politics. Thus, Necmettin Erbakan was able to become the chairman of the WP in the second general congress of the party held on October 11, 1987. Under Necmettin Erbakan's presidency, the party turned to the line of National Outlook again.⁸⁷ In 1989 local elections its votes increased from 2.6 % to 9.8 %. Çakır relates the increasing strength of the WP firstly to the party's strong organization, which was based on its all members' steady and devoted work at every level of the party organization and secondly to the decreasing popularity of the Motherland Party.⁸⁸

In general elections in 1991, in alliance with the National Work Party (NWP) and Reformist Democracy Party (RDP), the WP received 16.88 % of the votes and was represented by 38 deputies in the parliament. In the local elections in 1994, the party received 19.1 % of the votes and its candidates became the mayors of the metropolitan municipalities of Turkey's big cities such as Istanbul and Ankara. This success was considered as the mark of the rise of the tension between the secular regime of Turkish Republic and the WP. After the success of 1994 local elections, the WP received 21.38 % of the votes and emerged as the largest party in December 1995 general elections and took 158 seats in the parliament. Although there was a minority coalition between the True Path Party and Motherland Party, which was considered as an attempt made to keep the Welfare Party out of office⁸⁹, the life of coalition was short. The WP formed a majority coalition government with the True Path Party on June 28, 1996. This coalition government is considered as a turning point in the history of the Turkish Republic because, for the

⁸⁷ Yavuz, 2004, p. 596

⁸⁸ Çakır, 1995, p. 26

⁸⁹ Çınar, 1999, p.234

first time, the Turkish Republic had a prime minister whose political philosophy was based on Islam.⁹⁰

Starting from the local elections in 1994, the rise of the WP was considered as a threat to the secular democratic regime by the secular ruling elite and big capitals. Thus, the coalition government was not welcome well by some parts of the society. On February 28, 1997 at the National Security Assembly, the Turkish General Staff handed in a presentation, called “Measures for the fight against irtica”, which had 18 articles to the government. This presentation was not only a starting point for the dissolution of both the government and National Outlook Movement but also a turning point for Turkish politics and thus the events after the presentation were named as the Process of February 28 in Turkish political history.⁹¹

In addition to these incidents, on May 21, 1997, Attorney General of the Republic, filed charge of closure against the WP to the Supreme Court for being the center of the anti-laicist actions. On the other hand, according to the articles of coalition protocols, the government resigned on June 18, 1997 and Tansu Çiller was expected to be charged to form the government. Instead, Suleyman Demirel, who was the president of the republic, charged Mesut Yılmaz, the leader of the Motherland Party instead of Tansu Çiller, to form the government. Hence, the WP was no longer on the government and due to the verdict of the Supreme Court on January 16, 1998 the WP was closed down and the leaders of the party were also prohibited from politics for 5 years.

⁹⁰ Yavuz, 1997, p. 63

⁹¹ The effects of process of February 28 on Turkish politics and Turkish political Islam will be discussed in details in the following chapter.

While the trial for the closure was continuing, the successors of the Welfare Party founded the Virtue Party on December 12, 1997. In the general elections of 1999, the VP received only 15% of the votes and presented by 111 deputies in the parliament. Since the VP was also considered as a threat to the secular democratic regime and on May 7, 1999, the Attorney General of Republic filed charge of closure against the VP to the Supreme Court. The claim for the need for closure was again based on being the center of anti-laicist movement and being the continuity of the closed WP.

3.2 The WP's Understanding of Democracy

3.2.1 The WP's Understanding of Society and Politics

As it is discussed before, understanding of democracy of any thought/ ideology/ or political party could not only be studied depending upon how the thought/ ideology/ or political party defines the basic terms such as democracy, sovereignty, human rights or laicism but also depends on how this ideology/political party considers the nature of society and related to this, how this ideology/ political party conceptualizes the politics. Thus, through this part, it will be understood and discussed what kind of an understanding of society the WP had and what kind of a meaning and function of the politics got in this understanding of society.

The WP's understanding of society and politics was not so different than the NSP had had. As it is discussed through the "The Democracy Conceptualisation of the NSP" section in chapter 2; the NSP's understanding of society was based on considering the Turkish society as a homogenous entity like traditional conservative understanding of organic society. The conservative understanding of organic society considers society as a whole that is consisted of parts. In this sense the whole is more important than the parts. The NSP's understanding of society was based on considering society as a homogeneous society consisted of the children of the same nation and

history and is integrated around common values/good will.⁹² Depending upon the same consideration, in the party program of the WP, Turkish Republic is defined as an indivisible unity in which every person has the common faith, happiness and sadness and is bounded with the national solidarity and justice consideration.⁹³ As it may be understood from this description, the WP continues to consider the Turkish society as a homogenous entity composed of the children of the common faith and integrated around common values. Moreover, for the WP, to be a Muslim has been the basic feature of the children of this homogeneous society. In that context, it defines “the people” of Turkish society as Muslims- an organic, collective union- regardless of class or ethnic divisions. It highlights Islamic solidarity to override ethnic or class differences. In other words, for the WP, Turkish society is imagined as a religious Muslim community that is composed of Muslims who are unified by their shared Islamic faith and objective practices.⁹⁴

In addition to this homogenous organic understanding of society, the WP continues to define the common values of Turkish society as morality and virtue that are the main products of the common cultural/religious heritage, as did the NSP. Furthermore, the WP continues to present the “spiritual development”, which is one of the principles of the National Outlook, as one of the solutions to the existing problems of Turkey.⁹⁵ For the WP, the spiritual development should be evolved to settle these common values as the main regulators of order in the Turkish society. In that context, depending upon the WP’s emphasis on the spiritual development and

⁹² Çınar, 1999, p. 227

⁹³ Refah Partisi Programı, 1986, Samsun, p. 6

⁹⁴ Yavuz, 2002, p. 218

⁹⁵ Interview with Necmettin Erbakan, Büyük Türkiye’yi Biz Kuracağız (We will found the Big Turkey), Hasan Mesut Hazar, 25 July 1991, Türkiye (Turkish Daily) in Türkiye’nin Temel Meseleleri, p. 245

relating the realization of the National Outlook⁹⁶, it may be claimed that the WP determines an ideal for Turkish society to be reached. In other words, the WP has an ideal image of society where common values and norms, which are the morality and virtue, the products of common cultural/religious (Islamic) heritage, have taken the function of ordering the rules. And thus, it may be said that, for the WP there was an ideal society needed to reconstruct in the lines of the principles of the National Outlook. Moreover, related to the WP's ideal to realize the NO, it may be said that the WP also determines a common good for the Turkish society, which is to homogenize the people in the line of the NO.

The WP's understanding of politics, and so democracy, has also been directly related to its understanding of ideal society, which is based on the principles of the NO. In that sense, it may be said that the WP's understanding of politics cannot be explicitly understood unless its understanding of society is considered. For the WP the politics gets its function and role in the society, since it serves for the realization of the ideal. That there is an ideal society to be constructed and there is a definition of common good for the WP, the politics has taken the role to enable this common good, which is based on the principles of the NO to be realized. In that context, for the WP the politics is conceptualized as a process of establishing an order to realize the determined common good first and then continuing this established order in the line of determined common good. With another expression, it may be said that the WP considers the politics as a functional and/or instrumental process to realize the common good, which is the revelation of the NO.

Furthermore, for the WP, since the politics is considered as an instrumental process, every component of politics is awaited to be a means for a well-

⁹⁶ At that point, it may be mentioned that the WP has continued to present realization of the National Outlook as the absolute solution to the existing problems of Turkey during its term. At the same interview, mentioned in the footnote above, Necmetin Erbakan lists the main principles of the National Outlook as leaving the imitating mentality, ending the modern colonial practices, realizing the spiritual development, establishing the "Justice Economic Order" and "Justice State Order", evolution of the real freedom of belief and thought, targeting to establish cooperation with Muslim countries instead of the European Community.

functioning process like the “body politics” in traditional conservative ideology. Related to the WP’s consideration of politics, it may also be claimed that, in general terms, the WP considers democracy, probably the most important component of the modern politics, as a means (tool) for a well-functioning process that is expected to result in the revelation of the NO. Likewise, Necmettin Erbakan defines democracy as a means to realize the NO in one of his statements, declared in 1993. Depending upon this general consideration of politics and the statement of Necmettin Erbakan, it may be claimed, according to the WP, democracy is only a means to express the will of nation, which is actually the NO. And since the will of nation is actually the NO, democracy is expected to result in reproduction and revelation of the NO.⁹⁷

One other point that might be discussed here to be able to understand the WP’s understanding of politics is its description of the characteristics of the rulers/ decision-makers. According to the WP, the main characteristics of the rulers/decision-makers should be based on being virtuous people (men) like in traditional conservative ideology. ⁹⁸ According to the WP, the rulers/decision-makers should be virtuous, because only virtuous people (men) can use their political liberties in the general benefit of the society.⁹⁹ In other words, according to the WP, only limited number of people, the virtuous ones, have the sense and vision to use the political liberties (and tools of political power) for the general benefit of the society.

While this argument of the WP is evaluated from the backside, it may be argued that according to the WP, the political liberties, belonging to ordinary people who are not virtuous, could be abused or used for the disadvantage of

⁹⁷ Çınar, 1999, p.273

⁹⁸ At this point, it should be mentioned that as it is discussed in the former chapter, in the seventies Necmettin Erbakan had claimed that the rulers/decision-makers in the society should be chosen among the virtuous one. In that context, it may be said that there had not been a change on the opinions of the NO about the characteristics of the rulers/ decision-makers.

⁹⁹ Çınar, 1999, p. 270

the society. In that context, there might be limitations and/or prerequisites for the participation of ordinary people in politics. Furthermore, it may be argued that the WP defines the participation of ordinary people in politics with his/her vote for the 'virtuous men'. In other words, the participation of (ordinary) people in politics is limited to vote for the virtuous men. In that sense, it may be argued that the WP had an understanding of 'limited participation'.

Depending upon the WP's emphasis on virtuous men as the ruler, it may be argued that the WP determines a prerequisite for the decision –making process. In that context, it may be argued that the WP does not have an understanding of democratic plural political community in which each member of the society, with all their religious, ethnical, cultural, sexual or ideological differentiation, share their idea, opinion about public issues and participate in decision-making processes in the society.

As it will be discussed in detail in the following sections, the WP has never avoided describing itself as the defender and demander of the "real democracy" in Turkey. In that context, it is claimed that democracy has not been implemented in its real meaning and it will be the real implementing factor of democracy in Turkey. On the other hand, while, the WP's understanding of society, which is based on considering Turkish society as a homogenous entity (a community) integrated around moral (religious) values and heritage; and its understanding of politics, which is based on defining the politics as an instrumental process to be able to reach an ideal (establishing an order, founded on the principles of the NO), are taken into account, it may be claimed that the relation that the WP settles with the concept of democracy, stands on an instrumental dimension. In that sense, it may be said that all the demands of the WP for the real democracy, and its references to the concept of democracy depend on its aim to open itself a field to play in the Turkish political arena. And thus, the WP's understanding of democracy seems far away from creating new democratic extents for Turkey.

Now on, it will be studied how the WP has defined and used the concept of democracy; and relevant concepts such laicism and human rights, and whether there have been change and/or shift in the usage of these concepts in its discourse by time.

