

INTELLECTUAL HEGEMONY OF JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY  
IN TURKEY: A GRAMSCIAN PERSPECTIVE

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

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## ABSTRACT

### INTELLECTUAL HEGEMONY OF JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY: A GRAMSCIAN PERSPECTIVE

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This thesis attempts to examine the relationship between liberal intellectuals and the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) in Turkish politics. The Justice and Development Party was elected to power in the 2002 general elections, and has been continually in power since. The rise of the AKP was interpreted as a real historical break in Turkish politics since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, and sparked the emergence of new public discussions and academic debates on the significance of the party to Turkish politics. The rise and rule of the AKP was also prepared by the formation of a group of intellectuals who classified themselves as liberals or democrats, those focused on in this study comprising mainly columnists in Turkish newspapers. This intellectual stratum showed an exceptional sympathy and support towards the AKP, especially between the years 2002-2011, which also corresponded to the establishment of hegemony of the AKP in Turkish politics and the AKP's furthering of neo-liberalization.

This study analyzes the nature and multiple dimensions of the relationship between liberal intellectuals and the AKP in Turkish politics and within the larger context of neo-liberalism. The study employs concepts of *hegemony* and *passive revolution* and *intellectuals* developed by Antonio Gramsci, as a theoretical framework, and argues that this intellectual stratum provided the AKP with an ideological leadership during the establishment of the hegemony of the party in Turkish politics and contributed to the perpetuation of neo-liberalism in Turkey by the agency of the AKP.

**Key Words:** Justice and Development Party, Gramsci, Hegemony, Neo-liberalism, Intellectuals.

## ÖZ

### ADALET VE KALKINMA PARTİSİ'NİN TÜRKİYE'DEKİ ENTELLEKTÜEL HEGEMONYASI: GRAMSCI'CI BİR İNCELEME

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Bu tez Türkiye'de 2002 yılında iktidara gelen Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi ile aynı dönemde kamu alanında beliren ve liberal entelektüeller olarak nitelenen ve birçoğu Türk medyasında köşe yazarı olan entelektüel zümre arasındaki ilişkiyi eleştirel bir çerçeveden incelemektedir. Çalışma temel olarak Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin Türk siyasetinde iktidara gelişini ve 2002 yılından bu yana güçlenerek süre gelen iktidarını Gramsci'nin hegemonya kavramı etrafında inceleyip, neo-liberalizm ile ilişkilendirerek açıklamaktadır. Genel olarak bu çalışma AKP'nin son 10 yılda Türk siyasetinde kendi iktidarını tesis ederken aynı zamanda Türkiye'de neo-liberal dönüşümün yeni aktörü olduğunu savunmaktadır. Çalışma AKP'nin Türk siyasetindeki yükselişine ve 10 yıllık iktidarına bu çerçeveden yaklaşarak, liberal entelektüeller ile AKP arasındaki ilişkiyi Gramsci'nin hegemonya tesisinde entelektüellere atfettiği rolü temel alarak analiz etmektedir. Liberal entelektüeller ile AKP arasındaki ilişkiyi birçok temelde ele alan bu çalışma, liberal entelektüellerin AKP'yi Kemalist ideoloji ve düzene karşı demokratik alternatif olarak gördüklerini ve Türk kamuoyuna da medya aracılığıyla partiyi aynı şekilde yansıttıklarını saptamaktadır. Liberal entelektüeller AKP'ye karşı söz konusu yaklaşımları ve partiyi Türk kamuoyunda Kemalizm karşısında demokratik-liberal alternatif bir oluşum olarak sunarak aslında bu partinin Türk siyasetindeki hegemonyasını kurmasında ve Türkiye'de neo-liberalizmin derinleşmesinde işlevsel bir rol oynamışlardır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** AKP, Gramsci, Hegemonya, Neo-Liberalizm, Entelektüeller.

*To My Parents Kazım and Ayla Yaman*

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most remarkable trends of the last thirty years has been the resurgence of a new form of liberal economics commonly referred to as neo-liberalism. With the beginning of new millennium, neo-liberalism came to be regarded as a dominant ideology in the areas of political ideology and economic development. Turkey, which represents only secular democracy in the Middle East and a country with major Muslim population in Europe, also began to expose to neo-liberalism following 1980 military coup<sup>i</sup> in the form of privatizations and financial deregulations. In particular, during the 1990s the country saw the implementation of a series of structural reforms that deepened neo-liberalism in the country. However, with the beginning of new millennium, the country experienced two serious financial crises in 2000 and 2001 respectively which in turn both discredited the extant political parties in the country and brought neo-liberal project into a deadlock. Such a conjuncture also witnessed to the rise of a new political Islamist movement under the name of Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP for its Turkish acronym), which rose to power after the 2002 national elections in Turkey. The AKP has been acting as the ruling party for almost ten years with three major electoral successes in 2002 with 34.43% of the vote, 2007 with 46.58% of the vote, and 2011 with 49.90% of the vote. The AKP's rise from a political Islamist<sup>ii</sup> background and turn into a dominant party in a secular country was interpreted as a real historical break in Turkish politics since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. Many political scientists have recognized this change and usually analyzed its significance and how it happened through a macro political economy approach. The rise and rule of the AKP indeed sparked the emergence of new public discussions and academic debates regarding what the party signifies in Turkish politics. To a large extent, a great body of literature has addressed the rise and rule of the AKP as a marriage of Islam and secularism, of religion and democracy, or of East and West.

More significantly and of relevance to this thesis, the rise and initial rule of the AKP in Turkish politics also reshaped the intellectual landscape in Turkey. In particular, the rise and rule of the AKP paved the way for the formation of a group of intellectuals who classify themselves as liberals<sup>iii</sup> mainly comprising of columnists in Turkish newspapers. This intellectual stratum showed an exceptional sympathy and support towards the AKP, especially between the years (2002-2011), which also corresponded to the establishment of hegemony of the party in Turkish politics and resurgence of neo-liberalism in Turkey through the exercise of its hegemony. This thesis aims to analyze the relationship between the AKP and liberal intellectuals by locating the former in the context of neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey. The main concern of this thesis is to focus the role played by liberal intellectuals to consolidate the AKP rule in Turkey and analyze the multiple dimensions of this consolidation within the larger context of neo-liberal restructuring in Turkey. Attempting to analyze such a complex and multi faceted phenomenon from a critical perspective, this thesis at the theoretical level took its inspiration from Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891- 1937) whose political theory includes a focus on the position of intellectuals in relation to the changing economic structures in a given society. This thesis employs Gramsci's concept of *hegemony*, which he originally developed to explain the failure of socialist movements in Western Europe in early 20<sup>th</sup> century and concomitantly to reveal how ruling class rule in those societies, as a theoretical concept whilst analyzing the rise and rule of the AKP within the context of neo-liberal restructuring in Turkey. The thesis employs another Gramscian concept, *passive revolution* in order to evaluate the further implications of the rise and rule of the AKP especially as relevant to the changing power structures in Turkish politics. Within this perspective, the thesis subjects the position of liberal intellectuals who sympathized with and supported the AKP into a Gramscian analysis and evaluates the position of liberal intellectuals within the context of neo-liberal restructuring in Turkey.

There has been a recently growing Gramscian literature (i.e. Doğan 2011; Tuğal 2009; Yıldırım 2009) in analyzing the rise and rule of the AKP within the context of neo-liberal restructuring in Turkey. However, the role played by liberal intellectuals in the establishment of AKP's hegemony and resurgence of neo- neglected in existing Gramscian literature. Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute to this recently established body of literature by focusing on the role of the intellectuals in the resurgence of neo-liberalism and the establishment of the hegemony of the AKP in Turkish politics.

This thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter of this thesis aims to illustrate the rise and rule of the AKP by focusing on three different mainstream perspectives. The chapter begins with a brief historical introduction of the relationship between political Islamist movements, which form the AKP's political origins and secular structure of modern Turkey. Following this, the chapter introduces the mainstream perspective taken in this thesis; learning through experience, which mainly presumes that political Islamist movements' constant engagement with secular establishment in modern Turkey pushed them to enter into a kind of learning process. This in turn led them to internalize the secular structure of Turkish Republic and gradually resulted in the de-radicalization of political Islam, paving the way for the rise of the AKP as a moderate Islamist party that is reconciled with the secular structure of Turkey. The chapter then introduces a paradigm called *center-periphery dichotomy*<sup>iv</sup> which became a very popular academic source to explain the rise of the AKP from liberal perspective. The last part of the chapter focuses on the globalization perspective that mainly analyzes the rise of the AKP as relevant to the globalization process that Turkey was exposed to beginning from 1980s and explains the electoral success of the party by claiming that the party has developed the capacity and organizational ability to rule Turkey within the peculiarities of globalization process. The chapter draws a general conclusion from all perspectives by revealing certain deficiencies

that the reviewed literature include and suggests that Gramsci's theory of hegemony can contribute to the understanding of the rise and rule of the AKP from a critical perspective and lay a theoretical basis to focus on the relationship between the party and liberal intellectuals.

Chapter two outlines a Gramscian theoretical framework within which the rise and rule of the AKP and role of the liberal intellectuals as relevant to the party and neo-liberal restructuring can be critically focused upon. The chapter initially historicizes Gramsci in order to elaborate how his theoretical endeavour emerged and to illustrate the historical context in which his ideas were given shape. The chapter then illustrates Gramsci's concept of hegemony along with its surrounding theory and puts special emphasis on the role played by intellectuals in the establishment of the hegemony. The third part of the chapter applies Gramsci's concept of hegemony to the rise and rule of the AKP in Turkey and demonstrates how the rise and rule of the marked resurgence of neo-liberalism in Turkey. Finally, the chapter analyzes the certain mechanisms that the AKP employed to perpetuate neo-liberalism in Turkey and concomitantly to consolidate its political hegemony in Turkish politics. The chapter finally suggests that the perpetuation of neo-liberalism through the agency of the AKP can be better understood by focusing on the role by played liberal intellectuals.

The third chapter examines the reasons behind the emergence of liberal sympathy and support towards the AKP. The chapter initially discusses how liberal intellectuals interpreted the rise and rule of the AKP in Turkish politics. The second part of the chapter reveals that liberal intellectuals viewed the AKP as a democratic alternative to *Kemalism*, which was the dominant ideology of modern Turkey until the rise of the AKP and has been constantly condemned by liberal intellectuals owing to its authoritarian character which prevented Turkey from evolving along liberal and democratic lines. The third part of the chapter three analyzes the media productions of liberal intellectuals that promote certain ideas to a wider

audience to promote the rise and rule of the AKP. The fourth part of chapter focuses on the current relationship between the AKP and liberal intellectuals and reveals that liberal intellectuals have recently disenchanted with the AKP because of the latter's unveiling its religious, nationalist and conservative features. The chapter then focuses on the AKP's definitions of its ideology, *conservative democracy* which appealed to liberal intellectuals and laid a basis for the emergence of the relationship between liberal intellectuals and the AKP rule. The following section of third chapter presents a critical investigation into the ideological tenets of the AKP's definition of conservative democracy and reveals that the AKP's ideological orientation can be delineated as religious conservative nationalism. Finally, the chapter constructs a theoretical framework on the basis of Gramsci's concept of intellectuals and within which the position of liberal intellectuals can be focused on as relevant to the AKP's hegemony and neo-liberalism in Turkey.

## CHAPTER 1

### HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE RISE OF THE AKP

This chapter aims to illustrate the rise and rule of the AKP by referring three different mainstream perspectives, each of which narrates the rise and rule of the party under different themes. The main intention of this part is to develop an understanding of what the rise and rule of the AKP signifies in Turkish politics from different mainstream perspectives and to display how it is interpreted by different scholars with reference to certain historical developments that had significant effect upon the rise and rule of the AKP. The data which is provided in this chapter also lays the foundation of other subsequent chapters that analyze the rise and rule of the AKP from a Gramscian framework and subject the relationship between liberal intellectuals and the AKP into a Gramscian analysis.

Although the AKP has become the dominant party in Turkish politics since 2002, it comes from a political Islamist party tradition whose origins and formation can be traced back to the establishment of Republic of Turkey. Therefore, before analyzing the rise of the AKP within different frameworks and from a Gramscian perspective, a brief introduction to the historical process of the political Islamist movements in modern Turkey is necessary. The central tendency in defining the historical process is to refer to the relationship between the secular ideology of the Turkish state and the formation of political Islamist movements. Within this account, the formation of the political Islamist movements in Turkey is connected to the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk under the influence of Western positivism, which showed itself with the new state's adaptation of secularism as an ideology to achieve Western modernization. This perception of modernity, which was mainly adopted by the founder cadre of the new Republic, comprising the bureaucratic elites and the Turkish military top brass, rejected the role of religion within the public sphere and opted for a radical and speedy political revolution



directed from 'above' through an authoritarian state. The first phase of this revolution was realized during the single party regime within which Ataturk's secular Republican People's party acted as the sole actor until the 1950s through suppressing the representation of Islam in political and social realms. In this context, transition to the multi-party period in 1950 marks the beginning of the emergence of political Islamist movements in modern Turkey. When the Democrat Party (1946- 1960) came to power in 1950 through challenging the Kemalist<sup>v</sup> Republican People's Party single party regime, it primarily defined itself as a political party that is culturally conservative and sensitive to the Islamic values of Turkish society. However, the first political party that explicitly defined itself as Islamically oriented was the National Order Party, which was established by Necmettin Erbakan in 1970 on the basis of his ideology of National View (*Milli Görüş*). The ideology of the National View combined certain elements such as Islamism and nationalism, and challenged the Kemalist modernization project by adopting an anti-western and anti-capitalist discourse. When the party was closed down in 1971 by the Constitutional Court for breaking the secular principles of the Turkish Republic, it was succeeded by the National Salvation Party (NSP). The NSP took an active role in Turkish politics until the 1980 military coup. Like all other political parties in 1980, the NSP was closed down by the 1980 military government. However, Erbakan's movement reemerged in the public sphere in the form of the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) in 1983, which gathered momentum towards the end of the 1980s and entered into parliament in 1991. The party won the municipality elections in two important cities (Istanbul and Ankara) in 1994 and became the leading party in the 1995 national elections with 21 % of the vote. In the aftermath of these elections, Erbakan established a Welfare-led coalition government and became the first Islamist prime minister of Turkey. Erbakan's attempts to Islamicize the public sphere and his adaptation of an anti-Western and anti-Israeli foreign policy on the one hand, and his orientation towards the promotion of relations and cooperation with Muslim countries on the other,

prompted the military controlled National Security Council to impose some sanctions against the government on the 28 February 1997, which in turn resulted in the fall of the Erbakan government. This process also brought the closure of the Welfare Party in 1998 and Erbakan's ban from politics by the Constitutional Court. Following this, the Welfare Party and Erbakan's movement were succeeded by the Virtue Party under the leadership of an Erbakan loyalist; Recai Kutan. However, this time the movement was divided into two. A new group (reformist wing) challenged the traditional party leadership as they found Erbakan's style of politics authoritarian and his national view ideology outmoded to deal with current problems facing Turkish society. Therefore, while the reformist group split with the movement and established the Justice and Development Party in 2001 under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Erbakan loyalists established the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*). When the Justice and Development Party came to power in the 2002 national elections, the Felicity Party only managed to gain 2.5% of the vote and failed to enter into the parliament. The AKP's coming to power in the 2002 national elections as a ruling party, its ability to stay in power for almost ten years and its restructuring of Turkish politics and society have instigated discussions and a rich academic literature regarding the party's orientation and what path the party is leading Turkey down. In the light of these developments, a great body of academic publications analyzed the rise of the AKP by developing different methodological and theoretical frameworks. Based on these, this chapter introduces different approaches to the rise of the AKP in Turkish politics. By focusing on three different mainstream perspectives, this chapter aims to highlight the history and historiography of the rise of the AKP in Turkish politics<sup>vi</sup>.

### **1.1 Learning through Experience: Transformation of Political Islam and the rise of the AKP in Turkish politics.**

One of the most popular explanations in interpreting the rise of the AKP in Turkish politics is that the AKP, as a party that emerged out of the political

Islamist movements in Turkey, was a product of an unending conflict between the secular establishments of modern Turkey and political Islamist movements. The central premise of this perspective is based on the argument that political Islamist movements' engagement with the secular institutions of the Republic constantly pushed them to enter into a transformation process that eventually brought about the rise of the AKP. Within this perspective, Mehan (2006) suggests that political Islamist movements were strictly controlled by the secular institutions of the Turkish Republic therefore Islamist movements were constantly obliged to renew their political behaviour within the principles of the secular Republic. For Mehan, the conflict between political Islamist movements and secular institutions of the Republic began with the establishment of the islamically oriented National Order Party (1970- 1971) *Milli Nizam Partisi* in 1970 under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan. The party's closure by virtue of being a threat to the foundations of the secular Republic and to the ethos of Ataturk's revolution by the judiciary, and suspension of the political activities of the National Salvation Party (1972 – 1981) - as its successor in 1980 by the military initiated the transformation of political Islamist movements in Turkey. Mehan suggests that the friction between Erbakan's movement and military bureaucratic elite forced Erbakan and his movement to act more cautiously against the secular institutions of the Republic. An additional dimension to this friction emerged when the Welfare Party and Erbakan came to power in 1995 as the first Islamist prime minister of Turkey.

The initial expansion of Islamic educational and bureaucratic organizations during Welfare's tenure, as well as a new openness to an Islamic entity and symbolism in the public sphere, made the military establishment increasingly nervous. The military and parts of secular civil society feared that Islamists would quickly infiltrate state institutions and eventually introduce Islamic law (*Şeriat*). (Mehan, 2004, p. 344).