3.2.2 Definition and Usage of the Concepts of Democracy, Laicism and Human Rights in the Discourse of the WP

Since the definition and usage of the concepts of democracy, laicism and human rights are studied to analyze the understanding of democracy of the WP, it is realized that there have been events and periods in Turkish political history that directly effected and/or shifted the context the WP conceptualized democracy. These events and periods can be listed as:

- The opposition years until June, 1996
- The Process of February 28 A; Period As a Partner Party In The Coalition Government Until June, 1997
- The Process of February 28 B ; Dissolution of the Government and the Closure of the WP by the Decision of Constitutional Court

3.2.2.1 The Opposition Years Until 1996

Although the WP has been considered as a threat for the democratic regime, it defines itself as the party working hard and genuinely to make Turkey a country where contemporary, “real democracy”, “real pluralist democracy” evolves and “human rights” are protected in its “real meaning”¹⁰⁰. Moreover it declares the establishment of democracy in the real meaning and revealing the “will of nation” as one of the basic principles of the party in its party program.^{101/102/103}

¹⁰⁰ Erbakan, 4. Kongre Açılış Konuşması, p. 79

¹⁰¹ Refah Partisi Programı, p. 7

This claim of the WP to establish “real democracy” and protect “human rights” in “real meaning” has directly related to its critique and opposition about the existing political system in Turkey. According to the WP, although it is written in the constitution, every idea and thought is not given equal chances to be represented or discussed in front the people in Turkey due to democracy. Depending upon this claim, Necmettin Erbakan evaluates the Turkish democracy as;

“...The constitution (of Turkey) states the national will, the democracy. What does democracy mean? It means rule by people. The natural way to evolve for the rule by people is the following: political parties present their every proposal on public matters (how to rule people) to people. Each proposal is presented and discussed in equal conditions under an absolute freedom of thought and belief. People have the chance to learn each one and then choose among them with free will. (On the other hand) Today’s democracy (in Turkey) is just a deception; is just a sly dig.”¹⁰⁴

According to Erbakan, democracy in Turkey is just a deception because the existing system does not allow the WP to share its proposals on how to rule the people with the people. In that sense, for the WP, the democracy is not applied in its real meaning in Turkey and the democracy in Turkey is

¹⁰² At this point it should be mentioned that, through the party program of the WP with 32 pages, the word ‘democracy’ has only been used twice. It is first used on the fifth page, in the passage through which the WP explains the reason for the establishment of the party. In that passage, the WP declares that the WP is founded to protect the republic and democracy. The second usage of the term is seen in the basic principles section of the program that is stated above.

¹⁰³ Depending upon this statement it may be said that the WP shares the general understanding of democracy with the Turkish right-wing political parties. Turkish right-wing parties consider democracy as revelation of the will of the nation. (*milli iradenin tecellisi*)

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Necmettin Erbakan, “Fikir ve İnanç Hür Olmalı” (Thought and Belief Should Be Free), Geycan Şaylan, Cumhuriyet (Turkish Daily), 9 June 1991 in *Türkiye’nin Temel Meseleleri (1992)*, Rehber Yayıncılık, Ankara, p. 178

controlled. That is why the WP calls the practice of democracy as “controlled democracy” (güdümlü demokrasi) and the current political system as the regime of pressure. As it may be understood from the passage, Erbakan’s description of democracy (especially for the early nineties) is limited within the general description of formal democracy, which identifies a democratic regime with the existence of main institutions such as political parties, free elections, an absolute competition environment for political parties to be chosen, a legislative body (government, cabinet), a judiciary body (parliament) to realize the principle of “rule by people”. In that sense, the WP condenses its critiques on the democracy practices of Turkey to be able to present its own proposals to people and to be able to discuss its own proposals without getting any obstacles.

Depending upon these statements and other statements in official party documents, it may be said that these two claims of the WP, which are to establish “real (pluralist¹⁰⁵) democracy” and to protect human rights in “real meaning” form the bases for the democracy understanding in the WP’s discourse. These two claims are directly related to the WP’s critique of established understanding and practices of laicism in Turkey.

As to remember, since the occurrence of the NO in early seventies, one of the most important issues that the parties of the NO have criticized in Turkish political life has been the established understanding and practices of laicism. According to the NO, the practices, applied on behalf of laicism in Turkey have contradicted the real, western meaning of the term; because the current practices in Turkey violated the human rights. For the NO, the real laicism meant giving every person the chance to live in accordance with her/his belief due to the freedom of belief and conscience. Thus, what had to be done to remove that situation in Turkey was to implement laicism in its western meaning, (which was, for the NO, actually giving every person to live in

¹⁰⁵ Although it will be studied in details in following sections, it may be useful to mention here that the concept of “plural democracy” began to be used in the statements of Necmettin Erbakan in early nineties as the consequences of the debates of the period on Turkish political agenda; which were dealing for the establishment of a plural democratic system in Turkey.

accordance with her/his belief). Depending upon this consideration of laicism, the NO claimed that the practices in Turkey had violated the belief and conscience, because the believers (Muslims) had not been allowed to live in accordance with their religion. In that context, NO claimed that the democracy was not applied in its real meaning in Turkey and it called the practice of democracy as “controlled democracy” (güdümlü demokrasi) and the current political system as the regime of pressure. This main argument about the practices of laicism of the NO was used during the WP period. During the opposition years, generally the WP was referred to use the term ‘democracy’ in the context of established understanding and practices of laicism. Thus, during the opposition years, the party improved a discourse that was demanding real democracy, which was the prerequisite of the real laicism for the NO.

One of the most important issues in Turkish political agenda in the nineties, which the WP discussed in the context of current practices of laicism and democracy, was the matter of headscarf.¹⁰⁶ The WP has criticized the banning of wearing headscarf in public places as being against the freedom of belief and worship. The WP has claimed that it is against the ban because it is against the abuse of one of the basic human rights. From the occurrence of the NO, for the NO and so for the WP, the freedom of belief and conscience and worship is emphasized as one of the leading component of “human rights”. According to WP, the freedom of belief and conscience includes freedom to express and diffuse belief (religion)¹⁰⁷; freedom to teach and learn

¹⁰⁶ As to remember, according to legal codes of Turkey, women are not allowed to wear headscarf in public buildings. This ban on wearing headscarf in public buildings becomes one of the important issues, which are discussed in the agenda of Turkish politics. Furthermore, at the beginnings of 1990, Turkey witnessed a huge demonstration campaign against banning on wearing headscarf in public places such as schools, universities or public buildings. These demonstrations were organized by urbanized modern Muslims.

¹⁰⁷ At that point, it should be mentioned, the terms of *religion* and *belief* are both used, because while Erbakan was using the term ‘freedom of belief’ in 70’s, in the 90’s he preferred to use the term ‘freedom of religion’.

belief (religion); freedom to be organized; and freedom to live in accordance with the requirements of the religion (freedom of worship).¹⁰⁸

In that context, it may be mentioned that the NO, thus the WP, has considered the religion as Islam and what it means by the freedom of religion has been giving the believers (Muslims) the chance to live in accordance with the rules of Islam. According to WP, while the non-Muslim minorities in Turkey have the opportunity to live in accordance with their religion by the Treaty of Lausanne, the Muslims do not have the opportunity to live in accordance with their religion.¹⁰⁹ That is why it considers the ban as ‘oppression’ over the Muslims.¹¹⁰ The WP has evaluated the ban as ‘oppression over Muslims’ in every condition and has offered ‘the elimination of oppression and pressure over believers (Muslims)’ as one of the steps for democratization in Turkey, wherever the others are passing to real democracy and reconstruction of the state.¹¹¹ On the other hand, it is not possible to see a similar approach of the WP, which discusses the freedom of religion for the ones that do not believe in any religion or the ones who believe in other religions. In that context, it may be claimed that the emphasis on human rights has a functional role for the WP to reach its aim and has not been a substantial matter.¹¹²

One important point about this period is the demand of the WP for a “real pluralist democracy”.¹¹³ At Fourth General Congress of the WP, Erbakan

¹⁰⁸ Erbakan, 4. Büyük Kongre Açış Konuşması, p. 80

¹⁰⁹ Refah Partisi 24 Aralık 1995 Seçimleri Seçim Beyannamesi, Özel Basım, TBMM Kütüphanesi, p.19-20.

¹¹⁰ *Bu Zulüm Bitecek*, Milli Gazete, 8/11/1994

¹¹¹ Refah Partisi 24 Aralık 1995 Seçimleri Seçim Beyannamesi, p. 3; 19-20.

¹¹² For a detailed discussion on understanding of rights in the Islamist discourse, see Jenny B. White, *The Islamist Movement in Turkey and Human Rights*, Human Rights Review, October- November 2001, p. 17-26

¹¹³ Although Necmettin Erbakan has used the concept of plural democracy in his discourse by the middle nineties, it is argued that the roots of the idea of a plural society for the WP is directly related to its program called *just order*, which is firstly introduced

used the concept of pluralist democracy for criticizing the current political regime and defined the current political regime as the regime where the minority dominates the majority. Furthermore, at the same congress, Necmettin Erbakan declared that the WP would establish the real pluralist democracy.¹¹⁴ According to Erbakan, the current political system allows only one type of way to rule people, which is based on the principles of Kemalist understanding of society and politics. Furthermore, according to the WP, the current political regime does not allow challenging opinions or ideas to present themselves (one of which is the WP) to people. Thus, according to the WP, democracy in Turkey does not have a pluralistic structure. In that sense, it may be said that the WP conceptualizes the pluralist democracy as the existence of different ideas and their presentment to people. With this way, the people would have the opportunity to choose among them in an absolute competition environment.

On the other hand, pluralist democracy in western world is discussed not only in the context of the existence and presentment of different ideas about the public matters to people in an absolute competition environment but also in the context of existence and acceptance of every kind of differentiation in the society. In other words, the pluralist democracy is based on the acceptance of all kind of differentiation in the society and participation of these diversities to the decision-making mechanism through certain agencies. Furthermore, these principles bring new definitions for the

to people at the Third General Convention of the WP, which was held in October 7, 1990. (Yıldız, Ahmet. *Politico-Religious Discourse of Political Islam in Turkey; The Parties of National Outlook*, Muslim World, April 2003, p. 187-210. That is because the roots of “just order” go back to the Akevler Kooperatifi in İzmir, which is theoretically formulated by Süleyman Karagülle and Süleyman Akdemir and considered as Turkey’s first Muslim commune. (Çakır, 1994, p. 131) Yavuz describes the characteristics of this formulation as that its aim was the creation of a pluralistic, democratic, and free-marked civil society. The charter assumed a society consisting of communes and similar settlements that would cooperate on common issues and services. Advocating less state intervention and more individual responsibility. (Yavuz, 2002, p. 221) And this charter, depending upon its understanding of society that is consisting of different segments, has been considered as a mark that for the first time, Muslim professionals had based their ideas on the principles of liberal ideologies, namely pluralism, democracy, the free market and individual responsibility.(Yavuz, 2002, p.221)

¹¹⁴ Erbakan, 4. Kongre Açış Konuşması, p. 83

political actors and political institutions such as civil society organizations, interest groups, pressure groups, etc. independent from classical political institutions of liberal democracy such as political parties, governments or elections. Especially the acceptance of differentiation in the society and participation of these diversities to decision-making mechanisms through certain agencies beside voting has been accepted as the main principles of pluralist democracy.

Since the statements of Necmettin Erbakan and official party documents of the WP are studied to look for the traces of these principles it is not possible to claim that the WP has not conceptualized the pluralist democracy with its real meaning. That is because, as it is discussed before, the WP considers the society as a homogeneous entity integrated around common value instead of a heterogeneous society consisted of different social, religious, ethnical groups. Furthermore, it is not possible to claim that the WP offers a way for the active participation of people to decision-making processes. In that sense, it may be argued that since the pluralist democracy, in classical meaning, is defined as a rule of government based on differentiation in societies and participation of these differentiations in decision-making processes on public matters through certain agencies, Necmettin Erbakan has not used the term in the sense of its real meaning. Furthermore, as the tensional relationship with the established political structure in Turkey and the WP are considered, it may be argued that Necmettin Erbakan presents the WP as the demander of real pluralist democracy in Turkey for being able to present its differentiation to public without getting any obstacles and pressure from the established political structure. In that sense, it may be argued that pluralist democracy has again a functional role for the WP to open itself an area to live in Turkish political land and to recover its own demands.

3.2.2.2 The Process of February 28 (A); Period As A Partner Party In The Coalition Government Until June, 1997

In June 1996, the Welfare Party formed a coalition government with the True Path Party as a result of the general elections in 1995. It stayed in government as a partner party until June, 1997. Four months before the dissolution of the government, Turkey had lived the Process of February 28. Thus, for the WP, the period in the coalition government after the process of February 28 was a period of attempts to guarantee the continuation of the government and prevent the party from closure. In that sense, as the statements of Necmettin Erbakan given during this period are studied, it is seen that on one hand, the WP continued to define democracy as the National Outlook Tradition of which the basic principles were determined in the early 70's did, on the other hand it increased its references to the concept of democracy in its discourse against the threat for closure. In that sense, the democracy definition of the party could be asserted as a repetition of democracy definition of National Outlook Movement Tradition. Likewise, the party leader Necmettin Erbakan claimed that democracy had three components in his speech at the group meeting of his party dated 11/03/1997 and described these three components as follows;

“One of these components is the reality that the sovereignty belongs to nation unconditionally. Nobody can threaten nation's sovereignty in front of nation. Anyone who says that these people do not understand anything has no relation with democracy. Second component of democracy is to accept that the people have always been the essence and the state is founded to serve them. Anyone who thinks the opposite does not believe in democracy. The other component of the democracy is getting inspiration from the decisions of the people.”¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Erbakan: *Üniversite Olaylarını Solcular Çıkarıyor*, 12/03/1997, Sabah

As it may be understood from the quotation, the WP bases its democracy consideration on popular sovereignty. In that sense, it may be argued that, for the WP, democracy could only be evolved by popular sovereignty. Moreover, according to the WP democracy depends on accepting what the nation (people) wants.

Furthermore, the WP claims that the state is founded to serve the nation. Just focusing on this statement, it may be argued that the WP's understanding of state consists of liberal components. According to the liberal understanding of state, individuals form the essence of the political community and political structure in the society. In that context, the political and the administrative structures (the state) in the society are also founded to serve for the people. In that sense, the state itself does not have a priority over people. Furthermore, according to the liberal understanding of state, state is firstly responsible for the protection of freedom and rights of individuals. As these main characteristics of liberal understanding of state are considered, it may be argued that these principles cover the main demands of the WP from the current political system. That is because principles of liberal understanding of state provide the WP with relevant bases to offer and implement its own policy proposals in a free atmosphere. Moreover, they provide the foundations that the WP built its own critiques about the current political system and practices of laicism.

Necmettin Erbakan's evaluations on the current issues of the period such as early elections, possibility of the WP's closure and the relations between the WP and the military on the press conference, dated 16/06/1997 gives important clues to study how the party conceptualized and used democracy as a term during its time at the government after the process of February 28.

One of the current issues of the period was whether it was needed to go on early elections or not. At this press conference, despite the fact that the WP was a coalition government party, the prime minister said that the

government, itself wants to go on an early election.¹¹⁶ Necmettin Erbakan, in the name of his party, determines the most important subject for Turkey as obtaining a strong majority in the parliament. He claims that the basis in the democracies is the majority in the parliament.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, the existing legal regulations let the party (parties), which has the majority of seats in the parliament to be in the government and to be able to have the majority of the seats in the parliament, take the majority of the votes. In other words, the existing legal regulations in Turkey base the realization of democracy on the principle of the rule of majority. As the existing situation in Turkey and the claim of Necmettin Erbakan, which states that the basis in the democracies is the majority in the parliament are considered, it may be argued that the WP conceptualizes democracy as the rule of majority. In others words, for the WP, a government, which is charged by getting the consents of the majority by the election is enough for the evolution of democracy. Likewise, at the same press conference, Erbakan emphasizes the vote rates of the WP in the last general elections and relates the vote rates of his party with democracy and claims that the WP is the backbone and guarantee of the democracy in Turkey.¹¹⁸

One other issue of the period was the attempts to close down the WP. He criticizes these attempts saying that there is nothing like closing down of a political party in democracies. Furthermore, he claims that the closure of a political party can only occur in underdeveloped democracies and closure of his party will mean ignoring the half of the people and saying that we do not give human rights to them. He continues his words like, since there is democracy, it is not possible to ignore the half of the public, in other words it is not possible to destroy the people¹¹⁹ As it should be understood from that speech, Erbakan defines democracy as the preference of the public and

¹¹⁶ *Seçimi En Çok Biz İstiyoruz*,17/06/1997, Türkiye

¹¹⁷ *Seçimi En Çok Biz İstiyoruz*,17/06/1997, Türkiye

¹¹⁸ *Seçimi En Çok Biz İstiyoruz*,17/06/1997, Türkiye

¹¹⁹ *Seçimi En Çok Biz İstiyoruz*,17/06/1997, Türkiye

relates the political preferences of the public with the principles of human rights and claims that authorities should accept these preferences since they claim that there are human rights in Turkey. We frequently see familiar statements of Necmettin Erbakan, which are given about the closure of both the WP and the FP by the decisions of the Constitutional Court, saying that closing down of a political party is both against democracy and the human rights. Likewise, he explains the reason for applying to the European Court of Human Rights for the annulment of closure decision of the Welfare Party that the decision is against human rights on the bases of ignoring the preferences of the public.¹²⁰

At the same press conference, his evaluations about the military and the relation between the WP and the military have also been questioned. While he states that Turkey is a democratic law-state and continues as “ the charges of the government, military and other institutions are determined within the order of the state without causing any confusion. There’s democracy in Turkey and there haven’t been any confusion or emptiness on the state order in Turkey”, he says. ‘Turkish brave army is respectful to laws and democracy, and Turkish Army Forces, on its own, is the most defender and protector of democracy in Turkey’.¹²¹

This statement should also be evaluated as a message to the Turkish military that has always been the most significant actor in Turkish political life since the establishment of the republic. When the usage of the terms such as democracy and human rights is compared with the past, it is realized that the party authorities had used and put emphasis on these terms more than ever with the occurrence of the problems about the continuity of the party. Furthermore, the coming period, during which the government dissolved and the WP was closed down, has been the period during which

¹²⁰ *Refah Davası Bir Dünya Meselesi Olacak*, 23/01/1998, Milli Gazete

¹²¹ *Seçimi En Çok Biz İstiyoruz*, 17/06/1997, Türkiye

Erbakan criticized the current practice of democracy and human rights in Turkey and demanded for the real democracy. In that context, the shift in the usage of the term democracy is seen. As to remember, until the possibility of the closure of the party, the real democracy was always demanded in the context of evolving freedom of belief and conscience as the requirement of the human rights, but then demand for democracy is seen as showing respect to the political choices of the people in the context of human rights.

Although the WP seemed to improve a democracy discourse against party closure, it did not reflect the same sensitiveness on other current issues of Turkey such as the debates on ethnic, religious or gender identities and the participation and demands of these identities in politics. For instance, the NO had never accepted that there was a Kurdish question and offered the solution of unification of Kurds and Turks under the bond of Islam to the matter of terrorism. This approach is directly related with its understanding of society. As it is discussed before, the WP defines the “people” as Muslim-an organic, collective union-regardless of class or ethnic divisions. It highlights Islamic solidarity to override ethnic or class differences. In other words, society for the party is composed of Muslims who are unified by their shared Islamic faith and objective practices.¹²² In that context, it may be argued that the emphasis on human rights has a functional role for the WP through which the WP tries to open an area to recover its own demands. That is why, it is not possible to meet similar speeches of the WP authorities which are based on human rights and democracy discourse on the issues such Kurdish question, the demands of Alevi or rights of women.

¹²² Yavuz, 2002, p.218

3.2.2.2 Process of February 28 (B) : Dissolution of the Government and Closure of the WP by the Decision of Constitutional Court

After declaration of February 28 decisions the coalition government of Welfare-Path dissolved and the Democratic Left Party and the Motherland Party founded a new coalition government. And, Necmettin Erbakan developed all his opposition against the foundation of that new government depending upon the argument that there was no democracy in Turkey. Likewise, he defined the charging Mesut Yılmaz as prime minister and coalition of the MP and the DLP as government, as appointments and he used the adjectives of 'freak', 'totalitarian', and 'dominant' for the coalition government in the group meeting of the Welfare Party at the National Assembly, dated 14/10/1997.¹²³ He continued his assessment that the foundation of the new government was against democracy in every condition.¹²⁴ In the same meeting, he declared that settling democracy in western terms, human rights and contemporaneity as the primary aim of his party.¹²⁵

After the closure of the Welfare Party, Necmettin Erbakan increased his critics on the practices of democracy in Turkey, which argued that despite the facts that Turkish Republic was defined as a democratic, laicist, social, and rule of law state in her constitution and it was supposed that there was a regime in Turkey which was based on the principles of human rights and justice; the practice (the closure of his party) was not reconciled with these principles. Moreover, he claimed that there was no democracy in practice.¹²⁶ According to him, that kind of practice of democracy should only be defined

¹²³ Demokrasiyi Hocada İstiyor, 15/10/1997, Milliyet

¹²⁴ For similar statements of Necmettin Erbakan see. Hoca Seçim İstedi, 21/06/1998, Milliyet; Erbakan'dan Demokrasi Çağrısı, 22/06/1998; Demokrasiye Döneceğiz, 18/07/1998, Milli Gazete

¹²⁵ Demokrasiyi Hocada İstiyor, 15/10/1997, Milliyet

¹²⁶ Refah Davası Bir Dünya Meselesi olacak, 23/01/1998, Milli Gazete

as controlled democracy, because his party, which had also meant the nation itself had been closed by another will instead of the will of the people, nation. In other words, other powers had come between the nation and its will and thus, democracy had been eliminated by the other will.¹²⁷ Depending upon these evolutions, it may be said that the WP conceptualized democracy as the revelation of the will of people and defined it as the preference of majority. Furthermore, it was argued that with the closure of the party, the preference of people, in fact, the preference of majority had been ignored. In that sense, the democracy had been destroyed.

The authorities of the Welfare Party applied to European Human Rights Court for the annulment of the closure decision of the Welfare Party after the closure of the Welfare Party with accordance to the decision of the Constitutional Court. As it is mentioned before, Necmettin Erbakan claims that party closure is against human rights on the bases of ignoring the choices of the people. He explains the reason for the application to European Human Rights Court with the same approach and says that they applied to Human Rights Court because the closure of his party was an action against the principles of human rights. Beside its human rights dimension, Erbakan claims that this trial had another importance that this trial will bring up Europe's current approach to the world of Islam. He makes the following assertion on the subject:

“The whole Western world will consider the matter on the aspect that all the basic values of whole western and Islam world are common; in that manner, they (whole western world) will give a special importance to the matter. They will lay the foundation to make the basic matters of the western and Islam world common by refusing the injustice.”¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Demokrasi mi, Faşizm mi?, 11/02/1998, Milli Gazete

¹²⁸ Refah Davası Bir Dünya Meselesi Olacak, 23/01/1998, Milli Gazete

This assertion is very attractive to show up the transformation on National Outlook's approach to west. Likewise, the literature on Turkish political life defines the basic descriptive feature of the National Outlook tradition as being against the West and westernization attempts in Turkey. We may say that this feature of National Outlook tradition, which Dağı defines as the fundamental -axis of the ideological leaning of National Outlook¹²⁹ have been transformed by the facts of primarily getting closer and then being in the government; being not able to find solution to party closure with the tools of domestic law; and being able to activate the opposition against the party closure with western tools such the trial in the European Human Rights Court and creating an international public opinion about the matter by the activities of international civil society organizations.

In the light of all these statements and arguments of Necmettin Erbakan about the democracy, it should be said the WP considered democracy as a rule of government, which is based on the will of nation. During all the opposition years, limited coalition period, after the WP had conceptualized democracy to obey the will of nation. Furthermore, it always criticized the laicism practices in Turkey to be against the democracy and basic human rights. In that context, its emphasis on human rights was conceded on the freedom of belief (religion). It did not defend or mention the freedom of political choice in the context of human rights until the process of February 28. By then, as the consequence of threat of closure, the emphasis on human rights shifted from freedom of belief (religion) to freedom of political choice. Thus, it based its critiques about the closure of the WP on the argument that the party closure was against human rights, and so democracy because it contradicted to the principle of respect to freedom of (political) choice. On the other hand, the WP had never defined the issue of democratization in Turkey, with its all aspects, as the priority issues of Turkey until the process of February 28. By then, the priority issue of the Turkey has been stated as the democracy and human rights by the successors of the WP. In that sense

¹²⁹ Dağı, İhsan (2002). *Kimlik, Söylem Siyaset. İmge Kitapevi, Ankara*

it may be claimed the WP has always conceptualized democracy as a tool to reach its own aims. At the first stage, this aim had been the establishment of an order based on the principles of the NO, then as the consequences of the Process of February 28, this aim had become to prevent the party from the closure.

Briefly, it may be said that the WP had continued to defend the bases that the National Outlook Tradition built its understanding of democracy with little shifts and changes¹³⁰ which were based on considering society as an homogeneous society and defining democracy as the revelation of popular sovereignty. As a consequence of the process of February 28, the National Outlook Tradition went into a self-criticizing process and the JDP was founded on the attempts of its founders to break themselves from the tradition and to define the JDP as a different formation from the National Outlook Tradition. They claim that the JDP has been based on principles, which are different from the principles of the National Outlook. Now on, the dynamics forced the National Outlook tradition to dissolve and the JDP to differentiate from the National Outlook tradition in the concept of its understanding of democracy will be discussed.