Eventually strong pressure from the military initiated an anti-Welfare campaign by the media, the secular bourgeois organization (TUSIAD) and

civil society that forced Erbakan to resign from his post as prime minister in June 1997, and the Welfare Party was closed down by the Constitutional Court in 1998 for violating the secular principles of the constitution. At this juncture, Mechan asserts that when it became clear that the Welfare Party would be closed down, some Welfare deputies developed a new strategic step and founded a new party; the Virtue Party (1997- 2001) (*Fazilet Partisi*). “Upon the founding of the Virtue Party (FP), the realities of the Republic deserved much credit in determining the party’s strategies of self-representation. Indeed, a number of Welfare deputies felt that the new party’s name was too Islamic.” (Mechan, 2004, p. 346). For Mechan, the Virtue Party (FP) appeared as a new face in Turkish politics and adopted the language of democracy rather than Islam. “Virtue’s principal messages, which continued throughout its relatively short life, included the necessity of real democracy in Turkey, the importance of human rights, and a focus on expanding political liberties.” (Mechan, 2004, p. 346). However, for Mechan, although the Virtue Party (FP) appeared to adopt a democratic discourse, the main motive behind this shift was to avoid party closure and enable Erbakan to re-enter national politics, which would initiate a separatist movement within the party in the future. The Virtue Party (FP) went to the 1999 national polls under the shadow of intense public warnings from the military about the dangers of Islamic based politics in Turkey with the aim of warning the electorate not to vote for it.

The most pressing dangers to Virtue in the election, however, appeared to come from divisions within the party itself. Splits between Erbakan’s close associates and a younger generation modelled on Erdoğan and Gül became ever more apparent. Erbakan’s ongoing reputation as the ‘phantom of the Virtue Party’ was criticized both by the secular establishment and by increasing numbers within the party who felt that Erbakan was stifling party democracy. (Mechan, 2004, p. 347).

The split within the party came to the fore when the Virtue Party was closed down in 2001 by the Constitutional Court for the reason that the party was a continuation of the Welfare Party and a threat to the secular principles of the Republic. The closure of the Virtue Party divided the movement into two;

while the Erbakan loyalists established the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*), a new group (reformist wing), established the Justice and Development Party in August 2001. "Tayyip Erdogan took the helm of the reformist party, hoping to benefit from his reputation as the honest mayor of Istanbul on the national stage." (Mechan, 2004, p. 349). Through recruiting the old politicians from the Virtue Party and centre-right parties such as the True Path Party (1983-2007), (*DYP*), the Motherland Party (1983-2009), (*ANAP*) and the Nationalist Action Party (*MHP*), the AKP aimed to constitute a new moderate party image that is close to the centre-right party tradition.

The AK Party's agenda was populist in style, with relatively few concrete policy recommendations initially. Erdogan described himself as a 'man of the middle path' and indicated that the AKP would work to serve as a bridge between traditional and modernizing Turkey. The party was to represent 'citizen Osman', the average Turk who was struggling to make it in the modern world. The party made it clear early on that it would support a market economy and push for Turkey's admission into the European Union. It pledged to respect religious beliefs and support moral values, but within the context of a secular state (and in between references to Atatürk). (Mechan, 2004, p. 351).

Mechan claims that the AKP followed a successful policy in differentiating itself from the former Islamist parties and was oriented towards a more secular minded-centre right party tradition. The 2002 national elections proved the AKP's strategy right, with the party gaining 34 % of the national vote while the other successor of the Virtue Party, the Felicity Party, got only 2.5 %. The 2002 elections established the party's leadership in Turkish politics which it has maintained and consolidated ever since. Mechan implies that the dramatic rise of the AKP mainly arose from the long standing experiences of political Islamist movements in Turkey. In short, for Mechan, transformation of the radical political Islamist movements in Turkey to a moderate looking AKP can be explained by the strategic responses taken by Islamist party leaders to overcome the constraints imposed on the movement by the secular institutions of the Republic. While Mechan suggests that the secular establishments of modern Turkey forced political Islamist movements to undergo a

transformation process, Ihsan Dagı (2008) emphasizes certain developments occurring in the 1990s that succeeded in transforming political Islam, giving rise to the AKP in Turkish politics as a centre- right and liberal democratic party. Dagı states that when the secular military brought down the Welfare Party led coalition government on 28 February in 1997<sup>vii</sup> and the Constitutional Court banned the Welfare Party from politics, Islamist movements in Turkey entered into a process of transformation. As Dagı puts it: “in the wake of the February 28 process, Islamists found themselves in the defensive camp against the power of the secular establishment. Fantasies about Islamizing society and the state came to an end: some Islamists declared that the idea of an Islamic state had failed.” (Dagı, 2008, p. 27). For Dagı, following the 27 February Process, most of the Islamic groups realized that Islam as a political project could not sustain the established social and economic networks among themselves and they gradually began to distance themselves from political Islam. “Many in Islamic circles opted for a conservative-centrist approach that they expected to help them preserve Islamic social and economic networks. The way was opened for the transformation of political Islam and the emergence of the AKP.” (Dagı, 2008, p. 27). According to Dagı, the 28 February Process led the AKP leaders to split with older Islamic circles and the National View Movement which the AKP’s predecessor always adhered to. The defeat of Political Islam pushed the AKP leaders to follow a conservative democratic approach in Turkish politics in which Islam became of secondary importance:

Through its claim to stand for "democratic conservatives", the AKP declared the end of ideologies, including Islamism, in the age of globalization... The new leadership referred to the Democrat Party of the 1950s, the Justice Party of the 1960s, and the Motherland Party of the 1980s, mass parties of the centre-right, as the predecessors of the AKP.’ (Dagı, 2008, p. 27).

Moreover, Dagı claims that this transformation of political Islam and the new face of the AKP can be found within the party’s different political stance towards a number of issues unlike its predecessors. Dagı suggests

that when the AKP came to power in the 2001 national elections, at the international level the party engaged with global markets by adapting liberal economics and, unlike the National View movement that had defined the European Union as a Christian Club, the party undertook new political initiatives for admission to the European Union. In addition, at the national level the party engaged with the headscarf issue under the theme of human rights and saw it as a democratic issue rather than Muslim duty. The party also worked in conjunction with the UN to solve the Cyprus issue and placed the Kurdish Question on the government agenda in contrast to the *Kemalist* period when it was systemically ignored. Finally, by emphasizing Ergodan's famous motto: 'service to people is service to God', Dağı claims that the AKP, by acting pragmatically, constituted a new policy line within which public service and satisfying society's needs comes before Islamist ideology. For Dağı, these are only a few examples, which are enough to demonstrate that the AKP is a liberal democrat party rather than purely Islamic. In brief, Dağı suggests that the 28 February process brought a transformation of political Islam in Turkey and the AKP emerged from this process with its new globalist, market oriented, and pro-Western face that made it different from its predecessors.

Finally, the AKP's performance in power and its electoral base also prove that the party can be categorized as a centre-right party committed to democracy rather than political Islam. While Mehan and Dağı put much more emphasis on recent historical developments in interpreting the transformation of political Islam and the rise of the AKP, Şerif Mardin (2005) suggests that the roots of the transformation of Islamist movements and rise of the AKP should be traced back to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century which marks the beginnings of Western positivism's encroachment upon the Ottoman Empire. For Mardin, the initial expansion of positivism into the Ottoman Empire began when the Empire created a new bureau of foreign affairs (*Amedi Odası*) to manage diplomatic relations between European cities and the empire. It was when the members of this new bureau, the Ottoman envoys, began to write reports about their observation of Western

(European) societies that positivism began to penetrate into the Ottoman Empire.

The reports of the envoys had a “positivistic” flavour, which recreated another shared tacit element, that of bureaucrats’ discourse. No wonder, then that the foundation nineteenth century reform movement known as the Tanzimat was modelled on the theories of the Austro-German Cameralists, those reformers of the state structures whose view adumbrated the later positivists and Saint-Simonians. (Mardin, 2005, p. 150).

Following *Tanzimat* Reforms, the strong influence of positivism began to shape the policies of the Young Turks (*Jön Türkler*), which gradually resulted in the establishment of the Republic of modern Turkey in 1923 along secular lines. Mardin remarks that the new republic was formed around the ideology of positivistic social engineering and designed on the basis of secularist modernity with the subordination of religion to the state. The establishment of a secular Republic and its perception of modernity led to the deepening alienation between Muslim masses and the secularist Republican elite. When the new secularist state ruptured all its ties with Islam with the establishment of secular Republic in 1923, a new process emerged that gradually led to the spread of an Islamic voice in a new operational code and paved the way for the emergence of revivalist Islamist movements in modern Turkey. According to Mardin, Islamic revivalist movements that emerged during the earlier periods of the Republic were mainly influenced by *Nakşibendism*: an order that emerged in India in the seventeenth century ‘as a metaphysical theory and a critical guideline’ to hearten Islam as an organizational tool in order to prevent its exposure to the ethos of Hinduism. Mardin indicates that when the new Secularist regime was established in 1923, its authority was challenged by three distinct but interrelated factors, “the desire of provincial notables (or *esraf*) and tribal leaders overlapping with crypto-religious brotherhoods of all descriptions to take part in governing, the anti secularism of the religiously motivated Nakşibandis of Anatolia, and the ongoing voice of



reformist Islam” (Mardin, 2005, p. 154). However, the new Republican regime with its secularist motto managed to transform Islamic revivalist movements by compelling them to act in line with the secularist doctrines of the new regime.

Between 1930 and 1980, the need to work in the everyday and to synchronize one’s approach with the framework of the administrative and economic institution of the Republic (all of which had a tacit background of positivist rationality), introduced the Nakşibendi and other Islamic conservatives still working through the networks to a new world. (Mardin, 2005, p. 154).

The gradual integration and adjustment of Islamic movements in general and Nakşibandis in particular, into the positivist rationality of the new Republic introduced them into modernity, which gradually laid the foundations of their own perception of modernity along conservative lines. For Mardin, a further transformation of Islamists and Nakşibandis was carried out after 1980 by a leading Nakşibandi leader, Mehmed Zahid Kotku. “Kotku had created a new version of the “operational code” of the Nakşibandi synchronized with the political code promoted by the Republic, that of constitutional legitimacy.” (Mardin, 2005, p. 158). The focal point in Kotku’s strategy was his moderate approach to the secular Turkish state rather than seeing it as an absolute enemy. In order to raise the voice of Islamic folk in modern Turkish society and constitute legitimacy for Islam, Kotku encouraged the disciples of the Naksibendi order to invest in the media to propagate Islam and promoted the education of his disciples on the basis of scientific thought in the secular institutions of the Republic. These strategies of Kotku added a new twist to the Islamic movement’s engagement with the secular Republic and paved the way for the emergence of a new Islamic voice in Turkey that is compatible with the modern positivist rationality of the secular Republic. Before Kotku died in 1980, his strategies had already begun to flourish. When Turgut Özal, known for his affinity with Nakşibandis, came to power with the victory of his liberal Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP) in 1983, he

portrayed himself as a religious man equipped with modern and scientific thought, and acting as a politician “in a public sphere that was the very creation of the Republic.” (Mardin, 2005 p. 158). Mardin suggests that the operational codes of the Nakşibendis was added a further dimension in 1983 when Esat Cosan, the new leader of the Nakşibendi order developed another new strategy to promote Islam as a civic culture among Turkish Muslims. Cosan began to publish an *ad hoc* group of journals. “All of these publications were targeting the issues that were, indeed, aspects of the current discussions in Turkey with politics, and had ties that were strikingly modern.” (Mardin, 2005 p. 159). For Mardin, the final specific development that gave shape to the Turkish Islamic exceptionalism and made a significant contribution to the rise of the AKP is the alliance between Nakşibandis and the Mother Land Party (*ANAP*) through an organization called the Unity Foundation, (*Birlik Vakfı*).

This extra political organization created by members of the Mother Land Party harnessing shared cultural ideologies for the promotion of conservative policies was to be called the “Unity Foundation”(Birlik Vakfı), it was behind the scenes of R.T. Erdogan and replicated the well-known institution of the political action group. This was still another level of politicization of the Islamist discourse and its inclusion into the games played in “civil society”. (Mardin, 2005, p. 159, 160).

This politicization of Islam and Islamic culture along conservative lines yielded to a new form of exceptionalism; that was the transformation of Nakşibandis from a reactionary movement to a behaviour- shaping organizational movement. “This new structuration and the constraints that were part of it, as well as the history of Nakşibendi change over two centuries, provide one key to the rise of the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*.” (Mardin, 2005, p. 160). According to Mardin, the rise of the AKP should be analyzed in parallel with the gradual transformations of Naksibendis and their political strategies to engage with secular institutions and the ethos of the Republic of Turkey. Mardin suggests that the political strategies of Nakşibendis can also be observed in the political persona of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. For Mardin, when Recep Tayyip Erdoğan entered into politics as

the head of the Youth Branch of the National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*) and a Nakşibendi, he was delivering fiery speeches which promoted a kind of socio-political Islamic activism. “One of his speeches of 1980, for instance, seems an anticipation of his later persona: “our mission is not one of simple-minded fight or world conquest; it is to spread and promote the rule of the religion of *Allah*. The first condition of this mission is peace and concord.” (Mardin, 2005 p. 159). In short, the AKP’s victory is not a simple and recent phenomenon; its deep roots should be sought in the eighteenth century Ottoman Period when Western positivism had begun to penetrate into the Ottoman Empire, gradually bringing about the *Tanzimat* Reforms resulting in the establishment of the secular Republic. The posture of Islamic movements towards and against the secular Republic and their strategies (*operational codes*) to engage with Republican modernity plunged them into a constant transformation process. While they initially did not accept the secular state and its values, their unavoidable engagement with the secular institutions of the Republic introduced them to technology, secular education, and, finally, rational market economics. They developed political strategies to raise Islamic culture and consciousness among the masses and established a political control over them. This constant restructuring of Islam beginning from the late Ottoman Period eventually gave birth to a synthesis of Islam with modernity in Turkey; which in turn was transformed into a politically conservative and economically liberal constitution which characterized the AKP.

### **1-2 Liberal Assertions: Centre Periphery Dichotomy and the Rise of the AKP.**

Ever since the AKP’s coming to power in 2002, Turkish academia and intelligentsia was dominated by the paradigm of center-periphery that was developed by Serif Mardin. The paradigm is mostly used by liberal academes and the intelligentsia especially in explaining the rise of the AKP. The intention of this section is to reveal certain tenets of Mardin’s

center-periphery paradigm and illustrate the ways in which this paradigm constitutes the basis of liberal assumptions in interpreting the rise of the AKP. Mardin's center-periphery paradigm is based on the historical analysis of the development of civil society-state relationships in modern Turkey. For Mardin, every society has a center and periphery and "multiple confrontations between center and periphery take place in the process of centralization and the results of these confrontations play a significant role in the formation of different political structures and cultures." (Mardin, 1973, p. 169). Mardin argues that "civil-society is a western phenomenon rooted in the autonomy of cities and trade practices in feudal Europe and contractual tradition institutionalized in the legal work of the Ständestaat system". (Mardin in Güngen & Erten, 2005, p. 4-5). Within this perspective, while in the West the formation of the modern state was based on a series of confrontations leading to compromises with what may be called the forces of "periphery, the feudal nobility, the cities, the burghers and later, industrial labour" (Mardin, 1973, p. 170) in the formation of the Ottoman Turkish state the situation was the reverse. According to Mardin, due to the absence of a Western type of capitalist development within the Ottoman Empire, there were no multiple confrontations in the Empire before the nineteenth century and the autonomy of the periphery was only *de facto* in the face of a relatively well organized center. Mardin claims that the gap between center (Ottoman state) and the periphery (civil society) was too wide and the binding elements between two locales were religious institutions, the judicial system (*ulema*) and the tradition of public work. For Mardin, since Ottoman-Turkish social formation was not derived from the principles of the separation of political and economic spheres, the rupture between center and periphery did not change after the establishment of the modern Turkish Republic. Mardin suggests that the Kemalist ruling cadre of the new Republic comprising bureaucratic and military elites took over the *strong state tradition*<sup>viii</sup> from the Ottoman Empire and aimed to impose the Kemalist modernization project on society from above within a hierarchal logic. Moreover, for Mardin although the Kemalist modernization

project aimed to instil a Western type of modernization, secularism and Kemalist nationalism, the ethos of Kemalist modernization could not penetrate into the rural population of the new Republic, who had expressed themselves with Islamic (*Sunni*) values, religious brotherhoods, and tariqahs since the Ottoman Empire. In other words, the dichotomy and the alienation between center and periphery still continued within the new Republic. Today, Mardin's center-periphery paradigm is mostly referenced by rightist and liberal circles in Turkey in forming their explanations of the absence of a Western type of civil society formation in Turkey. Within this perspective, the AKP's coming to power in 2002 is also interpreted as the victory of the periphery over the center and the removal of barriers to develop the civil society and democratization of the country. After the AKP came to power in 2002, the center-periphery paradigm inspired different analyses concerning the rise of the AKP in Turkish politics. Although these analyses approach the rise of the AKP from different points of views, the common idea in these analyses is that the AKP represents the periphery as the voice of marginalized masses. These arguments in turn construct an image of the AKP in Turkish politics, in which the party normalizes state-society relationships, democratizes the country and contributes to the development of civil society. An initial example of this trend can be found in Ergun Ozbudun and William Hale's (2010) attempts to evaluate the rise of the AKP through the lenses of liberalism, Islamism and democracy. By attempting to evaluate the rise of the AKP in Turkish politics with reference to its predecessors, Hale and Ozbudun suggest that the AKP can substantially be seen as the representative of the periphery whose interests for the first time began to be represented in the Democrat Party coming to power in the 1950s.

The DP's leadership was mainly composed of free professionals, like lawyers, doctors and businessmen, together with some landowners (a group that included Menderes himself) who effectively constituted counter-elite to the state-dominated coalition, which had ruled Turkey since 1923 and to a large extent before that. In this, the DP created the main building blocks of what can be called the liberal centre-right tradition in Turkish politics - that is, attachment to private enterprise

(aided, on occasion, by the state), majoritarian democracy (with a tinge of cultural conservatism), clientelist populism and a Western-oriented foreign policy. Unlike conservative parties in Western Europe, parties in this tradition have had an anti-establishment bias, in that they have opposed the statist elite, which ruled Turkey until 1950, combining this with an important electoral base in the poorer sections of Turkish society, in town and village, as well as the non-state bourgeoisie. These elements remain major parts of the AKP's political persona. (Özbudun & Hale, 2010, p. 18).