¹³⁰ For instance, the WP had argued that there might have been a multi-law system in Turkey for a short term. This discussion on multi-law had been asserted as a turning point for the WP. In short terms, the multi-law system was based on the acceptance of the heterogeneous structure of the society., and thus it was based on the acceptance of plurality in the society. According to the multi-law system the society was consisted of different religious, ethnical groups which should be subject to their own law system. However, the WP did not continue to define the multi-law system as one of its proposals for Turkey for a long time.

CHAPTER 4

THE JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY (JDP):ITS FOUNDATION, POLITICAL STANCE AND UNDERSTANDING OF DEMOCRACY

The successors of the WP (those who were not banned from politics) founded the Virtue Party (the VP) on December 12, 1997, just before the closure of the WP in 1998 in accordance with the related decision of the Constitutional Court. The VP was also outlawed by the decision of Constitutional Court on June 22, 2001. The dynamics of Turkish politics that had prepared the closures and the consequences of these closures brought the NOM to the process of dissolution. There were internal and external dynamics that forced the NOM to the process of dissolution. While the internal factor was the process of February 28, the external factor was the process of EU membership. The NOM went into a dissolution process because after the closure of the VP, old members of the NOM founded two different parties; the Felicity Party and the Justice and Development Party. What was important for this process was the attempt of the JDP's founders to define the JDP as a formation different from the NOM and to introduce the JDP as a conservative democrat party instead of an Islamist party. Moreover, just one and half year after it had been founded, the JDP came to power as a single party depending upon the results of November 2002 Elections. Through this chapter, the dynamics of Turkish politics that played a role in the dissolution and/or separation process of the NOM will be discussed. The conservative democrat political stance and understanding of democracy of the JDP will also be explained and discussed, being related to the basic concern of this study. After discussing the effects of the process of February 28 on Turkish politics, the differentiation points of the JDP from the NOM will be discussed. To be able to study the understanding of democracy of the JDP, the method used in the former chapter will be followed; the

conservative democrat political stance and understanding of democracy will be studied in two dimensions. In the first dimension, the JDP's understanding of society and politics will be studied. In the second dimension, it will be tried to find how democracy and concepts of democracy such as freedom, human rights and laicism are described and introduced in the formal documents and in the statements of the party spokesmen, especially of R. Tayyip Erdoğan, the party leader and the current prime minister. In these contexts, the ruptures and continuities of the JDP from its National Outlook past, from the WP will be discussed.

4.1 Founding of the JDP

4.1.1 The Process of February 28; A New Definition for the State-Religion Relation

As it is discussed in detail in chapter II, The Politicization of Islam in Turkish Political History, the Kemalist perception of state, society and politics established during the early years of the republic and continued by the ruling elite of military and bureaucracy during the whole history of Turkish Republic has been the dominant determiner of the structure of politics in Turkey. In this context, the political history of Turkey is described as the history of cleavage between the center, Kemalist ruling military/bureaucracy elite and the periphery, masses of people who did not seem to seize the basic principles of the state and society structure of the republic. Beside the economic reasons, the politicization of Islam in Turkey is also asserted in the context of laicism policy of the republican ruling elite, and in the context of center-periphery cleavage in Turkey as well. In that context, there have been two main arguments, which try to explain the effect of the state (which is founded on Kemalist perception of nation, society and politics) on the religion and politicization of Islam in Turkey. One approach discusses that the emergence of political Islam could be asserted as an opponent or a reaction movement against the laicist policies of Turkish Republic. By a different expression, the emergence of political Islam is evaluated as the

reaction of periphery against the state. This approach discusses that the role of Islam as a social manner than a political manner has mainly gained impetus over Turkish society despite the ruling power of the state. On the other hand, the other approach argues that the Kemalist consideration of state, carried by military/ bureaucratic ruling elite, has been the main factor for the definition of the role of Islam in both social and political life during the whole history of the republic. In that sense, it is argued that religion has been controlled, manipulated, encouraged or suppressed as a social and political power by the state itself. Thus, first the politicization and then the rise of Islam have only occurred in the framework, borders of which are drawn by Kemalist consideration of state.¹³¹ In other words, political Islam merely gained the role that the Kemalist consideration of state let it gain in the game of politics. Furthermore, when Political Islam tried to redefine its role in Turkish politics depending upon the support of masses especially in the 1990s¹³², the Kemalist consideration of state interrupted the situation by its own tools. Thus, the Process of February 28 and its effect on both the future of political Islam and Turkish politics should be analyzed in that context.

The coalition government formed by the WP and the True Path Party collapsed through the process after the announcement of the National Security Council's (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu (MGK), NSC) declaration with 4 articles and decisions with 18 articles. The declaration and decisions were based on the list of measures designed to eliminate one of the supposed threats, which is Islamist reactionism, irticia (The other threat, especially to the unitarian character of the republic is supposed to be the separatist terrorist movements.) to the secular and unitarian qualities of the Turkish Republic on February 28, 1997. Through the consequences of this process,

¹³¹ See Sakalhoğlu, Ümit Cizre. "Parameters and Strategies of Islam-State Interaction in Republican Turkey", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996):231-51 for a similar approach and detailed analyses of the state-religion interaction.

¹³² In the 1990s Turkey had witnessed the rise of support of voters for the Welfare Party and transformation of the WP from a fringe party to a mass party.

the coalition government collapsed; the WP was outlawed for being the center of anti-laicist actions by the decision of the Supreme Court on January 16, 1998 and the leaders of the WP were banned from politics for 5 years.

Declaration and Decisions of NSC of February 28 (1997)¹³³ have been asserted the starting point of a new period for Turkish politics, which was shaped by the military's plan to redefine the political landscape of Turkey. This plan can be defined as bordering the lines of political landscape with the principles of Kemalist consideration of state, society and politics that are based on the idea of laicist, unitarian, nation-state of Turkish Republic. At that point, it should be mentioned that there are two expressions related to the issue of February 28, one of which is the Event of February 28 and the other is Process of February 28. While the expression of the Event of February 28 is used for informing the public and government about the declaration and decisions of NSC and politics' being reshaped by non-elected actors such military bureaucrats, the expression of Process 28 is used for expressing and emphasizing the continuity of will and role of military over Turkish politics.¹³⁴ Thus, the expression of "the Process of February 28" has been used not only for the far-reaching implications of the NSC decisions, but also for a new formulation of public policy and the relationship between state and society.¹³⁵

Process of February 28 was also the indicator of the new formulation of the interrelation between the state and the religion. As we discussed in the "The Military Intervention of 1980 and post-1980 Period" section in chapter II, in

¹³³ See Akpınar, Hakan (2001), *28 Şubat Postmodern Darbenin Öyküsü*, Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, p.204-210 for the Full Texts of Declaration and Decisions, with 18 articles of NSC.

¹³⁴ Özipek, Bekir Berat (2004) *28 Şubat ve İslamcılar in Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce* Cilt 6 İslamcılık,, Ankara: İletişim; 640-651, p. 640

¹³⁵ Cizre, Ümit & Çınar, Menderes. "Turkey 2002:Kemalism, Islamism, and Politics in the Light of February 28 Process", *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102(Spring/Summer 2003): 309-332;p. 310

the post-1980 period the military elite promoted the role of Islam in both society and politics. They considered Islam as a harmonizing feature for the Turkish society to eliminate the conflictive and chaotic environment of the time. And thus, they promoted the elements of Islam into public discourse to provide an ideological unity, a moral basis. On the other hand, the process of February 28 broke this state- religion interrelation, which was allowed for compromise, negotiation and reconciliation between the state and political Islam in the past.¹³⁶ This new formulation was based on the applications of rigid laicism, and control and redefinition of the role of Islam in the political realm. In this new formulation there was no need for negotiation and reconciliation between the state and political Islam.

After the declaration of the decisions of the NSC, new policies and practices concerning the measures listed in the decisions were introduced and implemented immediately. Among these policies and practices were introducing eight-year mandatory schooling system and scraping the secondary school system for prayer-leaders and preachers, informing the public and administrative staff in bureaucracy about the threat of irtica and measurements to handle with the problem of irtica throughout the seminars or mass media communication, altering all primary and secondary school curricula to emphasize both laic history and character of republic and new security threats posed by political Islam and separatist movements, appointing people among the ones known as staunch Kemalists to university chancellors, and (maybe) the most importantly, involvement of military institutions and cadres to the administration programs.^{137/138} In a broader sense, the most important consequence of this process over Turkish

¹³⁶ Cizre &Çınar, *ibid.*, p. 312

¹³⁷ Cizre &Çınar, *ibid.*, p.312 and Özipek, *ibid.*, p. 640

¹³⁸ At that point, it should be mentioned that; although the main decision takers and carriers of these decisions were military bureaucrats, the decisions of February 28 were welcomed and supported in a part of society including media, big capital owners and business world, thinkers who also considered the actions of the WP and rise of Islamist organizations as a threat to the secular democratic regime.

politics has been the increase in the Turkish military forces' influence (non-civic power) on public policy which is strengthened by the implementation of the policies listed above. Moreover, one other important consequence of this process, related to the increasing influence of military, has been the decreasing activity of the civic power over the public policy.

4.1.2 The Dissolution of the NOM; Separation of the Reformist Wing from the Movement

While the process of February 28 was drawing the limits of Turkish political landscape with the characteristics of laicist, unitarian, nation-state, it also determined the future of the NOM. By the new period, the members of the movement tried to improve a political discourse in which referring to Islam as the regulator of the social order was decreased and/or eliminated. Furthermore, this discourse was based on avoiding a social tension and a conflict with the established order of the state, which can be characterized as being non-confrontational, a low-profile discourse, and a moderate stance.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the new structure of the Turkish politics forced especially a group in the movement to improve a self-criticizing discourse in the movement. The demands for change in the movement, started in the early 1990's, also increased and the polarization within the movement was explicitly recognized. This polarization recognized explicitly on the general congress of the Virtue Party held on May 14, 2000. At the congress, there were two candidates for the presidency; Recai Kutan, who was the deputy of Necmettin Erbakan and considered as the representative of the traditionalist wing in the party; and against him, Abdullah Gül, who was considered as the representative of the reformist wing in the party. For the National Outlook Movement, it was for the first time that there were two candidates for the presidency.

As it is known, Necmettin Erbakan was the most dominant character in the National Outlook Movement, and in the parties of the National Outlook

¹³⁹ Cizre &Çınar, *ibid.*, p.323

Tradition as well, and was considered as the only leader. His words were considered as orders and applied according to his directions usually without facing any objection or critics. Although Necmettin Erbakan was banned from making politics with the closure of the Welfare Party, his influence and dominance was still ongoing and he was against the presidency candidacy of Abdullah Gül. In spite of Necmettin Erbakan's opposition, Abdullah Gül gained 521 votes at the congress. Although he was not elected as the president, the number of votes was considered as the most significant indicator for the ongoing opposition within the movement. The power struggle in the party, which had been ignored for a while, gained legitimacy and changed in quality after the congress.¹⁴⁰ In other words, the developments occurred during and after the congress sharpened the polarization or decomposition within the movement. While the reformist wing was insisting on a transformation for the movement and also for the party, the traditionalist wing demonstrated an attitude based on continuing the traditional policies of the National Outlook.¹⁴¹ On June 22, 2001 the Virtue Party was outlawed by the Constitutional Court for acting contrary to the principles of laicism. Afterwards, the traditionalist wing founded the Felicity Party on July 20, 2001 under the leadership of Recai Kutan and the reformist wing founded the Justice and Development Party under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on August 14, 2001.¹⁴² Furthermore, the JDP gained % 34.26 of the votes and took 363 seats in the general elections in November, 2002 and since then it has been in charge as the government party.

Although the most significant factor, which forced the reformist wing separate from the movement, was the process of February 28, there have been demands for change and/or transformation in traditional policies within

¹⁴⁰ Çakır, Ruşen.(2004) "*Milli Görüş Hareketi*", Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce cilt:6 İslamcılık, İstanbul,p.540-575, p.574

¹⁴¹ Tekin, Üzeyir. (2004), *AK Parti'nin Muhafazakar Demokrat Kimliği*,Orient; Ankara, p.68

¹⁴²For a detailed study of the dissolution/separation of the NOM see Selim, Yavuz.(2002) *Milli Görüş Hareketindeki Ayrışmanın Perde Arkası:Yol Ayrımı*,Hiler Yayınları; Ankara

the movement since 1990's. The factors or reasons, which forced the National Outlook Movement to dissolve and separate the reformist wing from the movement could be listed as following:

- Difference of opinions between the old and new generations in the movement (differences of generation)
- The social and political transformation of Turkish society during 1990's
- Getting close to political power with the increased vote rates; and success at municipal elections in 1994 and then coming to power as being partner to a coalition government in 1996
- The Process of February 28 and its impacts on self-criticizing process within the movement
- Personal conflicts within the movement (reaction against Erbakan's ongoing dominance over the party, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's demands for leadership)

As it is mentioned before, the JDP was founded by the reformist wing of the National Outlook Movement, who could also be considered as the new generation politicians in the movement. The prominent actors of the JDP are from the young generation, who involved movement in 1970's. And their demand for change in the movement, so in the Welfare Party started in the 1990's. Çakır defines the basic difference between the traditionalist and reformist wings in the 1990's as that while the traditionalists aimed to keep the Welfare Party as an ideological cadre party, the reformists aimed to transform the party to a mass party, standing on ideological backbone.¹⁴³ But he also mentions that the difference between traditionalist and reformist wing did not occur because of the distinctions on worldview but on working style. Thus, he claims that it would have been wrong to think that the reformist wing supported the ideas such as democracy and/or laicism in the early 1990's. Mehmet Bekaroğlu, who is a member of the Felicity Party, also

¹⁴³Çakır, 1994, p.77

supports the idea that the idea of change in National Outlook Tradition started in 1990's and says:

“There were serious demands and discussions on change in National Outlook Tradition in the 1990's. But the success on the municipal elections in 1994 and being the leading party in 1995 and forming the government delayed this discussion.”¹⁴⁴

Another factor that could be marked as a cause for the change was getting in a close relation with the Western world after taking the municipalities of big cities in the municipal elections in 1994. Moreover, the names like Abdullah Gül from the new generation of the movement took positions in international organizations, which also supported the dissolution of the dominant opinion about the west, which was distant and criticizing. Although, there had been demands for the change up to the 1990's, the most significant factor, which took the movement to dissolution and separation, was the process of February 28.

4.2 The New Political Stance of the JDP: The Differentiation Points of the JDP from the NOM

There was a debate about the separation of the reformist wing from the NOM because not only two different parties were founded by the old members of NOM after the closure of the VP by the decision of the Constitutional Court in 2002 but also the founders of the JDP declared that they changed and they left their Islamist identity as a political position behind. Furthermore, they named the new political position of the JDP as conservative democracy and introduced the JDP as a conservative democrat party. This so-called change in and/or break-up of the JDP and the NOM occurred especially in three points: giving up the political demands sprung from being Islamist (at least in the level of discourse); the change and/or

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Mehmet Bekaroğlu, R.Çakır, “Kimse Bizden Hayat Tarzımızı Değiştirmemizi Beklemesin” (Nobody waits us change our life style), Vatan (turkish daily), 11 September 2003

break on the consideration of the west; declaring to be the main carrier of democratic values and democratization in Turkey. Depending upon the claim of having left the Islamist identity behind, the founders of the JDP avoid giving statements those could remind of Islamism. More briefly they claim that the JDP will not stand on ideology. Likewise, Abdullah Gül, who is the minister of Foreign Affairs in the JDP government, says

“... Our only demand about religion is freedom of religion (freedom of belief) in the context of universal values...The approaches, which are named as abuse of religion are left behind and do not exist any more... Of course we have changed during this process, we have learned a lot. We all gained many experiences. Some of our friends went into jail; some of us took important positions in the administration of the country at the hardest days of the country. We all try to learn all what happens.”¹⁴⁵

With a familiar approach, Murat Mercan, who is the vice president of the Party, explains the reason for the change that they have noticed that Turkish people have never been Islamist and thus, they do not aim to carry Islam to different areas. Furthermore, he says that although Islam has always been a vital value in people’s lives, it (Islam) has never been the object for ideological polarization in Turkey.¹⁴⁶

As it may be understood from these statements, the JDP has been founded on the claim that it is a new formation, which is based on the change. This change is intensively felt in its approach to the religion, Islam. Depending upon these statements it may also be said that the JDP has gotten away from an approach, which is founded on accepting the Islamic values as the regulators of rules in the society. In that context, it is seen that the demands of the JDP about the religious issues will only realize in the context of

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Abdullah Gül, R.Çakır, “Kimse Bizden Hayat Tarzımızı Değiştirmemizi Beklemesin” (Nobody awaits us to change our life style), Vatan (turkish daily), 28 September 2003

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Murat Mercan, Ruşen Çakır“ Biz İslamcıydık ama halk hiç İslamcı olmadı” (We were Islamists; but the people have never been Islamist), Vatan (Turkish Daily), 1 October, 2003

individual rights and freedom. With a similar approach, Ahmet Insel also makes the following evaluation about the Islamism of the JDP:

“JDP’s Islamism is limited within its demand on freedom of preference in religious life and this Islamism stays on the level of cultural conservatism. Religion policy of the JDP is founded on avoiding religious Muslim population from exclusion and/or distinction, which might be based on their religious preferences.”¹⁴⁷

Bülent Arınç, one of the founding members of the JDP, who was also one of the important figures in the National Outlook Tradition and now is the head of Turkish Grand National Assembly has defined the JDP as a new formation and points the process of February 28 as the most important event that brought the decomposition to the NOM. He asserts the change and the foundation of the JDP as:

“ We all come from the National Outlook Tradition. On the other hand, we also questioned the whole world and ourselves while we were in the movement. In other words, we started to catch the transformation when we were in the movement.... We noticed the consequences of our any word or action... We experienced the February 28... After all these experiences, we did not found this party (the JDP) to be marked with National Outlook. We experienced this decomposition as a faith.”¹⁴⁸

In the same way, Hüseyin Çelik, who has never involved to National Outlook Movement and is the minister of Education at the JDP cabinet, also insists on the JDP’s claim on change.¹⁴⁹ According to him, although it should not be claimed that all members of the JDP have broken off the National Outlook line, but it should be explicitly said that the values such as democracy, laicism or issues such as the European Union have been

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Ahmet Insel, Ruşen Çakır “ABD’li Cumhuriyetçilere Benziyorlar”, Vatan (Turkish Daily), 13 October 2003

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Bülent Arınç, Ruşen Çakır, “ Benim gibi bir adam geçmişini inkar etmez” (A man like me does not deny his past), Vatan (Turkish Daily), 29 September 2003

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Hüseyin Çelik, Ruşen Çakır, “Tayyip Bey’in gözleriyle sözleri uyuyor” (Mr. Erdoğan’s eyes suit with his words), Vatan (Turkish Daily), 2 October 2003

absorbed in the party.¹⁵⁰ As it is understood from the statements, the founders of the JDP have insisted on the claim that they have changed and the JDP does not represent the National Outlook Tradition.¹⁵¹

In addition to the attempts of the politicians of the JDP to define the JDP as a different formation from the NOM, there have been academicians who also assert the JDP as a new and different political formation from the NOM. For instance, Ahmet Çiğdem argues that the JDP should not be considered as a representative of the NOM. He claims that the JDP does not represent the National Outlook Tradition but represents the Motherland Party tradition especially on the bases of its voters. According to Ahmet Çiğdem, the JDP represents the MP tradition, because the voters of the JDP are opportunist like the MP's voters were. In that context, he claims that the first aim of this mass is to have better economic conditions instead of democracy. Thus, he argues that the JDP has no initiative on the way of democratic public enlightenment; because it does not demonstrate an approach that aims to break the current status quo.¹⁵²

All these statements show that there seems to be a break in the JDP from its former Islamist identity. With a familiar assertion, Nuray Mert argues that after February 28, most of the Islamists understood that they would not be

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Hüseyin Çelik, Ruşen Çakır, "Tayyip Bey'in gözleriyle sözleri uyuyor" (Mr. Erdoğan's eyes suit with his words), Vatan (Turkish Daily), 2 October 2003

¹⁵¹ At that point it may be mentioned that there have been different interpretations that argues the JDP may be asserted a continuation of the National Outlook Movement. For instance, Abdullah Çalışkan, who is Adana MP of the JDP, considers the JDP as a continuity movement of the change started in period of the WP and the VP, instead of a rupture from the movement. He argues that the change on the ideas about the West and relations with the European Union have started at the time of the WP. Thus, according to him, this formation (the JDP) could be considered as a revised National Outlook. Furthermore, he considers the National Outlook as a formation by which the nation realizes itself and defines the National Outlook as the opinion of the nation. Moreover, he argues that while the JDP considered in the context that it relies on the opinions, ideas, demands and values of the nation, it should be said that the JDP is also a kind of National Outlook Movement. [Interview with Abdullah Çalışkan, Ruşen Çakır , " Yenilenmiş Milli Görüş Hareketiyiz" (We are a renewed National Outlook Movement), Vatan (Turkish Daily), 3 October 2003]

¹⁵² Interview with Ahmet Çiğdem, Ruşen Çakır, "Milli Görüş değil, ANAP geleneği" (Not National Outlook but the Motherland Party Tradition), Vatan (Turkish Daily), 2 October 2003

able to be in power as long as they insisted on their Islamist identity and so they preferred to be in power instead of being Islamist.¹⁵³

While the JDP attempts to get rid of its Islamist identity, it tries to formulate a new political stance, which it calls conservative democracy.¹⁵⁴ As it may be understood from the term, this formulation has two dimensions: one is to be conservative and the other is to be democrat.¹⁵⁵ The JDP prefers to represent itself as conservative in the context of its approach on the social change and transformation. In that sense, Hüseyin Çelik defines the conservatism of the JDP with the following statement:

“Our conservatism is the name of a sensitiveness which considers the realms of culture and morality. In that sense, conservatism does not mean the preservation of the old and/or existing in any condition, it expresses a sensitiveness which interests the preservation of things which are worth to be.”¹⁵⁶

As it may be understood from the quotation, the JDP aims to define itself as a conservative party in the context of its approach on social change and transformation. The JDP defines itself conservative, because it declares that it is against any revolutionist change in the society that will eliminate or destruct the products and institutions of common heritage such as culture, social values and norms, and family structure. In the same way, Yalçın Akdoğan defines conservatism as an approach, which defends evolutionist or gradual change in society instead of a revolutionist transformation; and which puts emphasis on the falseness of destruction of traditional social

¹⁵³ Interview with Nuray Mert, Ruşen Çakır “AKP, tabanla sistem arasında ip cambazı” (The JDP acts like a rope dancer between the system and its ground), Vatan (Turkish Daily), 6 October 2003

¹⁵⁴ The principles of *Conservative Democracy* had been introduced to people by a book, which is titled *Conservative Democracy* and authorized by Yalçın Akdoğan in the year of 2003.

¹⁵⁵ The dimension of democracy will be studied in the following section.

¹⁵⁶ Çelik, Hüseyin (2002), News, <<http://www.akparti.com.tr>>, 11/03/2005

institutions in the book of Conservative Democracy.¹⁵⁷ According to the JDP, the products of common heritage such as cultural and social values, norms or institutions like family should be protected. In that sense, it declares that any practice that will destruct the foundations of the family should not be implemented.^{158/159}

As it is seen from the statements above, there seems to be a contradiction in the discourse of the JDP. There is a contradiction in the discourse of the JDP because on one side, it declares itself as a conservative party, on the other side; it declares that it broke off its past and founded on change. With a similar approach, Ali Bulaç¹⁶⁰, who is one of the important figures among contemporary Islamist intellectuals, criticizes the JDP for both declaring to be conservative on one side, and breaking off its past on the other side. He argues that any conservative party could not certainly break off his past; thus, even the JDP should not be considered as an Islamist party, it should not deny its Islamist past. He defines the JDP as a new political movement, taking its roots from the National Outlook line. Furthermore, he argues that the JDP has a different perception of religion and politics than the National Outlook had. He relates this change on the perception of state and religion of the JDP to the efforts of Islamist circles, who have been defending that a wide-participatory and pluralist democracy could be and also should be established in Islam for a very long time.

Ali Bulaç also takes attention to what extent the JDP uses and conceptualises the term conservative. He claims that even if the JDP uses the term conservative to express a radical breaking off the National Outlook

¹⁵⁷ Akdoğan, Yalçın. (2003) Conservative Democracy, <<http://www.akparti.com.tr>>, 10/01/2005

¹⁵⁸ Akdoğan, ibid.