Ozbudun and Hale claim that the AKP as a political entity reflects the characteristics of the centre-right party tradition that originated in Turkey with the Democrat Party. Within this perspective, the AKP is seen as the representative of the masses who mainly adopt conservative social values, which have been marginalized by the centre for a long time. In particular, the rise of the AKP is seen as a process of the approach of the periphery to the centre that had gathered its momentum in 1950s with the rise of the Democrat Party. Nevertheless, the rise of the AKP, for Hale and Ozbudun symbolizes the penetration of the centre by the periphery for the first time in Turkish politics. Another leading figure who explains the rise of the AKP within this framework is Ahmet Insel. Insel (2003) approaches the rise of the AKP from a different perspective through suggesting that it symbolizes emancipation from the authoritarian regime that was established after the 12 September 1980 military coup. Insel suggests that, the predicaments of the 12 September regime necessarily gave rise to the emergence of the AKP. According to Insel when the 1982 constitution was prepared under the shadow of military intervention, it took the state to the centre and pushed society into the periphery. Insel argues that the 12 September regime solidified its authoritarian rule initially by determining the sphere of activities for political parties irrespective of left or right and legitimized itself through undemocratic laws, which mainly aimed to secure the privileged position of the Kemalist military and bureaucratic elite within the state administration. For Insel, the architects of the new regime obdurate all the ways in which social and political liberty can be reached. However, it could not prevent all restricted political and social energy from flowing into the economic sphere. Insel suggests that the only attempt to break the authoritarian regime of the

12 September was initiated by Ozal after he came to power with his Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*) in 1983. Although Ozal launched a programme of economic liberalism when he came to power in 1983, this liberalism did not extend into the political and social spheres due to the authoritarian regime of the 12 September and the escalation of military confrontations with the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), both of which forced the regime to suppress the emergence of identity based politics. Therefore Ozal's liberalism remained limited to the economic sphere. However, the dynamism of the economic sphere gradually began to give shape to the political and social spheres as well.

The liberalism of enterprise remained weak in terms of ramifications in the political sphere and gave precedence to opportunism and a "fixer" mentality in pursuit of easy profits. This urge was not balanced by social institutions, and the autonomous activity in the political sphere was reduced to the distribution of economic spoils, which promoted a kind of primitive accumulation of capital; that is the attempt to appropriate already produced value and to use political power to procure a larger share in distribution, rather than accumulating value by means of production. (Insel, 2003, p. 296).

The transformation of the economy in this way resulted in diminishing wage earners' share in national income and increased socio-economic inequalities among the people. For Insel, the economic fluctuations in general and the rise of new conservative enterprise groups in Anatolia began to shape further political developments. The legal political parties that keep their political activities in a limited sphere that was provided to them by the 12 September regime in turn began to determine their political strategies according to the fluctuations and increasing inequalities in the new economy. For Insel, the new liberal economy also stiffened the rivalry between the new rising enterprise groups in the provinces of Anatolia and the traditional republican (*Kemalist*) bourgeoisie (TUSIAD). Insel remarks that this new emergent class separated itself from the traditional republican Kemalist bourgeoisie. It was "culturally conservative, politically nationalist and moderately authoritarian, economically liberal, or rather, on the side of free enterprise". (Insel, 2003, p. 298). The political interests of this new

middle class began to be represented by the Motherland Party, (*Anavatan Partisi*) and the True Path Party, both of which represent centre-right traditions in Turkish politics. Although both of these parties were successful in representing the political interests of this new middle class to a certain extent, in the 1990s they gradually began to lose their capacities for this representation and this new class was not politically represented until the rise of the AKP.

The vacuum that the traditional rightist parties were unable to fill became one of the principal causes of instability dominating the parliament from 1995 up to the November 3 elections in 2002... Within this perspective, the results of the November 3 elections show that, for now, the AKP is the clear winner in the struggle to become the political representative of the new middle class. (Insel, 2003, p. 298).

For Insel, the AKP's takeover of the representation of this new middle class initiated a struggle between radical secularists and Islamists. The representation of the new conservative middle class of entrepreneurs by the AKP led republican elites and the secular bourgeoisie to lose their privileged position in Turkish politics. For Insel, this clash between two opposite poles has multiple dimensions in Turkish politics;

It is not only a clash between pro-modernists and traditionalists, but also a clash between the high (*havas*) and the low (*avam*)<sup>ix</sup> dating from the final period of the Ottoman Empire. The AKP's coming to power with a parliamentary majority, enabling a single-party government, constitutes an important threshold in this nearly century old conflict. (Insel, 2003, p. 299).

For Insel, the most important reason that brought huge success to the AKP in the 2002 national elections is the authentic and humble posture of the AKP cadre in proportion to previous parties and its rivals. This authenticity can be seen within the political persona of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Insel suggests that Erdogan's disobedience to the traditional republican modernization project and his authentic image, which makes him different from the traditional republican politicians, portrayed him as a "child of the people, who has risen from the bottom" among the public. This humble and authentic posture of the AKP not only created a sense of belonging



between the AKP and the new conservative middle class entrepreneurs, but also appealed to a large proportion of the working class who felt a great affinity with the cultural and traditional values that the AKP presented. “Viewed in this way, the AKP’s unstoppable march to power” could be understood as a more humble and authentic continuation of the process that started with Ozal.” (Insel, 2003, p. 300). Insel accepts that the AKP’s political conservatism and economic liberalism would normally make it a rightist party. However, “the distortions of political representation in traditional republican order and the established hegemony of statist secular forces over the Turkish state gave the AKP an opportunity to act as a democratic movement and to constitute a social force of attraction without abandoning its conservative posture and values.” (Insel, 2003, p.301). Through analyzing the party politics of the AKP, Insel claims that the AKP is a democratic party that “places the individual at the centre of all policies’ and embraces Turkish society with all its colours” (Insel, 2003, p. 304). Contrary to the assertion that the AKP is a reactionary party holding an Islamic agenda, Insel suggests that the AKP “characterizes secularism as an indispensable condition of democracy and guarantees ‘freedom of religion and conscience’ in a very democratic manner.” (Insel, 2003, p. 304). Finally, the AKP’s conservatism arose from its adaptation of the historical and cultural wealth of the Turkish nation for a solid future of the country. In the words of Insel:

The AKP compares society as a living organism that survives by replenishing itself in the cultural environment constituted by such entrenched institutions as the family, education, property, religion, and morality. It describes the development of this organism by means of an anti- constructivist argument in the style of Hayek, thus clearly marking its distance from the Kemalist project of modernization. The local culture and institutions that are produced and unified within their own natural process without external intervention do not conflict with universal values. (Insel, 2002, p. 304).

In sum, Insel interprets the rise of the AKP as an exit from the authoritarian regime of September 12 and as a positive step taken to normalize

democracy and state-society relationships in Turkey. The AKP as an entity succeeded in representing the political and economic interests of the new conservative middle class, and a large proportion of Turkish society (*periphery*). Through adopting the return into authentic culture and traditional values, the party discredited Turkey's century-old Westernization adventure imposed on society from above by Kemalist Westernizing military and bureaucratic elite (*center*).

### **1.3. The Rise of the AKP within the globalization process.**

This perspective suggests that Turkey has undergone a new transformation process following the 1980 military coup under the leadership of Turgut Özal. The transformation was realized in different realms such as political, social, and cultural, but the main drive behind this transformation was shift from import-oriented and protectionist policies to the export and market-oriented politics as a response the exigencies of emerging area of globalization. The process was initiated with the implementation of neo-liberal economic policies under the directives of the IMF. While the implementation of global neoliberal policies expedited the articulation of Turkey's economy to the world capitalist system it created a new society within which the winners and losers of the new economy became highly visible. All of these developments in turn constituted a new Turkish society, "a society of the haves, the have nots, and the have lots' similar to Thatcher's Britain." (White, 2002, p. 42). An outstanding group among the winners of the new economy was the small and medium sized enterprises that emerged in the new districts of Anatolia. Şevket Pamuk (2008) notes that this new emerging enterprising class (MUSIAD) was inherently conservative, comprising "small or medium sized family firms with limited capital. From the early stages, they have taken advantage of the low wages to produce for the export markets." (Pamuk, 2008, p. 4). For Pamuk, this new capital group was also different from the Istanbul based, state-supported and secularly oriented (TUSIAD) capital group in terms of its reliance on its own capital. During the 1990s, the interests of this new

capital group were represented in the Welfare Party. In her attempt to explain the success of the Welfare Party in the 1990s, Jenny White (2002) notes that the financial support of this newly emerging bourgeoisie for the Welfare Party allowed the party to mobilize the masses into politics through developing Islamic solidarity campaigns among the people who live at the margins of cities in poor conditions and represent the losers within the new economy and globalization process. For White, the Welfare Party acted as a political party where losers and winners of the new economy paradoxically came together in the 1990s. Moreover, the globalization perspective suggests that Turkey's experience of globalization included a further dimension towards the end of the 1990s when the EU attributed Turkey candidate status. These developments entailed a new state of structural adaptation to the global economy and also accelerated the emergence of identity based politics in the form of Kurdish nationalism and political Islam. In other words, a more complex society appeared that needed to be governed within the peculiarities of globalization. The globalization perspective suggests that the AKP emerged within this context as a political party whose Islamic posture disappeared throughout Turkey's globalization process. Within this framework, the rise of the AKP can be related to the several different but interrelated external and internal dynamics that emerged in the early 2000s. The first factor that has contributed to the rise of the AKP is relevant to the frictions that emerged within the Welfare Party as a predecessor of the AKP. The globalization perspective suggests that the AKP's emergence out of radical Islamist party traditions with a moderate face can be found in the changing political posture of the conservative bourgeoisie MÜSIAD (The Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association of Turkey) after the closure of the Welfare Party. As Şevket Pamuk remarks:

In its early years, MÜSIAD supported the Islamist parties led by Necmettin Erbakan, but the members were increasingly alienated by the inward-oriented, anti-Europe rhetoric of these parties. Ever since a group of politicians led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül broke off from Erbakan and moved to establish a new political party in

2001, the new industrialists and MÜSIAD offered critical support to the AKP for its more moderate, outward looking, pro-Europe, pro-globalization positions. I do not want to suggest that MÜSIAD support was the only reason for the moderation of the AKP but it was an important reason, nonetheless. (Pamuk, 2008, p. 271).

In other words, from a globalization perspective, the AKP's emergence as a moderate, pro- globalization and pro-EU party not only stems from the constraints which were imposed on political Islamist movements by the secular establishments of the Turkish Republic. The MUSIAD's victim hood of Erbakan's inward oriented policies and his anti-EU rhetoric both resulted in MUSID members' offer to provide critical support to the AKP and allowed their interests to be represented in the AKP. Another important element that has contributed to the rise of the AKP from a globalist stance is the Turkish experience of the global financial crises in 2000-2001 that discredited conventional political parties in the Turkish political arena and opened a political space for the AKP. As Ziya Öniş (2007) puts it

The major crises of financial globalization that Turkey experienced in 2000-2001, which resulted in a massive collapse of output (with negative growth of -7.4 percent in 2001) and was accompanied by even more rigorous IMF conditions in terms of fiscal disciplines and regulatory reforms, helped to discredit the established parties on both the Left and Right of the political spectrum, creating political space for the AKP to capitalize upon. (Öniş, 2007, p. 14).

The globalist stance presumes that the exigencies of emerging globalization in the 1980s resulted in a response by the Özal government in the form of adaptation to the market- oriented new economic policies. The new economy also created a new conservative bourgeoisie (MUSIAD) whose interests were initially represented in the AKP's predecessor; the Welfare Party. The financial assistance of this new bourgeoisie to the Welfare Party during the 1990s allowed the party to arrange Islamic solidarity campaigns among the losers of the new economy and hence the party succeeded to draw masses into politics and began to appeal to a large proportion of Turkish society, who was mainly losers in the new economy. The Welfare Party's closure in late the 1990s by secular

institutions of the Republic, and MUSIAD members' growing discontent with the anti-globalization and anti European rhetoric of the Welfare Party led them to support a more moderate entity that is compatible with both the secular structure of the Republic and globalization. Finally, when the Turkish experience of the financial crisis in 2001 made the conventional rightist and leftist parties unpopular, a political space was opened for the AKP to emerge as a pro- globalization party in the 2002 national elections, leading them to achieve a major electoral success. The AKP's coming to power as a ruling party in 2002 and its retention of power for almost one decade, during which it increased its electoral support, brought some scholarly analyses as to how the AKP acts as a globalist party in Turkish politics and achieves significant electoral success. In evaluating the party's political success within the framework of globalization, Ziya Öniş (2009) proposes that the AKP's success in Turkish politics lies in its ability to project itself as both as a pro- globalization and conservative party. For Öniş, the AKP's status as a pro- globalization party can be found in its engagement with global markets, desire for EU membership, and some reformist steps taken by the party to democratize the country. The conservative face of the party on the other hand lies in its emphasis on traditional and moral values of Turkish society. Öniş claims that when the AKP came to power after the 2002 national elections, the Turkish economy had already emerged from a deep financial crisis and the AKP, as soon as it came to power implemented economic reforms promoted by the IMF. The AKP's economic policies opened the country to global liquidity that eventually resulted in unusual economic growth and low inflation. "The combination of high growth and low inflation helped to enlarge the coalition of winners and losers from the neo-liberal globalization process, helping to boost the party's electoral fortunes." (Oniş, 2009, p. 23). The process of high growth also prevented the emergence of 'possible inter-class and intra-class distributional conflicts' that would possibly appear in a more gradual and slow growth atmosphere. For Oniş, although the neo-liberal policies of the AKP did not increase the wealth of a great proportion of

society and “benefits of the growth rates were not evenly distributed, poor and less privileged segments of the society benefited from the favourable mix of high growth and single digit inflation.” (Öniş, 2009, p. 23). Oniş suggests that the AKP was able to cover the negative outcomes of its neo-liberal, global policies through approaching neo-liberalism with a human face. As Oniş puts it:

The party was able to capitalize on its systematic efforts to help the poor with improved local government services and a variety of schemes involving the targeting of the poor through both formal and informal channels. Admittedly, its approach to redistribution was in line with the spirit of neo-liberalism in the sense that charity-based redistribution was emphasized more than state based forms of redistribution. Building on the traditions of political parties with an Islamist heritage in Turkey (and possibly elsewhere in the Middle East), the party was able to generate and maintain a large electoral-coalition that is able to keep together both the winners and losers of the neo-liberal globalization process. (Oniş, 2008, p. 24).

For Oniş, these features of the AKP made it a political party presenting itself as a progressive party that is sensitive to touch upon society’s moral standards and core values “Through this uneasy synthesis of globalism and conservatism, the party was able to appeal to diverse elements in Turkish society and build a broad base of electoral support which effectively transcended traditional boundaries based on class or identity.” (Oniş, 2009, p. 24). According to Oniş, another important element that stabilized the AKP’s success in Turkish national elections and politics is the absence of effective opposition parties both on the Left and Right. Oniş suggests the politics of opposition to the AKP in Turkey was mainly based on ‘*securitization of politics*, in other words the *politics of fear*’. In particular, the AKP’s engagement with global politics pushed opposition parties to follow inward oriented politics that both hindered the emergence of effective opposition to the AKP and gave a progressive image to the AKP to the masses. Finally, Oniş suggests that the AKP’s permanent success in Turkish politics can be found in its organizational structure and ability to respond swiftly to changes. Comparing the AKP to opposition parties; CHP (Republican People’s Party) and MHP (Nationalist Action Party), Oniş

claims that the “AKP was characterized by its adaptability and pragmatism whereas the main opposition parties were characterized by their in-built *resilience* and *strong ideological bias*.” (Oniş, 2009, p. 25). In brief, Oniş suggests that in order to understand the AKP’s rise to power and its stable place in Turkish politics, it is essential to look at the synthesis of globalization and conservatism that pushed the party’s rivals into nationalist and defensive camps, which in turn not only solidified the place and electoral base of the party in Turkish politics but also undermined the emergence of an effective opposition.

While Oniş suggests that the political success of the AKP should be analyzed as relevant to its combination of global neoliberal policies with social conservatism, Fuat Keyman (2010) remarks that the continuous success of the AKP is concerned with the party’s political posture and the implementation of certain policies that would provide good governance and transformation of complex Turkish society in conformity with globalization, Europeanization, democratization and finally with the modernization project that Turkey has been going through since 1923. Keyman remarks that the globalization process compelled Turkey to enter into a transformation process within which ‘discourses of the minimal/effective state, free market rationality and identity difference have gained power and popularity and are increasingly becoming the important of politics.’ (Keyman, 2010 p. 318). For Keyman, after the AKP came to power, it exhibited a good performance on ruling Turkish society within the complexities of globalization. Through adopting reform based and market oriented policies the AKP showed that it has a desire and capacity to transform Turkey within the age of globalization.

The AKP’s successful combination of market-oriented and reform-based politics has gone hand in hand with Turkey’s European integration process, Turkey’s proactive foreign policy, democratic opening initiatives in the areas of the Kurdish question, the Alevi question, the non-Muslim minority question, as well as with Turkey’s new economic roles as an emergent and an energy hub, and also with the increasing integration of Anatolia into the global economy, giving rise to the emergence of a new middle class and new elites and their

growing presence in the Turkish economy and modernity (Keyman, 2010, p. 316).

However, the focal point in the AKP's success is not only the adaptation of these reform based policies but also the AKP's synthesis of reform based policies with the local and traditional values of Turkish society, which in turn widens the party's societal support and provides a global legitimacy for the party. This synthesis is revealed in the AKP's neo-liberal policies. Keyman suggests that the AKP as a political party that strongly believes in the ethos of liberal market values implemented neo-liberal policies after it came to power in 2002. While the implementation of neo-liberal policies by the AKP accelerated the integration of Turkey into the world economy, and provided a global legitimacy for the party, it also increased poverty and unemployment that resulted in an increasing lack of access to basic needs. At this juncture, Keyman suggests that the AKP paradoxically seems too estranged from free market fundamentalism and emerges as a political actor that is sensitive about the economic and social problems of Turkish society.

The party deals with these problems and through philanthropy, presents itself as a caring political actor, and by doing so, claims that it initiates what is called a service based politics as a way of creating distributional justice in society. The party provides free coal, free food, and free primary school textbooks for the poor and disadvantaged segment of society, and it does so in a regular fashion while promoting services to these groups to enhance the feeling of aid and caring in society. (Keyman, 2010, p. 316).

Keyman implies that the philanthropic policies of the AKP target the distribution of the wealth and promotion of welfare policies among a large proportion of Turkish society who are mainly economic losers in the globalization process. The AKP's role as a caring political actor within this process carries a great importance in understanding the party's deep links with large societal groups and is one of the key stones that constitute the electoral hegemony of the party.



The final important element that complements the electoral hegemony of the AKP in Turkey and has arisen from global interests in Turkey is the proactive foreign policy of the AKP. Keyman claims that the AKP's foreign policy was built upon the premise that "as the world has become more globalized, more interdependent, and more risky," it requires more active and strategically more deep and constructive foreign policy. (Keyman, 2010, p. 321). Therefore, the AKP became the architect of a new Turkish foreign policy that employs different elements such as geopolitics, economy; identity and soft power. Keyman notes that Turkey actively played a role in different areas of global politics including "the occupation of Iraq, the Iran Problem and the future of the Middle East Region, the Russian question and future of Eurasia and the crisis of multiculturalism and the question of Islam in Europe." (Keyman, 2010, p. 322). In addition to these, the foreign policy orientation of the AKP allowed the party to combine its conservative and Muslim identity with Turkey's secular democratic structure.

Finally, during the AKP governments, Turkey, by means of its dynamic economy and iterative growth rates, young population and recently by beginning to act as an energy hub between the Middle East, the post-Soviet Republics and Europe, began to transform into one of the most important market economies in its region. In sum, Keyman suggests that the rise and continuous success of the AKP in Turkish politics can be understood through looking at the party's reform based policies, which marked the transformation of Turkish society within the peculiarities of present global conditions. The party's implementation of neo-liberal policies and its concomitant promotion of philanthropic and service based policies are of utmost importance in understanding how the AKP did establish deep societal links with a large majority of Turkish society, including in a large measure the economic losers of globalization and neo-liberalism. Finally, the proactive foreign policy of the AKP provided the party with a global legitimacy and raised global interest in Turkey. The AKP's attempts to contribute to global democratic governance through different initiatives, and

its masterly usage of its Middle Eastern Islamic and European Secular identity simultaneously paved the way for Turkey's active participation in many international issues. The proactive foreign policy of the AKP also revealed that the party is eager and capable of dealing with the complexities of global challenges facing Turkey today while, in contrast, opposition parties in Turkey preferred to follow an inward oriented policy that fails to appreciate the global dimension of contemporary politics.

#### **1.4 Concluding Remarks**

Although the surveyed literature has provided an important insight into the rise and rule of the AKP in Turkish politics and illustrated the political position of the AKP in Turkey from different perspectives, the same literature exhibits certain deficiencies. Therefore, this part aims to reveal these deficiencies before analyzing the rise of the AKP in an alternate and from a Gramscian framework. In so doing, the initial focus will be the first perspective that understands the rise of the AKP within the framework of the transformation of political Islam in Turkey. This perspective mainly presumes that political Islamist movements have constantly undergone a transformation process in Turkey due to the secular character of the Turkish Republic. While Ihsan Dağı and Queen Mehan understand the rise of the AKP from this perspective, they simply presume that the AKP came into being as a result of this transformation process as a democratic and liberal party. Both Dağı and Mehan limit the transformation process of political Islamist movements to a kind of learning process within which political Islamist movements always had to renew themselves and the AKP, as the ultimate outcome of this process, emerged as a political party that interiorized the secular structure of the Turkish Republic. However, this point of view is too narrow in terms of signifying the dimension of the reconciliation between the AKP and secular establishments of Turkey. Unlike Dağı and Mehan, Cihan Tugal ( 2009) suggests the AKP's development and emergence as a pro-EU and US party that supports neo-liberal policies set the scene for the absorption of Islamism into secular

neo-liberalism more or less successfully at all levels. In other words, Tuğal claims that the Islamist challenge to the secular Kemalist state and elite has been absorbed through the rise of the AKP. Based on this, interpretation of the rise of the AKP as an outcome of the conflict between political Islamist movements and secular Turkish state promote a kind of reductionism that misrepresents the rise of the AKP in Turkish politics. The same tendency can also be observed in Serif Mardin's argument while he is analyzing the rise of the AKP within the framework of the transformation of political Islamist movements beginning from the late Ottoman period. According to Mardin, the secular Republic's adaptation of Western positivism as an ideology resulted in the subordination of religion to the state in modern Turkey. As a reaction to this perception of religion, political Islamist movements were mainly organized around the *Nakşibandi* order. Moreover, Nakşibendi members' constant engagement with the institutions of the secular Republic forced them to change their operational codes and gradually brought their transformation along conservative lines. Mardin suggests that Nakşibendis' engagement with the institutions of the secular Republic introduced them into modernity, secular education and the rationality of free market economics and finally paved the way for the emergence of the AKP as a politically conservative and economically liberal party. To say in the words of Mardin, "Here, finally was the area of modern structuring force of organization and institution building, and world economy that had taken over (rather than "been taken over by ") the Naksibendi." (Mardin, 2005, p. 160). Although Mardin implies that the world economy took over the *Nakşibendis*, he does not give place to any argument regarding how this takeover was realized. Therefore there remains an ambiguity in understanding the transformation of political Islamist movements and the rise of the AKP as relevant to the world economy, which in turn prevents the understanding the of the political position of the AKP as relevant to neo-liberal restructuring. While the first perspective includes the aforementioned deficiencies in itself, the second perspective also contains some theoretical problems. These problems

mainly arise from Mardin's *center-periphery paradigm*, which became a very popular source of reference amongst liberal scholars in the interpretation of the rise of the AKP as in Ozbudun & Hale's (2010) attempts to explain the political success and social base of the AKP or Insel's arguments regarding what the AKP is representing in Turkish politics. The main fallacy in Mardin's center-periphery paradigm is that its attribution to Ottoman-Turkish social formation an exceptional character. Through adapting an orientalist framework, Mardin claims that the dynamics that gave shape to the state in the West were absent in Ottoman society. While in the West, the modern state came out of "a series of confrontations leading to the compromises with what may be called the forces of periphery: the feudal nobility, the cities, the burghers and later, industrial labour."(Mardin, 2002, p. 118), the Ottoman state before the nineteenth century did not witness the development of such confrontations and the forces of the periphery remained weak in the face of a strong center. Mardin claims that the strength of the center did not wane with the establishment of modern Turkey since the modernization process was not mainly based on the compromise between center and periphery as in the West. For Mardin, the bureaucratic elite (*Kemalist*) of the Turkish Republic re-constituted the strong center as it did not want to share its power with any forces and peripheral forces mainly preferred to define themselves with religious rituals and identities.

Within the light of these developments, Mardin implies that the Turkish Republic intrinsically consisted of a strong state and weak civil society. In addition to these, it is also assumed that the Kemalist bureaucratic elite as the representative of the center did not want to allow the development of an autonomous bourgeoisie or a new group of elites thus obstructed the ways in which market rationality along with civil society can emerge. Mardin implies that this posture of the center in modern Turkey deepened the cultural alienation between the center and the periphery. However, such a theoretical framework "conceptualizes Western history as continuous progress in terms of the development of civil society and reads

Turkish politics as a continuity whether in respect to state tradition or the centre-periphery confrontation.” (Erten & Güngen, 2005, p. 8). This reading of Turkish politics is based on a political structure that has not changed from the Ottoman Empire. In other words, this perspective does not see any epistemological break from the Ottoman past as relevant to the social and political structure of modern Turkey or as Galip Yalman (2002) notes, the state is perceived as an ontological entity that has not been subjected to any change or transformation. Such a framework in turn leads to a kind of reductionism in evaluating state-society relationships in Turkey. The initial example of this reductionism and misconception can be found within the arguments of Ergun Ozbudun and William Hale whose ideas regarding the position of the AKP have already been discussed in this review. In their attempt to explain the social base and rise of the AKP through referring to Mardin’s center-periphery dichotomy, Ozbudun and Hale (2009) claim that the electoral base of the AKP comprises of the masses who were excluded and marginalized by the secular establishments of Turkey. For Ozbudun and Hale, this segment of Turkish society (periphery) mainly comprises of the rural masses who are culturally conservative and alienated from the center (state) beginning from the Ottoman rule. Within this perspective, Ozbudun and Hale claim that the political interests of the periphery began to be represented by the Democrat Party in Turkish politics for the first time in the 1950s. Although Ozbudun and Hale emphasize that the AKP is not a successor to any political party, they position the AKP within the center-right party tradition whose foundations can be traced back to the Democrat party’s coming to power as the representative of the periphery in the 1950s, adding that the electoral base of the AKP is more or less similar to the Democrat Party’s electoral base in the 1950s. In other words, they see the AKP as the representative of the periphery.

The constitution of such a framework in interpreting the electoral base and the political position of the AKP in Turkish politics not only results in a form of reductionism, but also excludes other explanatory approaches to the rise

of the AKP. The reductionism mainly stems from the attitude that the forces of center and periphery are of a supra or trans-historical character. Needless to say, the forces that comprise both center and periphery are perceived as something that has not changed from the Ottoman Period. The cultural values that pertain to the center and periphery appear not to be subject to any historical change and are portrayed as remaining stable. In particular, the distinctive features of the periphery, such as being culturally conservative and alienated from the Kemalist secular state (center) and economically marginalized, remain unchanged in analyzing the electoral base of the AKP. However, following the Democrat Party's adaptation of the liberal economy in the 1950s, capitalist development and the imperatives of the market economy have brought significant changes to Turkish society. The periphery was made up of a rural population that was drawn into the market economy and migrated to the industrializing cities. Therefore, attributing an unchanging character to the periphery and seeing it as a driving force behind the rise of the AKP seems unsustainable given this evidence. Moreover, as the constitution of such a center-periphery framework avoids mentioning the historical process of capitalism in Turkey, the analysis of state-society relationships as relevant to the rise of the AKP results in a contradiction, which in turn creates a distorted image of the AKP in Turkish politics. This framework also prevents the evaluation of the emergence of new classes that contributed to the rise of the AKP in 2002. While Ozbudun and Hale put much more emphasis on the role of the periphery in interpreting the rise of the AKP as a center-right and liberal party, Ahmet Insel focuses on the role of the Turkish state (center) whose long standing privileged position was eventually undermined with the rise of the AKP. In the account of Insel, the rise of the AKP and the party as being the representative of the conservative bourgeoisie (MUSIAD), which was formed independently from the Kemalist center, is seen as an end to the asymmetric relation between a strong centre and weak periphery. Through approaching the rise of the AKP as an exit from the authoritarian regime of September 12, Insel suggests that the rise of the AKP represents

a human emancipation from the 12 September regime and leads to the development of civil society along economic rationality, which has been prevented by the political center so far. For Insel, the AKP's positive attitude towards the traditional and authentic culture of Turkish society can also be interpreted as a step for the elimination of the cultural dichotomy between the Kemalist center and Turkish society. Similar to Ozbudun and Hale, Insel approaches the asymmetric relation between the Turkish state and society in a problematic framework. The constitution of such a framework presumes that the underdevelopment of civil society in Turkey is related to the strong state tradition, which is intrinsically undemocratic and authoritarian. Within this perspective, the rise of the AKP on the basis of support from the small and medium sized conservative bourgeoisie (MUSIAD) who flourish under the neo-liberal policies of the Ozal government in the 1980s, symbolizes an emancipation from the authoritarian regime of 1980 in general and the strong state tradition in particular. Therefore, the rise of the AKP in Turkish politics, for Insel, not only normalizes state-society relationships in Turkey but also amounts to the democratization of the country. At this point, it seems that Insel's main concern is the formation of an independent civil society contingent on economic rationality. The formation of the conservative bourgeoisie (MUSIAD) as autonomous from the Kemalist political centre, and the AKP's acting as its representative is perceived as a democratization process that has led to the development of civil society and the eroding of the authoritarian state. Although Insel reads the rise of the AKP as a process of emancipation from the authoritarian Turkish state and normalization of democracy or state-society relationships in Turkey, he ignores the role of the neo-liberal hegemonic project, which recently "set itself the task of demolishing the myth of the benevolent state, if only to replace it with another age old myth, namely that of the market as a self regulating entity." (Yalman, 2002, p. 21-22). Insel agrees that Turkey has become expose to a neo-liberal transformation process following the 1980 military coup under the leadership of the Ozal government, but he only seems to be interested

in how the neo-liberal policies of the Ozal government paved the way for the emergence of a new conservative bourgeoisie whose interests are eventually represented in the AKP. Within this perspective, the AKP as a political party provides a democratic contribution to the development of civil society in the face of the authoritarian Turkish state. However, Insel does not put any emphasis on the antinomies of the neo-liberal hegemonic project. In the account of Insel, the development of civil society with the rise of the AKP is attributed as a key point to undermine the authority of the repressive (*ceberrut*) state and development of civil society. Nonetheless any discussion regarding the rise of the AKP in conjunction with the requirements of neo-liberalism is not given. In other words, Insel ignores how the market imperatives of the neo-liberal hegemonic project reconfigure the Turkish state and society. Therefore, the constitution of such a framework contains certain deficiencies in it and cannot read Turkish politics regarding the rise of the AKP in a critical framework. The exclusion of the imperatives of the neo-liberal hegemonic project in analyzing the rise of the AKP can also be found within the idea that interprets the rise of the AKP with reference to the globalization process. Although the globalization stance presents detailed analytical and descriptive information regarding the rise of the AKP with reference to the post-1980 developments in Turkish politics and illustrates the ways in which the AKP transformed Turkey within the context of the contemporary phase of globalization and how successfully it prevailed over the problems of neo-liberalism (i.e. philanthropic neo-liberalism), no criticisms regarding structural problems and the intrinsic nature of neo-liberalism are provided. This deficiency, for instance, reveals itself within the arguments of Fuat Keyman and Ziya Öniş with their approach to the rise of the AKP as a political party that has a capacity to transform Turkey within the peculiarities of globalization. Keyman and Öniş suggest that Turkey's exposure to the neo-liberal globalization process during the 1990s and early 2000s both in the form of the emergence of identity based politics (i.e. Kurdish question, political Islam) and the economic crisis of 2001



discredited the traditional parties of the Right and Left. This gave the AKP a free hand to represent itself as a progressive party capable of transforming Turkey to cope with the new conditions of globalization while maintaining traditional values of Turkish society; a conservative and progressive party. At this juncture, it is possible to suggest that for Keyman and Öniş, the essence of neo-liberal globalization is not questioned. In other words, as Harvey (2005); Yalman (2002) suggest, global neo-liberalism and the market economy are presented as the sole reality of universal wisdom. However, there is a growing literature which suggests that the economic crisis of 2002 in Turkey was also a crisis of the legitimacy of the neo-liberal hegemonic project itself that had already entered into a situation of inertia (Atasoy: 2009; Dogan: 2011; Yıldırım: 2009). This newly growing literature, through approaching the rise of the AKP in a more critical framework, remarks that the emergence of the AKP did not only resolve the legitimation crisis of the neo-liberal hegemonic project in Turkey but also allowed for the neo-liberal hegemonic project's resurgence in Turkey. Within this perspective, the AKP's emergence as both a conservative and pro-globalist party is seen as a *sina qua non* not only for the perpetuation of neo-liberal policies in Turkey, but also for the removal of the negative image of neo-liberalism among the impoverished sections of Turkish society. Moreover, unlike the globalist stance, this perspective does not solely read Turkish domestic politics in the light of external developments. By adopting an historical materialist view and Gramscian approach to the rise of the AKP it draws a more analytical framework to understand the relations of power in the Turkish state and society. Based on this, this thesis aims to approach the rise of the AKP from a Gramscian perspective by within which the position of liberal intellectuals can be also critically focused on as relevant to AKP within the broader context of neo-liberalism in Turkey.

## CHAPTER TWO

### GRAMSCI'S THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The previous chapter reviewed the existing literature on the rise of the AKP while noting the drawbacks of a number of these approaches. These drawbacks also obdurate the ways in which the role and position of liberal intellectuals can be focused on in relation to the rise and rule of the AKP and neo-liberal restructuring in Turkey. The first perspective reviewed limits the analysis to the political Islamist movements' transformation as a result of their constant engagement with the secular establishments of Turkey. The external political and economic dynamics that would potentially determine or affect the rise of the AKP are simply ignored or undervalued. In particular, as this perspective limits the rise of the AKP to the unending conflict between secular establishments and political Islamist movements, the economic and societal transformation process that Turkey has been undergoing along with the rise of the AKP is completely ignored. Therefore such an approach does not allow the constitution of a critical framework within which the role of intellectuals in relation to the AKP and within the context of neo-liberal restructuring in Turkey.

As to the center-periphery paradigm, it reads the Turkish socio-political formation as a stable and steady process, therefore failing to take into account the significant political and social changes that have taken place in Turkey in the context of neo-liberal restructuring. The adaptation of such a framework prevents the analysis of the position and mission of the intellectuals in relation to rise and rule of the AKP and within the larger context of neo-liberalism. The main drawback of the globalization perspective on the other hand lies in its particular emphasis on external factors in explaining the rise and continuous success of the AKP. It does not critically acknowledge the ways in which these external dynamics occurred as a result of neo-liberal restructuring. In other words, this

perspective simply takes global neo-liberalism for granted. In addition, as this perspective attributes to the globalization process a determinant role in terms of its affect on the rise of the AKP, it cannot comprehend the contribution of internal ideological struggles and intellectual debates to the rise of the AKP in Turkey.

Therefore this chapter aims to approach the rise and rule of the AKP within a Gramscian framework by referring to certain literature that analyzes the rise and rule of the AKP as relevant to neo-liberal restructuring in Turkey. The main consideration of this chapter is to establish a Gramscian theoretical framework within which the position of liberal intellectuals can be focused on in relation to the rise and rule of the AKP and neo-liberal restructuring in Turkey.