¹⁵⁹ The JDP asserts the cash money transfer from the fiscal sources of the state, for abortion or surgery for changing sexuality as the examples of the practices, which may destruct the foundations of the institution of family.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with Ali Bulaç, Ruşen Çakır “AK Parti İslami geçimini istese de reddedemez”, (The JDP cannot deny its past), Vatan (Turkish Daily), 8 October 2003

line, there are problems about this usage. For him, first of all, this cannot be possible because a certain breaking off is contradictory to the nature of conservative politics and also to its fundamental hypothesis. In that point, he argues that the JDP could not deny its Islamist past. He also argues that conservative politics projects the preservation of the status quo; on the other hand, for him, the JDP is a periphery movement which has appeared as a reaction to the centre's practices, which he considers as practices of out-politics. Since the JDP has been a periphery movement; it should be reformist and encourage the change and accept new policies in accordance with the change. ¹⁶¹

The second point, the so-called change that has been significantly felt has been the JDP's consideration of the west. As to remember, the most significant feature of the NOM parties, which have differed them from current rightwing parties, was its critical and controversial stance towards the west and westernisation of Turkey. Starting with the times of coalition government of the TPP and the WP, especially after the issue of the closure of the WP had become a matter of Turkish political agenda¹⁶², this consideration of the west was broken. In that manner, the JDP declared the accession of Turkey to European Union, which has been asserted as the final step of Turkish modernization, as the primary target of both its party and Turkey during its foundation process and election campaign for general elections in November 2002. After coming to power, parallel to this target, the JDP has implemented the legal regulations based on democratisation of the existing Turkish political and administrative system to be able to start the negotiations with the EU for full membership. The insistence of the JDP on full membership to the European Union and close relations with the western world should also be asserted as one of the indicators of the change or break in NOM.

¹⁶¹ Interview with Ali Bulaç, Ruşen Çakır "AK Parti İslami geçimini istese de reddedemez", Vatan (Turkish Daily), 8 October 2003

¹⁶² As it is discussed and shown in the former chapter, this breakpoint in the consideration of the west had occurred with application to the Human Rights Court for amendment of the decision of the Constitutional Court about the closure of the WP.

The third point that may be considered as the indicator of the change is based on the interpretation of democracy. As to remember, in general terms democracy was considered as a tool instead of a means for the establishment of a “just order” for Necmettin Erbakan¹⁶³, for the NOM. On the other hand, the JDP claims that it considers democracy not only a form of government but also a value system. In that context, it claims that the JDP will take the required measures for a more democratic political and administrative system in Turkey. Depending upon this change on the discourse of Turkish political Islam, Murat Belge considers the JDP as a step in the domestication process of Islamism in Turkey and claims that democracy is a life-or-death matter for the JDP.¹⁶⁴

At that point, it may be suggested that implementation of a democratisation program to fulfil the Copenhagen Criteria, which is a requirement for Turkey to be able to start the membership negotiations with the EU, could be asserted as one of the examples of Robert Dahl’s argument that to be able to settle and continue a democratic system in trans-national organizations, each state will need to strength their democracy and democratic institutions. In his book of Democracy and Its Critiques he discusses that in the future each democratic country will need to rearrange themselves according to the trans-national powers and thus they will need to find new ways to protect and strength the democratic process.¹⁶⁵ By referring to this assumption, it may be said that intergovernmental organizations could affect the domestic policies of a country. Thus, it may be argued that, as also Dahl argues, the democratisation process of a political system could not only be demanded and determined by domestic sources, but also be demanded by trans-national organizations. Since the power of trans-national organizations over domestic

¹⁶³ Necmettin Erbakan (1993), Refah Partisi Ankara İl Teşkilatı Divan Toplantısı Açış Konuşması, Erbakan’ın Konuşmaları Haziran 1993, Refah Partisi Yayınları, Ankara, p. 94

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Murat Belge, Ruşen Çakır, “AKP karpuz gibi, dışı yeşil içi kırmızı” (The JDP resembles a melon that hull is green and inner part is red”, Vatan (Turkish Daily), 4 October 2003

¹⁶⁵ Dahl, p.407

policies is considered, it is realized that the JDP's claim to settle a more democratic political system and to consider democracy as a value system has not formed by only internal dynamics of Turkey but has also formed by the requirements determined by the EU for starting negotiations for full membership.

By settling these points of change to the bases of the JDP, the founders of the JDP have attempted to define the JDP as a new political formation, which broke its connection with its past. Furthermore, they have formulated the political stance of this new political formation, in the frame of the term of "conservative democracy". Since the social and political assumptions of this new political stance are studied, it is realized that on one hand, the JDP attempts to develop conservative stance towards the nature of society and change, on the other hand it tries to formulate its understanding of democracy with special references to the principles of pluralist and participatory democracy. In other words, while it presents itself as a conservative party, which defends the protection and continuation of the common values of the society such as culture, family, tradition, norms and rules, which are products of the common heritage, it defines itself as a democrat party which recognizes the differentiations in the society as a colourfulness.¹⁶⁶ Now on, the democratic dimension of conservative democrat political stance of the JDP will be studied in the context of analysing its conceptualisation of democracy.

4.3 The JDP's Understanding of Democracy

When the party program and statements of the party authorities are considered in the context of how democracy is conceptualised, it is realized that the features, determined as the democrat characteristics of the conservative democrat political stance of the JDP, are repeating themselves as the JDP's conceptualisation of democracy. In that sense, it may be argued that the main arguments in the book of Conservative Democracy lay the

¹⁶⁶ Akdoğan, *ibid.*

foundations of the statements of the party spokesman about democracy and the main arguments and 1s of the JDP about society, politics and democracy. Thus, through the remaining part, the main approaches, arguments and assessments on democracy, human rights and laicism in the book of Conservative Democracy will be especially referred to be able to explain and discuss the conceptualisation of democracy of the JDP.

4.3.1 The JDP's Understanding of Society and Politics

One important context that JDP's conceptualisation of democracy is related is its understanding of society. In the party program, which the JDP names as development and democratisation program, it declares that it accepts Turkish society with all its colours, its points of commonality and difference. Furthermore, it defines Turkey as a country which is formed of colours, similarities and differences and presents itself as the party of all people, living within the same geography for millennia, in peace, friendship and brotherhood, sharing a joint destiny, whose happiness, sorrow and pride is common.¹⁶⁷ Depending upon this statement it may be argued that the JDP tries to improve a discourse that considers Turkish society as a heterogeneous society, which involves different social groups. In that context, it may also be argued that the JDP differs from the NOM, which considered Turkish society as a homogeneous entity integrated around common value and norms. Likewise, depending upon its statement that it accepts Turkish society with all its colours, its points of commonality and difference, there have been arguments that the JDP considers Turkish society as a homogeneous entity.¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, the same statement continues with the emphasis of a joint destiny and common shares. Thus, it may be not

¹⁶⁷ Party Program of the Justice and Development Party, < <http://www.akparti.org.tr>>, 18/06/2005

¹⁶⁸ For a similar argument see Insel, Ahmet. "The AKP and Normalizing Democracy", *The Atlantic Quarterly*, Summer 2003, p.293-308

be so wrong to say that the party aims to define the people with unifying and combining features. In that context, the speech of Hüseyin Çelik, who is the minister of national education in the JDP cabinet, which states: “ ...We should meet in the common shares in spite of diversities. These common shares are the republic, country, flag, national song.”¹⁶⁹ could be asserted as an example of this attempt.

Furthermore, this definition of people of the JDP, which is based on sharing common destiny, reminds us the classical society consideration of the National Outlook tradition. In other words, as it can be understood from this ‘people’ definition, the JDP cannot demonstrate rupture from the classical society consideration of the National Outlook tradition, which carries the features of homogeneous society consideration. Its emphasis on the common destiny can be asserted as the indicator of this homogenous society consideration. As to remember, the understanding of society of the WP was also founded on the same understanding of society. In the book of National Outlook, Necmettin Erbakan describes the Turkish society as one nation, which lives in the same land and are children of the same nation and history. Although, the JDP seems to avoid defining Turkish society on the bases of common ethnicity or common religion and tries to put emphasis on diversities and pluralism, it should not be said that it does not consider the society as a homogenous form. In that context, it may be said that the JDP does not totally demonstrate rupture from its National Outlook roots and has been in a transition period. What mainly differs from the past about understanding of society is based on the reason why it attempts to consider the society as a homogenous entity. The NO considered the society as a homogenous entity as a consequence of an understanding of ideal society, which should be reached. On the other hand, although the JDP’s understanding of society has features those considers Turkish society as an

¹⁶⁹ Çelik, Hüseyin. “Turkish Republic State should be a republic where people meet in the Common Shares in spite of all diversities and form the democratic culture and conscious” (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti, bütün farklılıklara rağmen, insanları ortak patdalarda buluşturup, demokratik kültür ve bilinci oluşturan bir cumhuriyet olmalıdır), news, 28.10.2003, < <http://www.akparti.org.tr>>, 21/10/2004

homogeneous entity, this understanding of homogenous society does not spring from an understanding of ideal society. In other words, while there have been an understanding of ideal society for the NO, that should be reached, there should not be talked about an understanding of ideal society for the JDP.

According to conservative democrat political stance of the JDP, the politics is the arena of consensus. In other words, for the JDP, politics is not the arena of conflict among different interests, ideas.¹⁷⁰ Thus, for the JDP, diversities in a society could only express themselves in political area since the politics is founded on the basis of consensus and cooperation. In that sense, the diversities should tolerate each other and meet in a common point in the arena of politics.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, for the JDP, social and cultural diversities should participate in politics, which is based on tolerance and is established by the principles of democratic plurality as different colours¹⁷².

However, while the JDP puts emphasis on the importance of plurality, and diversities, it puts its reservation on making politics over identities. It claims that various identities should explain themselves on a democratic ground and they should seek solutions to some of their problems in the frame of democratic, rule of law state. On the other hand, the JDP claims that identity politics has the danger of polarization in the society. Because, according to the JDP, identities put one consideration, whether they are based on ethnicity, religion or religious denomination or ideology, to the centre of politics and this causes the separation between “they”(us) and “other” (them). Depending upon this evaluation, the JDP argues that there has been an important difference between tolerating and caring the diversities and subjecting the diversities to an excluding discourse and claims that identity differences should be considered as the natural field of

¹⁷⁰ Akdoğan, *ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip, Speech, “Conservatism and Democracy Symposium; 10/11.01.2004”, <<http://www.akparti.com.tr>>, 21/03/2005

¹⁷² Akdoğan, *ibid.*

freedoms but ‘nation’, which the JDP defines as the pluralist whole, should be kept together with common values and citizenship consciousness.¹⁷³

Due to its aim to avoid from any conflict and tension in the society, the JDP puts its reservation to continue politics over any ideology or identity, and defines politics in the context of consensus. Defining politics as a consensus ground and avoiding from conflict arose the question that how a democratic debate environment for the process of policy-making will be sustained. In that context, it may be argued that defining the politics, as a ground of consensus does not provide a democratic debate environment for policy-making process. That is because conflict and debate among different interests and identities are required for a democratic policy-making process. Conceptualizing the politics as the ground for consensus should also be asserted as an anti-political approach. Likewise, depending upon the JDP’s consideration of politics that is based on consensus, Menderes Çınar criticizes the JDP for having an anti-political approach. He discusses that the reformist side of the JDP does not stand on the idea of solving social/political problems, but stands on the idea of adaptation.¹⁷⁴ He also characterizes the JDP’s consideration of politics as being technical instead of political. He argues that the JDP’s attitude that excludes the ideologies has weakened itself. He claims that the JDP demonstrates inconsistency and instability on the issues concerning Turkey except the EU adaptation policies and IMF economic program. He explains the reason of this inconsistency and instability as the weakness of the JDP’s consideration of politics, which is, for him, technical and anti-political.

He also argues that since democracy is possible where and when the politics has to be, the JDP’s anti-political approach could be –potentially– considered as a threat for democracy. He argues that any conservative stance that

¹⁷³ Akdoğan, *ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Menderes Çınar, Ruşen Çakır, “Tüccar siyasetle demokrasi olmaz”, *Vatan* (Turkish Daily), 15 October 2003

perceives authority as a natural state ignores the power relations and conflicts among interest and identity diversities in the society, reduces the consensus to tolerances of diversities, not only considers religion inevitable for both authority and social stability but also avoids to define religion as a feature for differentiation and/or separation in the society will not be sufficient to produce a democratising social/ political vision.¹⁷⁵

In the same way, Menderes Çınar¹⁷⁶ claims that Islamism considers the society as a homogeneous entity and by doing this it rejects the activity of politics and reduces politics to administration. He argues that Islamism conceives society as homogenous; it cannot see politics as an activity of accommodation of diverse interests and identities. In that point, he claims that Islamism is anti-democratic, not because it politicises secularism, but simply because it does not recognize a differentiated and plural nature of society which is the starting point for a democratic politics. Since we evaluate the JDP's politics consideration with respect to the arguments of Çınar, it might be said that although the JDP claims that it has left its Islamist identity, it continues Islamist politics and considering society with its anti-political stance.