The chapter starts with the contextualization of the formation of Gramsci's concepts and ideas. Following this the chapter deals with Gramsci's conception of hegemony. Dealing with the concept of hegemony goes hand in hand with other supplementary Gramscian terms, which constitute the certain aspects of his concept of hegemony. Finally, the chapter establishes a theoretical framework within the relationship between liberal intellectuals and the AKP can be focused in the context of neo-liberal restructuring in Turkey and from a Gramscian perspective.

## **2.1 Historical Context for Gramsci's Theoretical Endeavour.**

"We must use the criterion that a philosophical position should be criticized and evaluated not for what it pretends to be, but for what it really is."

(Gramsci, in Femia, 1981: 113)

This thesis aims to use Gramsci's political theory as an organizing framework in order to explain the rise and rule of the AKP in Turkish politics. Therefore the formation and the origins of Gramsci's theoretical endeavour are initially analyzed as relevant to their historical context. Such an approach to the study of Gramsci's theoretical endeavour is also

adapted in order to comprehend the ideas precisely that were intended to be understood by Gramsci in a certain historical context.

Antonio Gramsci (1891- 1937) was born into the lower strata of the Sardinian petty bourgeoisie in 1911 in Italy and he studied philology at the University of Turin. By the end of First World War, one third of the population of Turin was composed of industrial workers and it was the central place where the socialist movements gathered pace. In 1913, Gramsci was involved in the activities of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) with Palmiro Togliatti in Turin and launched a radical weekly, *L'Ordine Nuovo*, much read during the wide spread disturbance of the “biennio rosso”<sup>x</sup> of 1919- 1920. Gramsci and his *L'Ordine* group created the PCI (Communist Party of Italy) in 1920. Two years later he was appointed leader of the PCI and in the same year he attended the activities of the Comintern (Communist International) in Moscow. Without risk of distortion, Joseph V. Femia (1987) suggests that it is possible to discern four different phases in Gramsci's political life and thought – phases which represent different theoretical priorities and responses to the political world. For Femia, the initial period comprises the years of 1914- 1919. These years mark the beginning of Gramsci's political and intellectual evolution. Considering the fact that Gramsci was an active member of the PSI in Turin during these years, he was a passionate and radical socialist revolutionary. Gramsci's works during this period focused mainly on the development of socialist revolution in Italy by the workers. With this aim, Gramsci's works emphasized the development of the right spiritual conditions of revolution and he strove to cultivate a proper class consciousness into the workers proletariat through delivering lectures and conducting seminars on philosophical and literary topics. (Femia, 1987, p.4). The second phase encompasses the years of 1919 – 1920 that correspond to the mass strikes and factory occupations of the “*Biennio Rosso*”. At this period, by using the journal *L'Ordine Nuovo* as their vehicle, Gramsci and a group of Marxist intellectuals aimed to guide the escalating militant struggles of the North Italian workers. Femia notes that

Gramsci developed his well known factory council theory at this period. “At this juncture, his philosophical idealism yielded to a more recognizably Marxist (though hardly orthodox) position concerning the role of the economic structure.” (Femia, 1987, p. 4). This shift in Gramsci’s philosophy can be seen in his factory council theory. With factory council theory, Gramsci put more emphasis on the self education of workers and committed himself to the concrete political organization of workers. In addition, unlike his earlier stance concerning the inculcation of the class consciousness into the workers from above, Gramsci now supported the view that class consciousness would arise spontaneously as a product of the workers.’ (Femia, 1987, P.4). To this end, Gramsci attributed the revolutionary party a major task in promoting the class consciousness of the workers. However, Gramsci’s political attempt to organize revolutionary Italian factory workers resulted in a failure after the Italian state’s suppression of the factory workers and their factory councils. The defeat of the revolutionary struggle of Italian workers did not only pave the way for the consolidation of the power of factory managers in Northern Italy but also led Gramsci to think about whether a different political strategy adopted by socialists could guide the realization of socialist revolution in Italy. The third shift in Gramsci’s political thought can be seen between the years of 1921 and 1926 beginning from the founding of the PCI to Gramsci’s imprisonment. For Gramsci, with the humiliating collapse of the council movement, it became plain that the autonomous activity of the masses was by no means sufficient for the overthrow of capitalism. (Femia, 1987, p. 5). During this time, Gramsci continued to develop revolutionary strategies and tactics through attributing party a special task but this time he began to see revolution as a more gradual and slow process to be realized. In addition, Gramsci dealt with the factional problems within the PCI and Comintern. He did spend much of 1922- 1923 in Moscow and his ideas regarding the intrinsic nature of the 1917 October Revolution developed during this period. “The Gramsci of 1921- 6 might be described as a loyal, but not uncritical, Bolshevik.” (Femia, 1987, 5).

The last but probably most important period, which brought represent the evolution of the new ideas in Gramsci's political thinking, begins from his imprisonment in 1926. He produced his major work; *Prison Notebooks* between the years 1929- 1935. "In these now famous notebooks—a monument to intellectual tenacity and heroism—Gramsci evolved themes, interest principles and concepts which were barely visible, if not entirely absent, in his previous writings." (Femia, 1987, p.5). Undoubtedly, this new shift in Gramsci's political thinking can be related to a chain of events that emerged during his age. The most crucial event that stimulated Gramsci's new way of thinking at this period was the failure of socialist revolutionary attempts in Italy in general and Western Europe in particular. As the leader of the Italian Communist Party and a revolutionary, Gramsci had always developed a formula of revolutionary strategies and tactics to overthrow the capitalist state and society and build an alternative form of state and society based on working class leadership. (Cox, 162). However, even the worst depression and crisis of capitalism (Great Depression), which emerged by the early 1930s, instead of paving the way for a socialist revolution, had not impelled the proletariat to rise up against its oppressors.

Sassoon notes that (1987) the expectancy of socialist revolution in major European countries was not only dominant in Gramsci's political thinking but also had pervaded leading Marxist circles of the age, especially Comintern thinking that saw Socialist Revolution as an inevitable process on the basis of a mechanistic interpretation of Marxism. (Sassoon, 1987, 109). All of these developments in turn led Gramsci to reinterpret Marx and Marxism in order to explain the very nature of advanced capitalist societies and his concept of "hegemony" along with its surrounding theory rose out of this concern.

## **2.2 Gramsci's Marxism**

As a Marxist revolutionary and historicist, Gramsci's interpretation of Marxism and Marx was influenced by the political and historical developments of his age. The first and foremost of these developments,

was the failure of socialist revolutionary movements in Western Europe contrary to the dominant belief among the leading Marxist theoreticians of the early twentieth century who interpreted socialist revolution as an inevitable process by developing a schema of unduly narrow and mechanical Marxist doctrines. Femia (1987) notes that Bukharin's<sup>xi</sup> *Popular Manual* mirrored this dominant intellectual current within Marxism, "a current which included the German School around Kautsky and the Russian School started by Plekhanov." (Femia, 1987, p. 6). The general tenets of this school were based on a kind of historical determinism, which presupposes that there exist objective laws of historical development similar in kind to natural laws. For this Marxist current, the impetus to the progress of history was given through the fundamental economic relations in a society, which Marx termed the base that provides the dynamic of history (Crehan, 2002, p. 21). For Femia (1987), "this Marxist current was dominated by a positivist epistemology, a dialectical variant of metaphysical naturalism, rigid economic determinism and a quasi-Darwinian evolutionary history." (Femia, 1987, p. 67). By dismissing all subjectivist elements (politics, philosophy, culture and psychology) in the interpretation of human history and social evolution, this Marxist school ignored the role of human consciousness in the evolution of history as they believed that all existence is material and "Man's knowledge consist of 'reflections', or abstract pictures of actual objects and process." (Femia, 1987, p. 67).

Coming back to the early twentieth century European context within which most advanced capitalist societies experienced the major crisis of capitalism in the 1920s and 1930s, this Marxist current presumed that internal contradictions of the capitalist mode of production would necessarily bring the socialist revolution to Europe. To say in the words of Piccone, "capitalism would unavoidably, collapse, thus automatically lifting the proletariat to its ascribed historical role." (Piccone, 1974, p. 33). However, not only did such a mechanistic Marxism fail to comprehend the

absence of socialist revolutions in Europe, it also failed to anticipate the subsequent advent of Fascism.

Gramsci's theory of hegemony, however, was successful in explaining the failure of socialist revolutions in Europe by rejecting such a fatalistic approach to Marxism. Gramsci suggested that Marxism cannot explain the historical evolution of human being on the basis of economically deterministic and fatalistic natural laws. He suggested that it is not possible to reckon any determinate outcomes since outcomes are not themselves determined by their antecedent conditions; they are depend on human will and decisions: "Marxism could predict with the accuracy of natural sciences only if human beings were absolutely passive, for their behaviour could then be quantified and subsumed under a systematic body of statements, embodying precise correlations." (Femia, 1987, p. 77). In order to dismiss such a fatalistic approach to history, Gramsci emphasized Engel's caution against a roughly economist reading of the work of Marx and himself.

According to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately* determining factor in history is the production and reproduction of real life. Neither Marx nor I have asserted more than this. Hence, if somebody twists into saying that the economic factor is the *only* determining one, he transforms the proposition into a meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase. (Marx and Engels, 1975, p. 394, Engel's emphasis in Crehan, 2002, p. 88).

Although Gramsci did not completely reject the view that economic relations were ultimate shapers of history and society, he was very critical of the rough economic determinism that dominated his Marxist contemporaries. He agreed with Marx's idea that the interaction between the superstructure and base is the driving force of history, but he inserted that the relations of production should remain of critical importance in the last analysis. Within this perspective, Gramsci put forward that socialist revolutions cannot be subjected to a deterministic timetable. In order to demonstrate this, Gramsci gave the example of the October Revolution of



1917, which was, for him, a product of Lenin's ability to understand that the conditions for socialism were present in agrarian Tsarist Russia, contrary to the fatalistic historical interpretation of the Marxism of his contemporaries who suggested that socialist revolutions would only come into being as a result of the internal contradictions of the capitalist mode of production in the most advanced capitalist societies.(Gramsci in Femia, 1987). For Gramsci, the raw economic facts cannot alone shape history and bring about socialist revolutions:

It is the man, man in societies, man who interact with one another... and develop through these contacts (civilization) a collective, social will; men who come to understand economic facts, judge them and adapt them to their will, so that this will become the motive force of the economy, the moulder of objective reality.' (Gramsci quoted in Femia, 1987, p. 90).

The novelty that Gramsci brought to Marxism was his development of a Marxist science of political action. In his attempt to explain the nature of modern states, Marx suggested that the distinction between the structure (base) and superstructure cannot be made as the superstructure (non-economic institutions: simply put, state and its political and legal apparatuses) is only a reflection of the economic reality of a capitalist society. In other words, Marx saw modern states as a control mechanism of the bourgeoisie to rule over the exploited class, which guarantees the ability of the dominant class to economically exploit the proletariat. In this respect, Marx defined the state and all its institutions as a reflection of the base (structure). However, for Gramsci the state (superstructure), alongside reflecting the economic relations found in the base, is also an apparatus for the dominant class to exercise its power ideologically and morally in a capitalist society. As Martin Carnoy evaluates it;

It is the superstructure that represents the active and positive factor in historical development; it is the complex of ideological and cultural relations, the spiritual and intellectual life, and the political expression

of these relations that become the focus of analysis rather than structure. (Carnoy, 1984, p.68).

Gramsci developed a distinct view of the modern state. He suggested that the state is not only a control mechanism of bourgeoisie rule to exploit the subaltern class economically. For him, the modern state is an intermediate sphere within which the dominant class disseminates its ideology and its perception of the world as if it is also the world view of the subaltern class. For Gramsci, the state is an intermediate sphere where the dominant class to be able to penetrate into every characteristic of civil society and leading for the subaltern class to identify with bourgeois rule, culture and ideology, which in turn prevents oppressed classes from developing a class consciousness to oppose bourgeoisie rule since the oppressed classes tend to internalize bourgeoisie rule both mentally and morally.

This is the general framework that Gramsci constituted in explaining the failure of socialist revolution in Western Europe after World War I. Unlike his contemporary Marxists who suggested that the automatic breakdown of capitalism would inevitably bring socialist revolution, Gramsci suggested that socialist revolutions did result in failure since the dominant class was able to gain the consent of the working class for the perpetuation of its dominance and general interests over them. This is what Gramsci calls the concept of hegemony.

### **2.3. Gramsci's Concept of Hegemony**

Gramsci's elaboration of the concept of hegemony derives from a variety of situations in which he found himself after 1926. The leading event that paved the way for Gramsci's use of the concept of hegemony was the fact that socialist revolutions in Western Europe had either not materialized or resulted in failure. Concomitantly, this reality was added a further dimension along with Western capitalism's ability to renew and stabilize itself with authoritarian regimes notwithstanding the deep economic crisis of the post-World War I context. Within the light of these developments,

Gramsci saw a new analysis regarding the distinctive political and ideological nature of advanced capitalist societies. The leading question that Gramsci posed in his analysis of the distinctive characteristic of advanced capitalist societies was how does the ruling class rule in advanced capitalist societies? Gramsci's concept of hegemony rose out of this concern and he asserted that the ruling class in advanced capitalist societies rule by constructing their ideological and moral leadership over the subordinate classes which made their rule non-coercive for most of the time. Before illustrating how Gramsci developed and used his concept of hegemony, it is necessary to underline why his concept of hegemony is taken as a point of departure among other Gramscian concepts.

The leading feature of Gramsci's concept of hegemony is that it laid the basis of his other concepts and terms. It is a nodal point in interpreting and developing other Gramscian concepts and terms. Sassoon (1987) notes that Gramsci's concept of hegemony can be fully comprehended only by taking the modern capitalist state as the starting point. For Sassoon, Gramsci uses the concept of hegemony to define the modern state, and its distinctive nature rooted in modern society. Gramsci assigned the modern state a distinctive role and saw it as an organized (centralized) control mechanism that allows the dominant class to control subordinate classes:

In the ancient and mediaeval state alike, centralization, whether political- territorial or social... was minimal. The state was, in a certain sense, a mechanic bloc of social groups... The modern State substitutes for the mechanical bloc of social groups to the active hegemony of the directive and dominant group. (Gramsci, in Sassoon, 1987, 113).

For Gramsci, in modern societies, the dominant class perpetuates its dominance in different ways through the agency of the state. Thus understanding the role of the state in different societies plays a key role in interpreting the different types of dominance.

Before delving into the different approaches to the nature of the modern state by Gramsci, it is useful to touch upon the Machiavellian literary

image: the Centaur- half animal and half human - that inspired Gramsci to approach politics and the modern state in two different ways. Machiavelli used the Centaur's being both animal and human in his *Prince* to imply that there are two different ways of fighting; by law or by force. 'The first way is natural to men, and the second to beasts, but as the first way often proves inadequate one must have recourse to the second. So a prince must understand how to make a nice use of the beast and the man.' (Gramsci, p 170).<sup>xii</sup>

This dual nature of Machiavelli's centaur can be found in Gramsci's political thinking in what he refers to as a dual perspective in analyzing political action and the nature of the modern state (Sassoon, 1987, p. 112). For Gramsci, the duality of political action can be observed in modern states and societies in the form of authority and hegemony, force and consent and violence and civilisation. They enter into an oppositional but dialectic relationship. Therefore, for Gramsci, "the political is not defined by and it cannot be understood in terms of only one of its attributes, of force or consent. It is *force* and *consent*, *authority* and *hegemony*, *violence* and *civilta*." (Gramsci in Sassoon, 1987, p. 112). Within this perspective, it is possible to suggest that Gramsci's view of the modern state is manifold, stemming from his dualistic approach to the politics and nature of the modern state.

His general definition of the modern state, which is *State = political society + civil society that is hegemony protected by the armour of coercion*. (Femia 1987; Sassoon, 1987). The former definition; State= political society implies that the state is the realm of force, coercion and dictatorship. What Gramsci implies here is that the dominant class commands the subaltern classes by the certain mechanism of the state apparatuses, such as legal and armed forces. State = political society means that while the dominant class commands the subaltern class, it resorts to force and uses the repressive state mechanisms to solidify and perpetuate its dominance over the subordinate classes.

The second concept Gramsci introduces is that *civil society* which is the area of liberty (in the liberal sense) encompassing private organizations such as schools, universities, religious institutions, political parties, civic and charitable organizations. For Gramsci, civil society is the realm of consensus, hegemony and persuasion within which the dominant class is able to rule over the subordinate classes without resorting to force, but by disseminating its perception of the world as if it is the subordinate classes to provide moral and intellectual leadership in civil society, and to construct the consent of subordinate classes to its dominance.

This definition of the state implies that there is a contrast between the state and civil society. In other words, while hegemony is carried out in civil society, domination is exercised through the state and its juridical government. The dominant class gains consent for its social domination through hegemony in society as a whole, but exercises domination through the control of the State's coercive apparatuses. In other words, "the state is the entire complex of political and theoretical activity by which the ruling classes not only justify and maintain their domination but also succeed in obtaining the active consent of the governed." (Femia, 1987, p. 28).

The second definition of the state, which Gramsci used to analyze advanced capitalist societies in the West, encompasses the elements of political society + civil society in a different way. In his second definition, Gramsci does not approach political society and civil society as two distinct spheres within which different types of rule function. Rather, he synthesizes two different realms in a single concept that is hegemony. With this definition of the state, 'hegemony is no longer confined civil society but it is also located in the state as political hegemony in contrast to civil hegemony. In other words, this perspective does not simply portray hegemony on the basis of consent that is embedded in civil society, but locates it in political society as coercion as well. Thus, hegemony is everywhere, but in different forms; the state becomes an apparatus of

hegemony, encompassing civil society and only distinguished from it by its coercive apparatuses.

In the third definition, Gramsci embraces the state more holistically. By attributing to the state a structural character, Gramsci suggests that (political society) and civil society are inseparable from each other. There is not any autonomy between state and civil society; thereby consent and coercion are also always simultaneous instances. “The state and civil society are merged into a larger unity; the state is the same as the social formation itself, including governmental and private apparatuses.” (Carnoy, 1984, p.73). In the final analysis, all ideological and political super structural notions embedded in civil society, such as cultural institutions, family, trade unions and private media, cannot be separated from state apparatuses. They all radiate through the state and are hegemonic apparatuses of the state.

The fundamental point to comprehend in these shifting approaches to the state is that Gramsci endeavours to analyze various forms of the manifestation of power in modern societies. With this in mind, “it is helpful to distinguish between “two superstructural levels one representing hegemony and consent, and the other coercion and force.” (Crehan, 2005, p. 103) From this point of view, while the state can encompass force (coercion) and consent (hegemony) separately from each other, it can also include these two elements simultaneously. This multi-faceted approach to the state by Gramsci can be better understood by highlighting his analysis regarding the different structure of states in the East and the West.

In the East, the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relationship between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there was a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks: more or less numerous from one State to the next, it goes without saying-----but this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each individual country.’(Gramsci in Anderson, 1970, p. 5).

For Gramsci, this dichotomy between the Eastern and Western states based on his observation that while in the East the state was so strong in the face of civil society, in the West there was a balanced or mediated relationship between state and civil society. In other words, while in the East the dominant class's command over the subaltern class was exclusively through the agency of the state and its coercive apparatuses, in the West the situation was the reverse. Gramsci's perception of the distinctive nature of Western states can be better comprehended by taking his attempt to explain the failure of socialist revolutions in the West into account and also considering his analysis of the power relations in advanced capitalist societies. When the failure of socialist movements became clear and capitalism showed no sign of collapse by the early 1930s in the West, Gramsci realized that the dominant class (bourgeoisie) was able to perpetuate its dominance and attain social control over the subordinate classes by building its hegemony both in civil and political society (state).

Disillusioned by the failure of the revolution to spread beyond Russia, Gramsci came to view hegemony as the most important face of power, the 'normal' form of power in any post-feudal society, and, in particular the strength of bourgeois rule in advanced capitalist society, where material force is resorted to on a large scale only in periods of exceptional crisis. The proletariat, in other words, wear their chains willingly. Condemned to perceive reality through the conceptual spectacles of the ruling class, they are unable to recognize the nature or extend of their own servitude. (Femia, 1987, p. 31).

In this respect, the main consideration of Gramsci was to reveal how the ruling class in advanced capitalist societies manages to win the active consent of subordinate classes to its rule. The explanation of this consent, for Gramsci, should be sought in civil society in which bourgeois rule builds its ideological and cultural predominance by using some hegemonic instruments of the state apparatus as well, which in turn produces a single concept of (bourgeois) reality that prevents subordinate classes from

comprehending their position in the capitalist societies and developing class consciousness to resist or overthrow bourgeois rule. For Gramsci, the normal exercise of power in advanced capitalist society is realized through the combination of force (political society) and consent (civil society), which stabilize each other mutually without resorting to force because of the existence of consent. In other words, it was not only private institutions in civil society which precludes the ways in which the subordinate class could comprehend its class role and realize itself in the capitalist mode of production (to become a class for itself in Marx's term) but also the state which included the hegemony of the bourgeoisie in superstructure prevented the subordinate class from comprehending its role.

The crucial point, to his mind, is that governments can often mobilize the support of the mass media and other ideological instruments, partly because the various elites, political or otherwise, share similar world-views and life-styles, and partly because the institutions of civil society, whether or not they are directly controlled by the state, must operate within a legal framework of rules and regulations. (Femia, 1987, p. 28).

Such an approach to the state and civil society also goes beyond the mechanistic and narrow Marxism of Gramsci's contemporaries who claimed material production is the source for the development of other spheres and the superstructure is a functionless sphere for the attainment of social and historical progress. Gramsci's major contribution to Marxism lays in his attribution of the simultaneous interaction between both structure and superstructure in understanding social reality. With his concept of hegemony, Gramsci suggested that if a dominant class exerts its ideological superiority in the superstructure and entrenches its hegemony in civil society, it must have solid economic roots: "If hegemony is ethico-political, it must also be economic, it must also have its foundation in the decisive function that the leading group exercises in the decisive nucleus of economic activity." (Gramsci in Femia, 1987, p. 24). It should be remembered, while analyzing Gramsci's political thought and his concept



of hegemony, that he was a Marxist whose main aim was to transform capitalist society in the interest of subaltern classes. In compliance with Marx's writings, for Gramsci, the ultimate actors in the realization of this transformation were classes as well. Within this perspective, the fundamental concern for Gramsci was: "how might a more equitable and just order be brought about, and what is it how people live and imagine their lives in particular times and places that advances or hampers this more equitable and just order ?" (Crehan, 2002, p. 71).

Thus, when Gramsci speaks of hegemony, he refers to a psychological state within which subaltern classes willingly accept or give consent to certain socio-political order therefore the dominant class preserves its privileged position in terms of economic and ideological superiority. For Gramsci, hegemony originates within the economy, yet stretches out towards the organization of all political and cultural institutions in civil society in order to win active consent of subordinate classes to the rule of the dominant class. In the process that leads to the attainment of active consent of the subordinate classes, Gramsci suggests that the state plays the key role as its material and moral strength depends precisely upon its ability to assimilate the cultural and ideological activity (electoral, educational, political, economic, and even religious) taking place within civil society. (Fontana, 2008, p. 95).

Thus the state acts as a hegemonic instrument of the dominant class by infusing into civil society both ideologically and culturally to legitimize the inequitable rule of the dominant class and to attain the consent of subaltern classes. Within this perspective, looking at certain institutions that are embedded in civil society, such as schools, libraries, voluntary associations, religious groups, universities, publishing houses or even the physio-spatial and the urban-architectural structure of civil society ranging from buildings, streets, boulevards and their names, Gramsci suggests that "all these institutions, structures and socio cultural practices are the "powerful system of earthworks" that make up civil society: a formidable

complex of trenches and fortifications of the dominant class.” (Gramsci in Fontana, 2008, p. 95). For Gramsci, these institutions in civil society serve to formulate a particular conception of life and disseminate it throughout society which in turn prevents the subordinate classes comprehending its historical role in advanced capitalist societies and paves the way for their affiliation with bourgeois rule.

Another significant dimension of Gramsci’s concept of hegemony is its emphasis on subjectivity in the progress of history. In contrast to his Marxist contemporaries, who attributed minimal (if any) importance to the subjectivism in the progress of history by interpreting Marxism on the basis of certain objective and natural laws, Gramsci did not ignore the role of human agency in historical progress. With his concept of hegemony, while he primarily revealed how the subordinate class can mentally fail to comprehend its historical role in advanced capitalist societies, he also formulated how this situation could be reversed and socialist revolutions would be brought about in these societies. To evaluate Gramsci in a wider and a more integrated framework, it is possible to suggest that he did not only explain why western industrial workers had not taken the path set out for them by Marxism but also aimed to provide a guide to revolutionary action as he saw Marxism as a philosophy of praxis (Femia, 1987, pp. 7-11). To this end, Gramsci developed a set of supplementary terms which he used to guide strategically true revolutionary action.

#### **2.4 Gramsci’s Conceptual Framework: The Aspects of Hegemony**

Gramsci’s theory to guide true socialist revolutionary action did derive from his analysis of the position of the subordinate class (proletariat) in Western capitalist societies where bourgeois rule perpetuated its dominance and control by building its hegemony. Therefore Gramsci aimed to develop a set of alternative strategies<sup>xiii</sup> which would organize the proletariat to comprehend its historical role in overthrowing bourgeois hegemony to replace it with socialism. In other words, Gramsci dealt with how the proletariat can develop its counter-hegemony in advanced capitalist

societies of Western Europe and build its own socialist state. The revolutionary road to socialism, for Gramsci, can be achieved by comprehending the very nature of the organization of bourgeois rule and its hegemony in Western European societies that would lead to correct strategies and organizational methods. Gramsci's guide to true revolutionary action can be systematized by addressing certain concepts that he developed to lead the proletariat to fulfil its historical mission of socialist revolution. These concepts are also pertinent today.

#### **2.4.1 Historic Bloc**

Within this perspective, Gramsci's concept of "*historic bloc*" (Blocco Storico) can be taken as a point of departure in systemizing his thoughts stepping forward to the realization of socialist revolution. Sassoon (1987) suggests that Gramsci uses the concept of 'historic bloc' in two different meanings. The first usage of the term refers to the relationship between the structure and superstructure: "It represents what Gramsci calls the unity of the process of the real." (Gramsci, 1977, p. 1300). That is to say the complex, contradictory and discordant *ensemble* of the superstructures is the reflection of the social relations of production.' (Gramsci in Sassoon, 1987, p. 120). By attributing both superstructure and structure an equal importance at the theoretical level, Gramsci suggests that the unity between the two spheres form a 'historic bloc'.

The conception of *historic bloc* in which precisely material forces are the content and ideologies are the form, though this distinction between form and content has purely didactic value, since the material forces would be inconceivable historically without form and the ideologies would be individual fancies without the material forces. (Gramsci in Sassoon, 1987, p. 130).

While this definition of the *historic bloc* is made up of joining two abstract realities, the second usage of the term is based on how these two areas of abstract reality function in real society. In other words, Gramsci illustrates the ways in which a *historic bloc* functions in real societies with concrete realities.

In Gramsci's schema a given group or class, as it develops in the economic sphere, finds some values more congenial than others, more resonant with its everyday experience. Selectively refashioning the available spontaneous philosophy, a group may develop its own particular world view - an ideology that cements into what Gramsci called 'historical bloc' possessing both cultural and economic solidarity. (Lears, 1986, p. 571).

For Gramsci, this second usage of the term *historical bloc* refers to the politico-economic alliance of a given class or a group in a real society. It is an alliance of different class forces on the basis of one dominant mode of production and around "a set of hegemonic ideas give strategic direction and coherence to its constituent elements." (Gill, 2002, p. 58). Moreover, in order to be hegemonic, "the leaders of a given historic bloc must develop a world view that appeals to the wide range of other groups within the society, and they must be able to claim with at least some plausibility that their particular interests are those of society at large." (Lears, 1986, p. 571). In other words, the strength of a given historic bloc depends upon its ability to articulate other sub-blocs and social forces to its own dominant bloc to perpetuate its hegemony in a given society. As Sassoon notes 'the *historical bloc* can produce *various* political blocs made up of different combinations of political allies which none the less maintain the general configuration of the fundamental historical bloc.' (Sassoon, 1987, p. 121).

Such an approach to the term *historical bloc* also reveals that Gramsci's analysis of power relations in advanced capitalist societies is not something static within which merely a closed system of ruling-class hegemony prevails. For Gramsci, the stability of a given *historical bloc* not only depends upon its ability to articulate with other modes of production, classes or social forces but also depends on its ability to prevent the emergence of an alternative progressive class that is economically and ideologically antagonistic to the existing *historical bloc*. Within this framework, Gramsci suggests that the proletariat, in order to create its hegemony in advanced capitalist societies and to lead the revolutionary

process should form its own *historical bloc* as an alternative to the existing bourgeois historic bloc.

To this end, Gramsci suggested that the working class must create its own hegemonic apparatuses. In order to build an alternative proletarian historic bloc, Gramsci attributes the socialist party a vanguard role to develop dialogue between the proletariat and other subordinate classes to form a strong political alliance. While Gramsci attributed the party a vanguard role in the creation of working class hegemony and to build its own alternative *historical bloc*, he also assigned a key role to the intellectuals of the party in the creation of this new historic bloc under working class hegemony to realize socialist revolution.

#### **2.4.2 Intellectuals**

Gramsci's focus on the subject of intellectuals stems from his concern regarding how successful socialist revolution can be achieved in the West by replacing bourgeois culture with proletarian culture. Gramsci saw that such a successful revolution can be achieved by comprehending the ways in which the bourgeoisie forms its *historical bloc* and stabilizes its hegemony in the West. Within this framework, his analysis of the formation of bourgeois hegemony in the West led him to examine the role of intellectuals in the constitution of the historical *bloc* of the bourgeoisie and therefore its hegemony. Based on these, he found out that intellectuals are the connecting elements of the unity between structure and superstructure. In other words, they function as organizers of hegemony by acting in both political and civil society as a deputy of bourgeois rule. Gramsci suggests that intellectuals disseminate bourgeois values and its perception of the world both on the cultural and ideological terrain thereby paving the way for the enlargement of the *historical bloc* of the bourgeoisie and perpetuation of its hegemony. Gramsci initiates his conception of intellectuals with a certain distinction; which 'is all men are intellectuals but not all men have the function of intellectuals in society.' (Gramsci in Sassoon, 1987, p. 134). By asserting that 'all men are intellectuals',

Gramsci suggests that every human being has a capacity to interpret the world in which he is in 'certain conditions and certain social and economic relations'. (Sassoon, 1987, p. 135). For him, a worker who only produces manual and muscular labour in the societies where the capitalist mode of production prevails engages in a certain kind of intellectual activity. S/he has their own conception of the world and consciousness but, for Gramsci, it is distorted by bourgeois values and lacks a comprehension of the real power relations. With the second categorization of intellectuals; "intellectuals who have the function of intellectuals in a given society", Gramsci suggests that

By 'intellectuals' must be understood not those strata commonly described by this term, but in general the entire social stratum which exercises an *organizational function* in the wide sense- whether in the field of production, or in that of culture, or in that of political administration. They correspond to the NCOs and junior officers in the army, also partly to the higher officers who have risen from the ranks. (Gramsci, SPN, p. 98 in Sassoon, 1987, p. 135).

What Gramsci suggests here is that intellectuals function in all areas of society ranging from the economic sphere to the civil and political society. For Gramsci, intellectuals can occupy a variety of positions in the general complex of social relations. While some of them may be involved in the economic sphere as technicians or managers, some can perform organizational and connective functions within the sphere of the superstructure. The important point for Gramsci is the role they undertake in the production of social relations. For Gramsci, 'intellectuals are the dominant group's 'deputies' exercise the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government' (Gramsci in Sassoon, 1987, p. 136). The different position of intellectuals in the production of social relations can be better comprehended by focusing on the theoretical differentiation that Gramsci made to illustrate how intellectuals produce a variety of relationships to different classes in modern capitalist societies.

### 2.4.2.1 Organic and Traditional Intellectuals

Gramsci's theoretical categorization of intellectuals arise out of his concern to understand how certain classes that emerge as a result of the change in the world of production ascend to the position of dominant or hegemonic classes in a given society (Cox, 1987; Crehan 2002; Femia 1987; Sassoon, 1987). This endeavour of Gramsci led him to conclude that there are two types of intellectuals. The first one is the *organic intellectuals* that a newly emerging capitalist class creates alongside other organizing elements of its hegemony in a given society. Organic intellectuals come into being when a newly emerging capitalist class realizes its privileged position in the economic sphere and turns from being merely a 'class in itself to a class for itself'.

Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and awareness of its function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. The capitalist entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in the political economy, the organizers of a new culture, of a new legal system. (Gramsci, in Sassoon, 1987, pp. 137- 138)

Within this framework, it can be argued Gramsci broadly evaluates the formation of organic intellectuals on the basis of changes in the economic sphere and accordingly formation of new classes. While organic intellectuals can function as a technician or a specialist in the productive sphere and their activities can be limited to the realm of the economic-corporative exigencies of the new capitalist class, Gramsci suggests that the same capitalist class must select or create another group of intellectuals who would have a capacity to be organizers of the new society within the realms of the *superstructure*. For Gramsci, a new capitalist class, in order to sustain its dominance both in the economic sphere and new societal order needs a new intellectual leadership that would spread particular ideas and values in civil society to legitimize both the changing order and sustain the hegemony of the dominant class. As Lentner

suggests:

This leadership is constituted largely by persuasion and consent when the leading group articulates and proliferates throughout society a cultural and ideological belief system whose teachings are accepted as universally valid by the general population. Such an ideological belief system brings together philosophy and rhetoric and is organized through intellectuals who are instruments of dominant class in gaining acceptance for their ideas and values. (Lentner, 2005, p. 741).

Organic intellectuals for Gramsci can be seen as binding elements between base and superstructure. They also actively participate in practical life 'as constructor, as organizer, "permanent persuader" and not just a simple orator (but superior at the same time to the mathematical spirit)' (Gramsci, 1971, p. 10). They can perform this function in different ways according to the type of organization that the dominant class or class projects needs. As Thomas notes:

The specificity of the organic intellectual is integrally linked to the specificity of the class project from which they emerge. There is not, that is merely one type of 'organic intellectual'; different class projects presuppose and imply different forms of organisation, which thus require different types of organic intellectuals, whose role is to elaborate such organization in both ideological and practical terms. (Thomas, 2009, p. 416).

In this respect, organic intellectuals can be specialists who fulfil technical, directive and organizational needs in the sphere of production. However, for Gramsci they can also be the intellectuals in the state machine or upper echelons of the academic world who have organic ties with the dominant class (Sassoon 1987, p. 140). The strength of Gramsci's analysis of organic intellectuals is that those intellectuals are not conceived of as a static category, but rather defined through their relationship to the social classes existing within capitalist society (Cahill, 2010 p. 2). Based on these, it can be suggested that for Gramsci organic intellectuals are organizing elements of hegemony of a dominant class "in the sense that they provide ideological leadership to a given class as well as articulating and implementing the hegemonic project of that class through the



apparatuses of the state and the public sphere”(Cahill,2010 p. 3). Finally, they function in all areas of social reality to provide the unity between base and superstructure so that the existent bloc can sustain its hegemony over the subaltern classes to perpetuate its economic dominance. Although Gramsci dealt with the formation of organic intellectuals in a certain historical and revolutionary context, the function that he attributed to organic intellectuals in the moment of transition still keeps its actuality in contemporary political and social developments. The main function that Gramsci attributed to organic intellectuals, which is the translation of the economic hegemony of the dominant class (bourgeoisie) or class projects into political and cultural hegemony can also be observed in the function of liberal intellectuals who support AKP rule in Turkey that will be the subject of subsequent chapters.