4.3.2 Definition of The Concepts of Democracy, Laicism and Human Rights in the Discourse of the JDP

Starting from the early attempts of establishing a new political formation, the JDP has claimed that the party accepts the principles of modern democracies, which are based on the acceptance and commitment of sovereignty of people, recourse to human rights, tolerance to diversities in the society and establishment of participatory decision making-process. Furthermore, it claims that it will carry democratic values and

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Menderes Çınar, Ruşen Çakır, "Tüccar siyasetle demokrasi olmaz", Vatan (Turkish Daily), 15 October 2003

¹⁷⁶ Çınar, Menderes "From Shadow-Boxing to Critical Understanding: Some Theoretical Notes on Islamism as 'a Political', 2003

democratisation to Turkey. In that sense, as the indicator of its claim that the JDP will be the carrier of democratic values and democratisation to Turkey, the JDP names its party program as development and democratisation program (for Turkey). Due to that aim, in its party program, the JDP defines itself as:

“Constituting a ground where the unity and the integrity of the Republic of Turkey, the secular, democratic, social state of law, and the processes of civilisation, democratisation, freedom of belief and equality of opportunity are considered essential.”¹⁷⁷

Furthermore, it's definition of the democracy and its consideration of democracy is stated under the title of democratisation and civil society in the program. In that section of the program, the JDP states how it defines democracy; discusses the method that should be applied for the realization of democracy in the society and exposes its assumptions about human rights and civil society. In that section, the JDP states that:

“According to our party; in a democratic society the rules should be put into order by the citizens. For this reason, democracy is a form of government where legal rules are created with the approval of the citizens. The final decision and executive authority in a democracy rest with the organs and institutions created through elections. Basic decisions related with the public life are made by those who are elected. In a democracy, sovereignty belongs to the people and this feature is a basic quality separating democratic regime from all other regimes. ... the competition of different preferences is one of the crucial elements of a healthy democratic system. In this race, those who receive the votes of majority come to power, they take up responsibility of the entire country or local administrations.”¹⁷⁸

As it may be understand from this quotation, the JDP seems to appropriate and offer the basic principles and institutions of representative (liberal)

¹⁷⁷Party Program of the Justice and Development Party, <[http:// www.akparti.org.tr](http://www.akparti.org.tr)>, 18/06/2005

¹⁷⁸ Party Program of the Justice and Development Party, < <http://www.akparti.org.tr>>, 18/06/2005

democracy model as rule by the people, moving this ruling right to representatives, selection of this representatives through elections, deciding the ones who will come to power with the principle of majority rule as the form of government. One other point that supports the claim that the JDP's consideration of democracy is based on the basic principles of liberal democracy is that it declares its commitment to individual rights and freedom and tolerance towards diversities. Thus, according to the party program of the JDP, freedoms constitute the foundation of the democracy and democracy is a system based on tolerance.¹⁷⁹ In that context, it can be said that it accepts the general assumptions of liberal understanding of state and democracy. In that sense, it does not demonstrate a critical stand towards the general presumptions of liberal democracy.

While formulating the democrat side of the conservative political stance, the JDP determines one of the features of conservative democracy as concerning both political and juridical legitimacy. Furthermore, the JDP claims that political legitimacy should be based on the sovereignty of the people and juridical legitimacy should be based on the constitution and universal norms for conservative democracy. In that context, Akdoğan defines the first component of political authority as general will, which is based on the consent of the people. The second component of political authority is that the content, by which the political authority conveys itself and expresses its organizational identity, in other words; the laws, the rules and values should be in accordance with the needs of the era and should get people's consent.¹⁸⁰ These arguments involve such questions to be answered that how the content by which the political authority conveys itself will be determined or what the needs of the era are and who will decide on these needs. Since the traces to answer these questions in the party program and formulation of conservative democrat political stance are looked for, it is seen that the consent of people should be sustained through

¹⁷⁹ Party Program of the JDP.

¹⁸⁰ Akdoğan, *ibid.*

free elections by which they revolve their authority to rule to representatives. Furthermore, according to conservative democracy, the content that the political authority conveys itself should be determined in accordance with the principle of rule of law. In that context, the government and its institutions should be limited within a legal framework. Moreover, the JDP, and so conservative democracy argues that the state should withdrawal to its fundamental functions; which are protecting the freedoms and rights of individuals and being a mediator and coordinator between different and conflicting interests. In other words, the state should be small but efficient.¹⁸¹ By then the representatives of the people, who have the right to rule them by winning the elections will be able to decide on the needs of the era. At that point, the conservative democracy discusses that while the representatives of the people, or rulers decide on the needs of era; they should consider the global agenda. Likewise, Akdoğan states that there are universal norms, which have been decided in the globalisation world, such as protection of individual against the state, expanding the influences of civil initiatives, protection of minority rights as a constitutional right.¹⁸²

Adding to the acceptance of the liberal values as the bases of its consideration of democracy, the JDP states that it appropriates the principles of both pluralist and participatory democracy as its consideration of democracy. While declaring that it accepts diversities in Turkish society as colourfulness, it aims to present itself a party that is also aware of the heterogeneous structure of Turkish society.¹⁸³ Furthermore, it frequently refers to the issue of respect to the minority rights in the context of enriching the pluralist side of democracy. For instance, in the party program it states that:

¹⁸¹ Akdoğan, *ibid.*

¹⁸² Akdoğan, *ibid.*

¹⁸³ However, as it is discussed before, the JDP does not seem convincing whether it really considers Turkish society as a heterogeneous society.

“...However, winning the race and coming to power does not make the will of the majority absolute. One of the most important qualities of contemporary democracy is that the majority will, under any circumstances, make the fundamental rights and freedoms a topic of discussion and that they shall respect the rights and freedoms of those who are in the minority. Securing the views of the minority and the right to oppose are considered as an element that strengthens the pluralist quality of democracy.”¹⁸⁴

In the same way, after listing liberal values such as protection of individuals against state, strengthening the civil initiatives, accepting civil groups and organizations as powerful and determinants; protection of minority rights under the constitutional confidence; protection of the representation and expression right of religious and ethnical groups; opening of political participation ways as the main components of the global agenda, Akdoğan claims that all these components should only be realized by establishing pluralist democracy¹⁸⁵. In that context, The JDP claims that it aims to settle a political ground that will be based on the principles of pluralist democracy. Therefore, it defines the democratic political ground as the ground where all the problems and all social demands can be offered and discussed. Moreover, it claims that it accepts democracy as the most appropriate form of government because that it gives all cultural and social diversities and demands the chance to participate in politics and prevent the established order from dominating radicalism. At that point, the JDP argues that these cultural and social diversities might attend politics with the establishment of participatory democracy. The JDP also claims that participatory democracy provides these diversities the appropriate circumstance for representation and participation in political processes. Related to its aim to present the participatory democracy as one of the components of its consideration of democracy, in its party program it states that:

¹⁸⁴ Party Program.

¹⁸⁵ Akdoğan, *ibid.*

“The right for citizens to participate in the public decision mechanism indicates that a democratic regime is not a one-way regime, but a two-way interaction by those who govern and who are governed. Therefore, the right to participate does not only mean, but also have the ways open for citizens to make, implement and control the implementation of the public decisions.”¹⁸⁶

According to the JDP, the participatory democracy should be sustained by a dialogue process among all the related parts of the society and effective participation of civil society to the decision-making process. It bases its argument on the characteristics of contemporary democracies and asserts the dialog and participation as the most important components of contemporary democracies.¹⁸⁷ In that context, it considers dialogic democracy not only a way of presentation of interest but also a way of improvement of cultural cosmopolite. It also claims that participation could only be provided by plurality. It also argues that it considers the civil society institutions as one of the most important actors in this dialog process and thus, a vital instrument for a ‘dialogical’, ‘pluralist’ and ‘participatory democracy’.

While the JDP’s conceptualisation of pluralist democracy is compared with the WP’s conceptualisation of pluralist democracy, it may be said that the JDP’s conceptualisation of plural democracy has strong and certain definition and arguments. As to remember, the term pluralist democracy found its place in the discourse of the WP in the early 90’s. However, the WP did not expose such clear arguments, which could be asserted as the bases of its consideration of pluralist democracy. In that sense, it may be argued that the WP’s consideration of pluralist democracy was fuzzy.

Since arguments and assumptions that form the discourse of the JDP about the bases of its consideration of pluralist democracy and participatory democracy are considered solely in the level of discourse without analyzing

¹⁸⁶ Party Program.

¹⁸⁷ Akdoğan, *ibid.*

the coherence of practice with the discourse, it may be argued that these assumptions may create a democratic contribution to Turkey. However, it may be mentioned that there have been some lacking points in the discourse. This lacking points especially expose themselves on its consideration of civil society. Since the party program and the statements of the party spokesman on the definition of civil society are considered, the JDP has the tendency to define the civil society with the private sector, market forces.¹⁸⁸ With the same fixing, Çoşar&Özman discuss that with dialogue, the JDP actually aims to include the market agencies and representatives of civil society in the formation of any policy proposals on the issues concerned. Moreover, Özman&Çoşar argue that the proposed mechanism for administration is based on the principles of marked mechanism and thus, the JDP seems to make no distinction between the pluralist and participatory democracy.¹⁸⁹ This argument of Özman&Çoşar is very important to understand what the JDP really means with its claim to establish pluralist democracy. The emergence of the understanding of pluralist democracy goes back to the 1950's and 1960's of the United States. For the founding names of the pluralist democracy idea, R. Dahl or E. Lipset, pluralism in society was based on the differentiation of the interests. The interests were also defined in economic terms. Thus, what meant by the term of interest group have usually been the trade chambers, big companies, and unions of employers or workers. In that manner, existence of a political mechanism that enables these interest groups to participate in the decision-making mechanisms was stated as a requirement for plural democracy. However, today's pluralist structure of modern societies is not just characterized with the existence of interest groups that are defined in economic terms. Today's modern heterogeneous plural societies are characterized with the existence of different social and economic groups based on geographical, ethnical, religious, occupational or gender identities. Thus, among the studies of

¹⁸⁸ Çoşar, S. &Özman, A, “ Centre-Right Politics in Turkey After the November 2002 General Election: Neo-Liberalism with a Muslim Face”, *Contemporary Politics 10* (March 2004) :57-74.

¹⁸⁹ Çoşar& Özman, *ibid.*, p. 64-65

contemporary political theories, there have been studies dealing with the issue of politicisation and recognition of these diversities. And the concept of participatory democracy is used not only for the participation of interest groups in decision-making mechanism as the classical pluralist democracy offers but also participation of these diversities to political decision-making processes. Furthermore, participatory democracy is discussed in the context of firstly active participation of each person in politics and secondly recognition of these diversities and then participation of these groups in political mechanism not only for the realization of common good but also recovering their political demands sprung from their differentiation; their cultural, ethnical, religious or gender identities. Moreover, the participatory democracy ideas, with different variants,¹⁹⁰ the main target of which can be summarized as the broadening the frame of the voters; and spreading and intensifying the participation of the voters in discussions, forming will and decision-making processes on public ¹⁹¹, also argues the redefinition of the political and private sphere. When the discourse and practices of the JDP on these diversities are studied, it is seen that the JDP does not offer a decision-making process through which these cultural, ethnical or gender identities could participate but offers a decision-making mechanism that the interest groups could participate. In that context, it may be said that what the JDP understands from the participatory democracy is limited within its consideration of plural democracy and it may also be argued that the JDP's plural democracy understanding is interest-based.

Besides defining the democracy as a form of government, the JDP tries to represent the democracy as a system of value. In that sense, for the JDP

¹⁹⁰ Schmidt lists the 'expensive democracy' idea of Mark Warren, 'strong democracy' idea of Benjamin Barber, 'associative democracy' idea of Paul Hirst, cosmopolite democracy idea of Archibugi/ Held, new feminist democracy theory of Anne Philips as the variants of participatory democracy theory in his book of Introduction to Democracy Theories [Schmidt, Manfred G.(2002) *Demokrasi Kuramlarına Giriş*, Vadi Yayınları, p.61]. Seyla Benhabib's idea of 'deliberative democracy' may also be considered as one of the variants of participatory democracy.