The second category of intellectuals in the account of Gramsci consists of traditional intellectuals. Unlike organic intellectuals, who appear with the rise of a new dominant class due to the changes in the world of economic production, traditional intellectuals are the ‘pre-existing intellectual groups that the new dominant class and its *organic intellectuals* confront.’ (Crehan, 2002, p. 141; Femia, 1987, p. 132; Sassoon, 1987, p. 142).

Every ‘essential’ social group which emerges into history out of the preceding economic structure, and as an expression of a development of this structure, has found (at least in all of history up to present) categories of intellectuals already in existence and which seemed indeed to represent an historical continuity uninterrupted even by the most complicated and radical changes in political and social forms. (Gramsci,SPN, pp. 6-7 in Sassoon, 1987, p. 142).

What makes ‘traditional intellectuals’ a *separate* entity in the face of organic intellectuals is that they belong to a different historical time and different hegemonic project. In other words, they were organic to one class and one mode of production in the past, but lost their position once the new order became firmly established. In order to clarify the position of traditional intellectuals, Gramsci takes the example of feudalism as a socio-economic

order within which feudal lords were the dominant classes. For Gramsci, within this order, ecclesiastics were organic intellectual to feudal lords: 'They held a monopoly of a number of important services: religious ideology, that is philosophy and science of the age, together with schools, education, morality, justice, charity, good works, etc.'(Gramsci in Crehan, 2002, p. 141). However, when feudal society was replaced by capitalist society the intellectuals of feudalism lost their status and function since the dominant class they represented was also replaced with the modern bourgeoisie. Another feature of traditional intellectuals, for Femia, is that "they hold the belief that they are 'autonomous, independent of the dominant social group and they do not necessarily share the world-view of the existing ruling class.' (Femia, 1987, p. 132). For Gramsci this self-conception is a delusional "social utopia by which the [traditional] intellectuals think of themselves as 'independent'." (Gramsci 1986, p. 8). According to Gramsci traditional intellectuals are somehow allied with the dominant ideology and the new dominant class. At this juncture, Gramsci's analysis of the position of rural intellectuals in southern Italy during the early twentieth century fits within the category of traditional intellectuals and can be taken into consideration in order to reveal the ways in which traditional intellectuals are articulated to a changing mode of production and hegemonic rule of a new emerging class.

Intellectuals of the rural type are for the most part 'traditional' that is they are linked to the social mass of the country people and the town (particularly small- town) petite bourgeoisie, not as yet elaborated and set in motion by the capitalist system. This type of intellectual brings into contact the peasant masses with the local and state administration (lawyers, notaries, etc.). Because of this activity they have an important politico- social function, since professional mediation is difficult to separate from political. (Gramsci in Sassoon, 1987, p. 144).

What Gramsci suggests here is that traditional intellectuals can belong to different historical times and can be categorized as traditional in the face of the newly dominant, capitalist class since they did develop organic links to the pre-existing mode of production. Nevertheless, deliberately or not, they

undertake a special task to introduce pre-capitalist classes that they represent into the politico-social ethos of the new capitalist mode of production, which in turn contributes to the development of an existent *historical bloc* in modern capitalist societies. In other words, traditional intellectuals, for Gramsci, live in two different historical periods and rather than being autonomous articulate certain sub-blocs into the *historical bloc* of a newly dominant class, thus solidifying its hegemony.

Gramsci's elaboration of both organic and traditional intellectuals does stem from his attempt to reveal how the bourgeoisie builds its hegemony over the subordinate classes in general and the proletariat in particular. His special emphasis on the role taken by intellectuals is also highly important in terms of comprehending how the ruling class builds its historical bloc and wins the consent of subordinate masses to its rule in advanced capitalist society. For Gramsci, intellectuals play a key role in the articulation of the subaltern class and different blocs to the bourgeoisie historical *bloc* by gaining their consent. This consent is produced by intellectuals in two different ways. While organic intellectuals, by disseminating the world view of the bourgeoisie, both in cultural and ideological spheres (superstructure), pave the way for the "active man in the mass to express a great deal in agreement with, or at least passive acceptance of the dominant conception of the world", traditional intellectuals, as a result of their historical continuity over different times, prevent common man from producing 'neither coherent nor consistent' ways of thinking to comprehend its subordinate position in advanced capitalist societies (Femia, 1987, pp. 9, 45). The whole process in turn creates a 'common *sense*' among the masses and produces a contradictory proletarian consciousness that takes bourgeois hegemony for granted and internalizes its values and norms as its own.

#### **2.4.2.2. Political Party and Intellectuals**

In the process towards socialist revolution and the creation of an *historic bloc* under proletarian hegemony, Gramsci sets out the notion that the

working class should create its own intellectuals in a similar way which the bourgeoisie did in advanced capitalist societies. Yet, he additionally inserted that this process would be more difficult for the proletariat. Considering the fact that the working class is under bourgeois hegemony and without possession of state power, Gramsci realized that the creation of independent working class intellectuals is not an easy task in bourgeois society. Therefore he attributed the revolutionary party a special task in the creation of a new socialist state underpinned by an organic historic bloc of the proletariat. Within this perspective, he suggested that a revolutionary party should start to prepare the proletariat both culturally and ideologically for the new socialist order that would also bring about a new socialist state to be built upon the organic unity of the proletarian *historic bloc*.

The party can succeed in this task to the extent that it can elaborate organic intellectuals and help the working class to develop an alternative hegemony involving a transformation of the mode of existence of intellectuals in society as a whole. It is on the basis that it will win over the traditional intellectuals and transform their relationship with the masses. (Gramsci in Sassoon, 1987, p. 148).

For Gramsci, the function of new organic intellectuals that the revolutionary party must create should be different than the organic intellectuals of the bourgeoisie. They must evolve sharply original proletarian culture, organization, and technique and be in constant interaction with the working class (Cox, 1983, p. 168). The organic intellectuals of the working class should relate their activities to the concrete situation of the proletariat in the productive sphere (structure). They should be aware of the complexities of the capitalist mode of production, and be able to show the proletariat its historical role in advanced capitalist societies. In other words, they should guide the proletariat to build a superior conception of the world and direct the proletariat to understand and evaluate its position coherently within the larger economic and political realities. In other words, 'the organic intellectual of the working class is a builder, an organizer, a permanent persuader so that he is able to engage in all aspects of struggle' (Sassoon, 1987, p. 149).

Aside from the reciprocity between intellectuals and political party, Gramsci put special emphasis on the nature of the relationship to be developed between the revolutionary party and the proletariat. For Gramsci, the revolutionary party must develop an organic relationship with the proletariat thereby the worker who enters the revolutionary party will overcome the limits of his existence in the economic sphere (Femia, 1987; Sassoon, 1987). The proletariat who enters into the relationship with the revolutionary party should no longer simply be defined as a producer of surplus value; the political party must lead the proletariat to forge a class consciousness to elaborate its position critically within the economic sphere (Sassoon, 1987, p. 149). Gramsci also saw the revolutionary party as a collective entity within which a variety of individuals from different backgrounds and class positions can develop democratic and organic relationships with the party theoreticians. Thus the proletariat can act in a more organized form and have an organic and collective class consciousness, which in turn would lead to the emergence of a more integrated *proletarian historic bloc* progressing to social revolution.

#### **2.4.3 War of Position, War of Manoeuvre**

Gramsci's developments of the concepts of War of Position and War of Manoeuvre (Movement) arose from his concern to guide the revolutionary party and working class to develop the right strategy and tactics to build up a socialist state and society. By using the military analogy of wars of position and war of manoeuvre, Gramsci initially aimed to reveal the internal structure of the bourgeois state in Western Europe as distinct from the states in the East, especially from the state in Russia where the Bolshevik Revolution had succeeded in 1917. Correspondingly, he put an emphasis on the right strategy to be formulated by the working class and a revolutionary party before or whilst overthrowing the bourgeois state in the West to build a socialist society under working class hegemony. By comparing military conflict to political struggles, Gramsci set out the basic difference between war of position and war of manoeuvre as follows; while the war of position means protracted trench warfare, the war of manoeuvre

on the other hand correspond to rapid frontal assault on the adversary's base: 'The latter has been reduced to more of a tactical than a strategic function. The same reduction, Gramsci suggests, must take place in art and science of politics (Femia, 1987, p. 51). The differences that Gramsci observed between Russian and Western European states and social formations can highlight the ways in which war of manoeuvre and war of position can work as two different revolutionary strategies in different conditions. Before the Bolshevik Revolution, Gramsci suggested that

In Russia, the administrative and coercive apparatus of the state was formidable but proved to be vulnerable, while civil society was underdeveloped. A relatively small working class led by a disciplined avant-garde was able to overwhelm the state in a war of movement and met no effective resistance from the rest of society. (Cox, 1983, p. 164).

However, for Gramsci, in Western Europe the situation differed from Russia in a variety of ways. Civil society in Western Europe under bourgeois hegemony was "much more fully developed and took manifold forms." (Cox, 1983, p. 165). In other words, in Western Europe, since bourgeois hegemony both ideologically and culturally structured itself in civil society by the agency of socio-political institutions and by creating its intellectuals:

A war of movement might conceivably, in the conditions of exceptional upheaval,<sup>xiv</sup> enable revolutionary party to seize the control of state apparatuses: but because of the resiliency of civil society such an exploit would in the long run be doomed to failure. (Cox, 1983, p. 165)

What Gramsci suggests here is that the war of manoeuvre, which is in terms of military science a rapid frontal attack on the enemy's base, and in the Gramscian sense an assault on the bourgeois state during the revolutionary process, cannot be an effective strategy "against the hegemonic state societies of Western Europe. The alternative strategy is the war of position which slowly builds up the strength of the social foundation of a new state." (Cox, 1983, p. 165). In order for the working class and their revolutionary party to overthrow the bourgeois state and to

build its socialist state and society, Gramsci suggests that *war of position* or *trench warfare* is necessary. To this end, the working class and its revolutionary party should begin to combat bourgeois values and ideology within the existing community (civil society) before taking its own state power. Furthermore, an alternative structure of intellectuals and institutions should be created within bourgeois society which, by articulating the interests of the subordinate classes, creates a new working class counter-hegemonic block before taking state power. Once state power is achieved by the working class and its revolutionary party, *war of position* should still be perpetuated in order for the working class to establish its hegemony fully and build its new socialist state and society on the basis of an organic unity.

#### **2.4.4 Passive Revolution**

Gramsci's discussion of passive revolution begins with a certain distinction that he made to reveal the different social structures of Western European societies. According to Gramsci, not all Western European societies were completely founded upon bourgeois hegemony. Rather, Western European societies for Gramsci did come into being in two different ways. "One kind had undergone a thorough social revolution and worked out fully its consequences in new modes of production and social relations. England and France were cases that had gone further than most in this respect." (Cox, 1983, p. 166). What Gramsci suggests here is that after the French Revolution (1789), "the bourgeoisie was able to represent itself as an "integral state", with all intellectual and moral forces that were necessary and adequate to the task of organizing a complete and a perfect society" (Gramsci in Morton, 2010, p. 9). To explain it in a Gramscian sense, the new emergent class (bourgeoisie) after the French Revolution in France was able to build its hegemony both intellectually and morally in a more or less organic fashion. In other words, the bourgeoisie that emerged as a result of changes in the economic structure (with the transition to capitalism) in France had ascended to the role of a hegemonic class by establishing its hegemony over the previous dominant class; the feudal

nobility. However, Gramsci also suggests that such a successful transition to capitalism under bourgeois leadership was not actualized in the rest of Western Europe. Unlike France and England, the other European societies had imported some aspects of a new order (capitalism) without displacing completely the feudal aristocracy. For Gramsci, within these European societies, the residues of the old social and economic order were still alive. As Robert Cox notes, these societies “were caught up in a dialectic revolution- restoration which tended to become blocked as neither the new forces nor the old could triumph.” (Cox, 1983, p. 166). In other words, although the old feudal class in these Western European societies lost their previous dominant position, they had not fully been eliminated in the new order. “The resulting stalemate with traditionally dominant classes created the conditions that Gramsci called passive revolution.” (Cox, 1983, p. 166).

Another use of the notion of passive revolution by Gramsci refers to the particular moment within which a potential revolutionary movement or political upheaval of a subaltern class is transformed into a “conservative project of restoration of the dominant class.” (Morton, 2010). For Gramsci, a dominant class in a given society can secure its privileged position to the extent that a reactionary or a revolutionary mass mobilization threatens its hegemony. When such a threat or counter hegemonic insurrection emerges, Gramsci suggests that the dominant class responds to the demands of subaltern classes by making some concessions within the terrain of the economic sphere that aims to pacify these counter-hegemonic threats. These concessions, for Gramsci, prevent the revolutionary attempts of subaltern classes from achieving success. Within this perspective, passive revolution can be regarded as a technique or strategy that the hegemonic class deploys whilst subduing counter-hegemonic forces that threaten its hegemonic position.<sup>xv</sup> In the movements towards proletarian revolution under the leadership of a revolutionary political party, Gramsci suggests that the “bourgeoisie may able to take the strategy of passive revolution by using the tools of war of position, the various ideological apparatuses, the trenches of civil society to whatever



extent possible to absorb the creation of an hegemony by working class.” (Gramsci in Sassoon, 1987, p. 210). At this point, Sassoon points out that passive revolution also can emerge in different ways. It can occur in the form of reformism by which the bourgeoisie can win over the leaders of the working class to decapitate the revolutionary movement. In addition, the bourgeoisie or hegemonic class, in order to sustain its hegemonic position, “can offer material incentives to buy the consent of the subaltern class or incorporate oppositional challengers into the extant hegemony through co-optation.” (Kakizaki, 2010, p. 234).

Finally, as Robert Cox notes, the dominant class by opting for the strategy of *transformismo*, can “assimilate and domesticate potentially dangerous ideas by adjusting them to the policies of the dominant coalition and thereby obstruct the formation of class based organization to the established social and political order.” (Cox, 1983, p. 167). All of these tactics aim to prevent revolutionary or progressive attempts by the subaltern class from threatening the structural transformation or the *mondus operanti* of the political system that is dominated by the hegemonic class. The whole process in turn brings about two different but interrelated outcomes. While the hegemonic class manages to secure its privileged position, counter hegemonic forces (in particular revolutionary movements) as a result of the material incentives or concessions provided to them by hegemonic classes in the form of reformism or co-optation deviate from revolutionary action. Therefore, in the action towards the revolutionary struggle, the revolutionary party and working class must be critical of every political manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie in order to prevent revolutionary efforts from resulting in a passive revolution.

## **2.5 The Rise of the AKP in Turkish Politics: A Gramscian Analysis**

The previous sections analyzed the formation and usage of the concepts and ideas that Gramsci developed in a revolutionary context. Although Gramsci’s ideas and concepts developed in a certain historical context and

to analyze certain political developments, they are also used to analyze the ongoing changes in contemporary politics. The relevance of Gramsci's ideas and concepts to contemporary politics can be related to the political nature of his ideas as opposed to the predominantly economist nature of the writings of other Marxists of his time. Within this perspective, this case study aims to construct a Gramscian theoretical framework within which the relationship between liberal intellectuals and the AKP can be focused on in the larger context of neo-liberal restructuring in Turkey. Gramsci's concept of hegemony along with passive revolution will constitute the theoretical basis of this section.

In his attempt to re-state the hegemony theory, Jonathan Joseph (2003) remarks that "to study hegemony in its manifold sense requires an examination of different social projects, the particular social groups and classes involved, the interests that they represent, the various world-views that they hold and political blocs and alliances that are constructed." (Joseph, 2003, p. 130). To this, Joseph adds that "hegemonic projects must be considered in relation to a given situation which agents attempt to preserve, develop, or transform (corresponding to conservative, passive/corporatist or radical projects)." (Joseph, 2003, p. 132). By adopting Joseph's instructions to study hegemony and the formation of hegemonic projects within a Gramscian framework, this section develops a Gramscian analysis to the rise and current rule of the AKP as relevant to neo-liberal hegemony, which emerged as a new strategy of world capitalism in the 1980s by replacing Keynesianism.

Neo-liberal orthodoxy began to ascend to its hegemonic position after the implementation of a set of economic policies in the advanced capitalist societies as in the USA under Reagan or in Britain under Thatcher. Towards the end of the 1980s, it had already begun to achieve to reach a hegemonic position through the international agencies such as IMF or World Bank and the Washington Consensus, which imposed and projected "this new orthodoxy onto Fordist welfare states and deeply entrenched

import-substitution industrialization (ISI) regimes via economic reform measures that include trade and financial liberalization, privatization and the withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provision.” (Patton, 2009, p. 438).

Over the last three decades, neo-liberal orthodoxy, by diffusing from advanced capitalist economics to peripheral countries by the means of international organizations resorted to re-structure world economies in the interests of world capitalism. To say in the words of Bourdieu (1998), “this infernal machine assigned itself the task of “destroying collective structures which may impede the pure market logic.”(Bourdieu, 1988, Online). “In this context neo-liberalism began to take on the mantle of a new hegemonic creed.” (Gamble, 2001, p.133). The neo-liberal orthodoxy penetrated all political and social institutions by introducing a set of policies ranging from privatization, financial deregulation, flexible exchange rate regimes, and fiscal austerity to the reduction of public expenditures and labour costs (Bourdeiu, 1988; Cizre and Yeldan, 2005).