¹⁹¹ Schmidt, *ibid*, p. 165

democracy is both a method, which provides different, even contradictory life styles, appropriate conditions to live together and a system of value, a culture that should be appropriated by all the parts of the society. As it is mentioned before, one of the features that the spokesmen of the JDP insist on is that the JDP does not stand on ideology. In the same way, in the party program, the JDP declares that it conducts political values in the platform of the democratic values rather than ideological platforms.¹⁹² In that content, it may be argued that the JDP defines democracy as a system of values and as a culture. Defining democracy as a value system rather than a mechanism is also seen in several speeches of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. For instance, in his speech at the group meeting of the JDP, dated 11/11/2003¹⁹³, he says, “democracy is a culture beyond being a fundamental concept of contemporary politics... We are resolute and determined to have democracy as a culture to realize the ideal of being an absolute state of law.”¹⁹⁴

While discussing the democracy in the context of system of value, the JDP makes distinction between mechanic and organic democracy. According to the formulation of conservative democracy, for the mechanic democracy understanding a democratic system is reduced only to the existence of specific institutions and free elections. However, for the JDP, organic democracy offers a democratic culture by which it will diffuse to all administrative, social and political parts of the society. Thus, conservative democracy defines the ideal democratic system as an organic democracy that is diffused to all administrative, social and political fields instead of a

¹⁹²Party Program of the Justice and Development Party, <[http:// www.akparti.org.tr](http://www.akparti.org.tr)>, 18/06/2005

¹⁹³ Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip. Text of Speech at the Group Conference of the JDP at the Grand Assembly dated 11/11/2003, <<http://www.akparti.org.tr>>, 10/12/2004

¹⁹⁴ For similar statements of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan , which discusses democracy on the bases of value system, see full text of his speech at “ Conservatism and Democracy Symposium” hold on 10-11/01.2004 in Istanbul and full text of his speech titled “ Democracy in Middle East, Pluralism in Europe and Perspective of Turkey” at Harvard University, dated 31/01/2004 available on <http://www.akparti.org.tr>

mechanic democracy, which is reduced to elections and specific institutions.¹⁹⁵

As the JDP's emphasis on dialogue and tolerance is considered, it may be argued that what the JDP means by considering democracy as a system of value is that every part of the society should appropriate a decision making process which is based on the dialogue among different interests and tolerance to diversities. In that sense, the JDP claims that it offers to settle a democratic culture, which will be efficient in every different scope of the life as one of its political aims. The JDP claims that lack of democracy relieves one of the basic reasons for the problems in Turkey and it offers settlement of the democratic culture in Turkish society as the most important solution to the problems of Turkish society.¹⁹⁶

That point also gives clues to realize one of the JDP's differentiation points from the NOM. As to remember, the National Outlook defined the basic reason for the problems in Turkey as the lack of morality and spirituality in the society. In addition, national outlook offered the re-establishment and-re-calling of the spiritual values as the solution.

The JDP defines laicism as an institutional attitude, which the state improves to provide differences, originated from religion or religious denominations, with a social peace environment for living together instead of conflicting with each other. Thus, the JDP argues that laicism also means that state should be in an equal distance to every religion and thought. Moreover the JDP claims that laicism should not be considered as a tool of the state or political power to control the religion and to interfere religion and religious people. Thus, it should be considered a way of avoiding from conflict, which could occur in the society among cultural diversities.¹⁹⁷ As it may be understood from these arguments, the JDP aims to define laicism as

¹⁹⁵ Akdoğan, *ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ Akdoğan, *ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ Party Program & Akdoğan, *ibid.*

an environment that enables diversities to live in peace. As this consideration and definition of laicism is also compared with the NOM's consideration, it may be argued that the JDP does not aim to settle a strong connection with democracy and laicism. In other words, it does not explicitly criticize the current practices of laicism in Turkey and it does not found all these arguments about democracy with direct reference to its consideration of laicism, as did the NOM, so did the WP.

To sum up, it may be said that the JDP attempts to establish its consideration of democracy on the liberal principles and values such as plurality, human rights, tolerance and consensus. Furthermore, it declares that due to the contemporary understanding of democracy, its consideration of democracy is also based on the realization of will of minority. Beside appropriating the basic principles of liberal democracies, the JDP seems to consider the fundamental contemporary debates on modern democracies that argue principle of majority rule ignores the rights of minorities in societies or claim that liberal democracy model defines the role of people in politics with voting and thus limits the role of people in politics. It does this by declaring that the JDP secures the views of minorities and right to oppose and offers a public decision mechanism where there will be a two-way interaction between the rulers and ruled built. Although it uses the phrase securing the views and rights of minorities, it does not give a clear and satisfactory definition of which groups should be accepted and treated as minorities in Turkish society, and it does not offer a method for how these views and rights will be secured. Furthermore, there has been missing points that explicitly expose how the participation will be evolved.

While all the components that the JDP use and discuss for conceptualizing its consideration of democracy as considering the society as a homogeneous and heterogeneous entity, declaring to be respectful to diversities and recognizing the entity of identities in the society as a colourfulness and avoiding identity politics, establishing a democratic culture, emphasizing the importance of participation are considered, it may be argued that the

conservative democrat political stance of the JDP is the coalition of the contemporary debates on democracy and thus that might be seen the contradictory points in its conceptualisation of democracy. For instance, on one side it declares that it accepts the diversities in the society and their right to participate in politics for covering their own demands, on the other hand it declares that it is against making politics over diversities and identities. Or, it declares that a democratic environment should only be sustained by the declaration of different opinions on public matters, however it does not aim to accept that there should be a contradiction due to the differentiation of interest or demands.

One other point that contradiction in the discourse exposes is its consideration of society. When the statement that it accepts diversities in Turkish society as colourfulness is considered, it may be claimed that the JDP recognizes the heterogeneous nature of the society. On the other hand, since the JDP's target for a unified society and emphasis on the common values and culture, considering politics as serving for 'nation' are taken into account, it may be claimed that the traces of NOM related to its consideration of society and politics are still recognized in the discourse of the JDP.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

While all the issues and arguments, related to the process of dissolution in the National Outlook Movement and understanding of democracy of the Welfare Party and the Justice and Development Party those are discussed until here are considered, it may be said that some points specifically leads to be mentioned for the comparison of democracy understanding of these two political parties. These points may be listed as the change and continuity in the understanding of society and politics; the practices of laicism in Turkey and its relation with democracy in Turkey; the JDP's attempts to conceptualize its democracy consideration with the principles of plural and participatory democracy; the shift in the definition and interpretation of democracy at least in the level of discourse.

The WP's envision of society was based on considering the Turkish as a homogenous, organic and collective union consisted of the children of the same nation and history; and integrated around common values/good. Thus, it did not tend to accept Turkish society as a heterogeneous entity, which is composed of different groups whose interests and demands from the political system differ. Moreover, it did not avoid defining a fundamental feature for this homogenous society, which had been to be Muslim. According to the WP, the people of Turkish society were Muslims and thus it considered Turkish society as a religious Muslim community, which was composed of Muslims who are bounded by their faith. On the other hand, strongly depending upon the consequences of the process of February 28, and aim of leaving the Islamist identity behind and of being leading political mass party, the JDP does not found its understanding of society to the consideration that the Turkish society is homogenous organic union which is composed of Muslims.

Contrary, at least in the discourse level, it efforts to represent itself as a political party which accepts the heterogeneous structure of the society which is consisted of diversities, which may base on ethnical, religious or gender differentiation in societies. Just depending upon its declaration that the JDP accepts diversities in the society, it may be said that the JDP considers Turkish society as a heterogeneous entity and thus there has been an important change in the discourse of the old members of the National Outlook. Instead, the JDP still has tendencies to define the Turkish society as a homogenous society. Because it still make emphasis on the joint destiny and common shares as the unifying features of Turkish society. However, this understanding of homogenous society has a main difference from the WP's understanding of homogeneous society. While the WP's understanding of homogenous society was the extension of its aim to establish an ideal society, which would have been founded on principles of the NO, it should not be argued that the JDP has an aim to establish an ideal society. Furthermore, it may be argued that on the one hand, the JDP has aimed to represent itself a new political formation which is aware of ongoing international and national debates on the issues of recognition and participation of diversities and which is accepting the main arguments of these debates such as being respectful to the rights of minorities; innovating new tools for more strong representation and participation of these diversities, etc. On the other hand, it does not exhibit a total break with its past. Thus, it may be argued that the JDP has been in a transition period between its past and its new-determined political stance. In that sense, it has features which reminds the features of the NO.

One other point, that may be asserted as a break about the understanding of democracy of the JDP has been the issue of the current practices of laicism in Turkey and its relation with the democracy in Turkey. While the WP's understanding of democracy had a direct relation with its critiques about the current practices of laicism in Turkey, the JDP improves a democracy understanding independent from its definition of democracy. As to remember, the WP always had a tensional relation with the established

political order. It had always criticized the current practices of laicism in Turkey and claimed that the practices actually violate the main principles of the real laicism and they contradicted to one of the leading human rights, which had been the right of belief and conscious. In that context, the WP had always declared that there had been no “real democracy” in Turkey. Thus, its understanding of democracy had a direct relation with its understanding of laicism and its demand for ‘real laicism’ had laid the foundation of its democracy consideration. On the other hand, depending upon the consequences of the process of February 28, the JDP has avoided improving a strong opposition against established political order to be able to last its existence. Furthermore, it has declared that it would work for the realization of Turkey’s ultimate modernization step, which has been the full membership of the European Union, which needed reforms for democratization in Turkey. In this sense, its understanding of democracy does not have a direct relation with the realization of ‘real laicism’ in Turkey.

One other point that may be mentioned is that although the concept of pluralist democracy had found place in the discourse of the WP, what it meant for the WP was not clear. Necmettin Erbakan claimed that the WP would establish the ‘real pluralist democracy’, however he did not clarify what the principles of the ‘real pluralist democracy’ had been or what kind of regulations should be made for the establishment of the real pluralist democracy. In this sense, it is not possible to claim that the WP had established its understanding of democracy on pluralist democracy. On the other hand, the JDP declares that its consideration of democracy is based on the establishing a pluralist and participatory democratic order in Turkey.

The WP’s understanding of democracy was also based on its democracy definition, according to which democracy meant the revelation of national will. In that context, the WP had considered democracy, only as a form of government, which enables the revelation of national will. According to the WP, the national will ultimately realize by the democracy, which it waited to consequence with the establishment of its ideal order, which would base on

the principles of the National Order. In other words, the WP had considered democracy only a form of government, a means for reaching an ideal. Thus, it avoided defining democracy itself as an ideal. In that sense, its consideration of democracy was based on practical dimension, which defined the democracy only a form of government, a political system of organization and institution. On the other hand, the JDP has declared that democracy should not only be defined as a form of government, but also be considered as a value of system. In that context, it may be argued that the JDP's consideration of democracy has normative dimension. One of the important factors for that kind of shift in the definition and interpretation of democracy has also been the general consensus in the global scale that democracy is the best form of government and also an ideal model of society. In this sense, it may be said that the JDP has been affected by the global conjecture, that has formed after the historical developments occurred by the end of eighties in which democracy has been accepted as the best form of government and model of society; moreover in which democracy itself is presented as a goal for modern societies to be reached.

As a conclusion, while the JDP's understanding of democracy is compared with its historical roots, it may be said that there have been shifts and changes in the understanding of democracy of the JDP depending upon the consequences of the process of February 28, the acceptance of the aim of Turkey's full membership and being open to the ongoing debates in the western world for a more democratic, participatory political orders. However, the JDP's understanding of democracy involves components that seem to contradict each other and it does seem to be successful to fulfill the context of terms that it uses. Moreover, although the JDP declares that its consideration of democracy is based on the acceptance of the principles of both pluralist and participatory democracy, it does offer a convincing method how this system will be sustained. Adding to these, the JDP left the issue of public administration reform, by which a more democratic and participatory democracy may be formed, out of agenda and the number of statements of party authorities for the establishment of a pluralist and participatory

democracy decreased. Also, while the statements of Tayyip Erdoğan in the last days, which emphasis the national will as the only source of the political authority or argues the superior/sub identity in Turkish society are considered, it may be argued that the JDP does not still have an absorbed coherent, and fixed understanding of democracy.

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