Turkey’s transition to the neo-liberal development model began in the 1980s under the leadership of Turgut Ozal. The first stage of neo-liberalism appeared in the form of structural market reforms such as the liberalization of commodity trade and flexibleness of labour markets. After the capital account was de-regulated and fully opened up in August 1989, the first stage of neo-liberalization was completed. The first wave of neo-liberal reforms had positive implications in terms of “swift recovery from the deep economic crisis that the country had found itself in during the late 1970s.” (Onis, 2005, p. 113). However, experience of economic crises that Turkey underwent in 1994, 1999, 2000, and 2001 paved the way for neo-liberalism to enter into a period of political and economic deadlock. The reasons for the emergence of these successive economic crises can be ranged from the failure of the policies to promote national capital groups to develop export-led strategies to the adaptation of an economic growth strategy that is highly dependent on short term foreign capital inflow. In particular, as the

courses of accumulation and investment being highly dependent upon short-term and profit seeking capital flows because of the policies of high national interest and low exchange rates, every momentum when capital tended to flow out of the national economy also triggered the crisis dynamics to occur. (Cizre and Yeldan, 2005). Therefore, in order to overcome every economic crisis, domestic and foreign indebtedness increased together with the sale of public enterprises and loans from international finance. All of these developments in turn led to the emergence of a more fragile economy and increased dependency on hot capital flows and finally brought about the fiscal discipline and structural reform programmes that were imposed by the IMF and World Bank. The neo-liberal transformation process also re-structured power relations in the country. In particular, due to the constraints on wages and the concurrent rise in consumer prices, the working class and officials experienced a decline in their purchasing power. In addition, neo-liberal reforms resulted in the collapse of the agricultural sector, which in turn accelerated the migration from countryside to urban areas and led to the stiffening of the rivalry between urban and rural proletariat by increasing unemployment in urban areas. The neo-liberal transformation process also saw the restructuring of the relationships of distribution between mid-sized and large capital groups. While lots of small and middle sized local firms went bankrupt because of being unable to develop export-oriented strategies and could not compete with local and international firms with larger capital resources, by the same token a new group of small and middle sized enterprises with Islamic capital flourished (Dogan, 2006; White, 2002) “the new economy created great wealth for some, while the lives of industrial and agricultural workers, retirees, public sector workers, and other people on a fixed income became more precarious.” (White, 2002, pp. 41-42). Therefore, the neo-liberal transformation process in Turkey did hasten the fundamental inequalities between various classes and led to the intensification of conflict between labour and capital. When the retrenchment of social state is added to this situation, a great proportion of

the population were negatively affected from the neo-liberal transformation process. Thus a political space for political Islam to capitalize upon the negative outcomes of neo-liberal transformation process was opened. The initial example of this can be found in the political activities of the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) as a predecessor of the AKP. When the Welfare Party emerged in the late 1980s and began to appeal to large sections of Turkish society in the early 1990s, its main concern was “to meet the material needs of the victims of the post-1980 neo-liberal economic reforms.” (Patton, 2009, p. 441).

Alongside the rural population, the Welfare Party was successful in gaining the support of the people who live at the margins of cities in poor conditions, mainly small shopkeepers and urban migrants. The party was able to channel the financial support of devout Muslim businessmen and Industrialists, who gained from the new economy, to the charitable and other organizations of the Party to help poor and needy people within the principles of Islamic ethics of solidarity: “The party activists established an extensive welfare network that delivered food, fuel, and clothing to families in dire straits; helped family members find jobs; and often paid school fees and hospital bills for those with insufficient income.” (Patton, 2009, p. 441). The Welfare Party’s economic programme, entitled *Just Order* (Adil Duzen) “aimed to restore social solidarity by reinvigorating Islamic spiritual and moral values, to secure social welfare and justice income distribution, and to endeavour to bring about greater unity of the Muslim *umma*” (Patton, 2009, p. 441), appealed to the large sections of Turkish society who had lost out under neo-liberalism. The constitution of such a relationship between the party and masses eventually paved the way for the party’s electoral success, both in 1994 local elections and in 1995 national elections. The Welfare Party’s and Erbakan’s vision of *Just Order* “was a utopian construction of an alternative economic order that would take the best of capitalism (private property, individual initiative and the best of socialism (a leading role for the state in planning the economy)” (Çınar and

Durhan in Patton, 2009, p. 442). Although the Welfare Party's and Erbakan's notion of *Just Order* did not directly oppose neo-liberalism in terms of promotion of private property ownership and free enterprise, it was giving signals deviating from the neo-liberal agenda in terms of a statist-developmental model. Therefore the Welfare Party's anti capitalist rhetoric and Erbakan's constant confrontations with the secular establishment of Turkey, in particular, the military, gradually "alienated pro-globalization, liberalizing Muslim bourgeoisie, whose green capital had contributed considerable financial backing for the Islamist movement." (Patton, 2009, p. 442; Dogan, 2011, p. 87). This posture of the Welfare Party and alienation of the Islamic bourgeoisie from the party re-shaped the nature of political Islamist movements and contributed to the rise of the AKP in 2002 as a major ruling party from various points.

The Welfare Party's critique of neo-liberalism and its challenge to Kemalist secularism led to the emergence of a kind of discontent amongst the Islamic capital group within the party towards the end of the 1990s. This Islamic capital group, which are today known as the Anatolian Tigers and whose political and economic interests are currently represented in MUSIAD were the winners of neo-liberalization in Turkey. The gradual increase of their economic power during the neo-liberal transformation process led them to undergo a kind of embourgeoisement. Thus by articulating their local business to global capitalism under the rule of a free market economy; they were seeking to grow their business. However, the Welfare Party's anti-capitalist rhetoric and the party's traditional ideology of National View, viewed globalization as a moral and spiritual threat to Islam, contradicted the interests of this Islamic capital group. This discontent made itself clear during the 28 February process in 1997 when the military led National Security council imposed a set of new decisions on the Welfare Party coalition government: The February 28 decisions declared that *irtica*, (Islamic fundamentalism) in Turkey, has become as dangerous as Kurdish separatism and should be fought by all available means. The 28

February process gradually resulted in the overthrow of the Welfare-led coalition government in 1997 and brought about the closure of the Welfare Party by the Constitutional court in 1998 by virtue that the party posed threats to the secular state. After the closure of the Welfare Party ‘radical members of the party like Abdullah Gül and Recep Tayyip Erdogan advocated a more moderate approach. “Thus, some radicals were willing to work within the system to achieve systematic change in society and politics.” (White, 2002, pp. 41-42). This new political stance showed itself when friction emerged between conservatives and reformists within the Felicity Party, the successor of the Welfare Party and National View Movement (Milli Görüş) in 2000. The reformists found the National View Movement too archaic and complained about the lack of internal democracy within the new party. By taking the support of the pro-globalization Islamic bourgeoisie they established the Justice and Development Party in 2001, which came to power in 2002 and got 34% of the vote in general elections. Although the mainstream literature considers the 28 February Process a touchstone in Turkish politics by arguing that the process forced political Islam to undergo a learning process and paved the way for the AKP’s strategic moderation against the secular establishments of Turkey and global neo-liberalism, the same literature (i.e. Dağı; Mardin; Mecham) pays little attention to the nature of this transformation in terms of its further implications in Turkish politics and society.

At this point, amongst others, Cihan Tugal’s (2009) study of the transformation of political Islam in his work: *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism* offers a more comprehensive and critical theoretical framework to analyze the very nature of this transformation. In particular, Tugal’s theoretical argument, which is based on Gramsci’s concepts of hegemony and passive revolution, provides a solid framework within which complex processes of transformation in political Islam can be identified. The main argument of Tugal is that the

moderate Islam which showed its face with the rise of the AKP and whose characteristics can be delineated as “market oriented, at least partially democratic, and sometimes even pro Western direction is the outcome of a complex process of absorption of Islamic radicalism into extant hegemony.” (Tugal, 2009, p. 3). Reconsidering the concept of hegemony in Gramscian terms in its very simple meaning; Tugal suggests that hegemony is a political leadership based on the consent of the led; a consent which is secured by the diffusion and popularization of the world view of the ruling class (Bates 1975 p. 352). Tugal argues that the rise of political Islam especially towards the end of the 1960s and 1970s was a counter hegemonic project against the extant secular and capitalist system. The discourse and philosophy of *Just Order (Adil Düzen)* and the ideology of National View (*Milli Görüş*) emerged in this period and attacked Western capitalism, Europe, and US through promising the masses a classless society. This stance of political Islamist movements continued after neo-liberalism penetrated into Turkey in the 1980s.

However, for Tugal, the political Islamist movements’ counter-hegemonic potential began to fade away towards the end of the 1990s. Tugal suggests that political Islamists’ constant engagement with the secular institutions of the Republic led them to internalize the discourses and practices of their enemies in a process of passive revolution. When this was added to the embourgeoisement of some Islamists who were mainly winners under neo-liberalism, the political Islamist movements gradually underwent a de-radicalization process, which in turn resulted in the formation of a popular disappointment among the Islamist community. Within the light of these developments, for Tugal “new leadership [of the AK Party] set the scene for the absorption of Islamism into secular neo-liberalism more or less successfully at all levels of the hegemonic formation.” (Tugal, 2010, p. 51). The AKP, which was established by radical political Islamists, came to power in 2002 as a moderate Islamist Party, supporting neoliberal policies, democratization and unlike its predecessors, it was pro-US and EU. Tuğal



suggests that the AKP's coming to power represents what Gramsci referred to as a *passive revolution*. In Gramscian terms, passive revolution emerges as "a molecular, gradual process of change which does result in a genuine shift in the locus of power, and it is a revolution without revolution, neither a series of transformations involving neither upheaval nor the active participation of masses." (Femia, 1987, p. 260).

According to Tugal, the rise of the AKP can be seen as a passive revolution from various points. First of all, it naturalized the articulation of political Islam to neo-liberal hegemony and the secular regime among the masses without any upheaval. Secondly, it completed the gradual de-radicalisation of political Islam in Turkey that resulted in the eradication of its counter-hegemonic potential. Thus by the agency of the AKP, political Islam was absorbed into the extant secular, partially democratic and neo-liberal hegemony by taking the willing consent of the religiously oriented masses. As Dogan (2011) puts it, the AKP, unlike its predecessors, emerged as a political party that is more sensitive towards the secular principles of the Republic and is committed to global neo-liberalism.

Alongside these developments, a set of certain dynamics that occurred in the early 2000s also contributed to the rise of the AKP (directly or indirectly) as a hegemonic project. In particular 'Turkey entered into a period of severe economic-cum-political crisis in November, 2000 with a final burst of the financial bubble in February 2001. This led to the rise of the AKP in 2002 in a number of respects. Following the crises of 2000 and 2001, the existing political structure could not develop an antidote for the negative effects of the crisis among the public, which in turn led to the escalation of discontent among the masses and discredited the ruling political parties from both the Right (Nationalist Action Party, *MHP*, Motherland Party, *ANAP*) and the Left (Democratic Leftist Party, *DSP*).

The economic slump provided the context for a growing awareness of limitations of the prevailing political system as well as of the need for a radical transformation. However, despite the ongoing clichés of the reform and liberalization, politics in Turkey sought refuge, if anything, in the *status quo*. Three- party coalition government, which oversaw the post- 2001 crisis management, epitomized this inertia. (Cizre and Yeldan, 2005, p. 398).

The economic crisis that Turkey experienced in 2001 was also one of severe crises for neo- liberalism in Turkey since 1980. In particular, bad management of the economy by the existing political elites and their disobedience to the neo-liberal policies in the form of populist fiscal spends converted neo-liberalism into an unsustainable hegemony project. As Saracoglu (2011) and Yıldırım (2009) note, that prior to the rise of the AKP in 2002, Turkey was experiencing a serious crisis of governance and the neo-liberal hegemony project entered into a process of crisis of representation as it was not able to perpetuate itself within the existing political structure and political party system in Turkey. Thus a serious vacuum was opened for the AKP to capitalize on. The AKP most certainly recognized the risks of deviating from the neo-liberal trajectory (Patton, 2009, p. 445). Considering neoliberalism was also in harmony with the political and economic interests of the Islamic bourgeoisie that supported the AKP and other big capital groups (TUSIAD), the AKP became an ideal agent to perpetuate neo-liberalism in Turkey. This proved to be right when the party came in power in 2002. “Once in power the AKP stuck to tightened controls over public spending, taking full credit for strictly following the IMF’s fiscal recommendations.” (Patton, 2009, p. 445). In other words, the neo-liberal project did restore itself with the rise of the AKP in Turkey. Cizre and Yeldan (2005) suggest that the rise of the AKP in the shadow of the 2001 economic and political crisis “painfully illustrates the theoretical debate on how to modify the state market relations in a country to convert it into a *reliable and stable partner* state in the global capitalist order.” (Cizre and Yeldan, 2005, p. 389). As soon as the party came to power in 2002, it proclaimed that it would adhere to stand-by

agreements with the IMF and would support World Bank conditionality terms. Indeed, 'the government policies of the AKP have explicitly outlined a neoliberal programme which defines development as participation in the world market.' (Atasoy, 2009, p. 112). "The AKP openly proclaimed that it supports a free market economy with all its rules and institutions, and adopts the principle that the state should not directly engage in economic activity." (AK Party programme cited in Atasoy, 2009 p. 113). As Doğan (2011) indicates that the rise of the AKP in 2002 marked the implementation of a second wave of structural neo-liberal reforms which in turn provided the perpetuation of neo-liberal policies in Turkey. These reforms include "greater liberalization – with significant restructuring agricultural and banking sector, privatization, tight fiscal policy, less state intervention, more equal conditions for competition and fiscal discipline to the informal sector." (Boratav and Ozugurlu in Atasoy, 2009, p. 112). It can be suggested that the AKP's rule for almost 10 years did deepen the neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey. The party has been "advocating dominant neo-liberal themes of privatization, public corporations, liberalization of trade, entrepreneurship", (Atasoy, 2009, p. 109) and restructuring the Turkish economy in the interests of the neo-liberalism. While the neo-liberal policies of the AKP led to the economic growth of Turkey and contributed to increasing the wealth of many, it also paved the way for the widening of the inequalities among the disadvantaged sections of Turkish society. The AKP as a political party appealed to "both prosperous and disadvantaged segments of society" (Atasoy, 2009, p. 109) and increased its electoral support in three successive general elections in 2002 (34 %), 2007(47 %) and 2011 (50 %) thus attaining an unprecedented hegemonic position in Turkish politics.

The electoral success of the AKP is mainly attributed to its social policies that it developed to deal with the problems of disadvantaged sections of Turkish society who are losers under neo-liberalism. Patton (2009) suggests that the AKP combined neo-liberalism with communitarian ideas and developed a 'third wayist' approach to the problem of widening

inequalities and the distribution of wealth. In a similar vein, Öniş (2012) suggests that the AKP, by using both informal and formal redistributive channels “to enlarge its base of electoral support” developed a kind of ‘social neo-liberalism’ enabled it to “bring the winners and losers of neo-liberal globalization into the orbit of one single, broad-based, cross-class electoral coalition.” (Öniş, 2012, p. 10). Deniz Yıldırım (2009) noted the AKP’s electoral success and its appeal to the disadvantaged segments of Turkish society can be best explained through the concept of ‘neo-liberal populism’, a term first used in analyzing political developments that emerged in Latin America throughout the 1990s where “the 1990s have witnessed the emergence and proliferation of political leaders who combine a populist style with far-reaching neo-liberal agendas.”<sup>xvi</sup> (Filc, 2011, p. 221). These leaders paradoxically became successful in both implementing neo-liberal policies and getting the popular support of the masses who were the victims of these policies. Within this perspective, Deniz Yıldırım approaches neo-liberal populism as a ruling strategy of the neo-liberal hegemony and suggests that while the AKP has successfully deepened the neo-liberal hegemony project in Turkey it has also concomitantly won votes from the great proportion of the masses who are victims of neo-liberal policies owing to the populist relation between the AKP and disadvantaged sections of Turkish society.

According to Yıldırım, the success of neo-liberal populism as a ruling strategy depends on the localisation of the neo-liberal hegemony project. In other words, the neo-liberal hegemony to pacify its negative effects in peripheral countries to which it penetrated established a distorted relationship with the masses. Therefore by localising the neo-liberal hegemony project, neo-liberal populist leaders as in the case of Erdoğan can appeal to the masses through employing different mechanisms that would, in a Gramscian sense, in turn produce a common sense and a contradictory consciousness among the masses. According to Yıldırım, the localization of the neo-liberal hegemony project among the masses by the neo-populist leaders both serves to internalize the negative outcomes of

neo-liberalism and forms a contradictory consciousness among the subordinated classes that would both prevent them from comprehending their historical role in the world of production and lead them to perceive the interests of the dominant class as their own. Based on such observations, it can be suggested that the main feature of neo-liberal populism is that while a charismatic leader implements neo-liberal policies, he (and his party) at the same time develops a set of popular policies to win the consent of the subordinate classes for these policies. Yıldırım suggests that Erdogan and the AKP apply neo-liberal populism as a political strategy to perpetuate the neo-liberal hegemony project in Turkey and to naturalize global neo-liberal policies in the eyes of the masses. In particular, by developing a kind of populist rhetoric, “the AKP and Erdogan tend to cover class antagonisms of neo-liberal policies and simply base politics on a populist polarization axis between the bureaucratic elites (Kemalist) and the masses in Turkey.” (Yıldırım, 2009, p. 20, my translation). By means of such a populist technique, they continue the language of being in opposition whilst ruling and create a party and leader image that is in conflict with an invisible enemy: “This stance of the AKP and Erdogan is quite instrumental for strengthening the image that the party and its leader struggle for a reform of the *status quo* in the eyes of impoverished sections of Turkish society.” (Yıldırım, 2009, p. 20, my translation). The key point to grasp here is that neo-liberal populism gains importance with its techniques that disconnects politics from the economy and fundamental inequalities. In this context, Yıldırım suggests that the AKP also employs such techniques that isolate economics from politics on the one hand, and continues the basic mechanisms of neo liberalism and deepens marketization on the another hand. Therefore the AKP both aims to create a social and political environment that would minimize any resistance against neo-liberal policies and take the political and electoral support of the masses who are victims of the same policies. Yıldırım suggest that this *Janus* like character of the AKP found both in the party’s authoritarian tendency whilst implementing neo-liberal policies and in the popular policies that the party

develops to win the consent of the masses. According to Yıldırım the AKP, in order to help poor and disadvantaged segments of Turkish society, developed a set of populist policies, which are based on the use of local level mobilization techniques (in particular by the agency of Municipalities) and both informal and formal mechanisms of redistribution. For Yıldırım these populist policies may appear in the form of health reforms, free distribution of coal, food, fuel, educational reforms or urban renewal projects and mostly under the philanthropic and Islamic solidarity ethic.

Yıldırım suggests that the AKP, through applying such policies still continues to deepen the neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey and paradoxically achieves the critical objective of gaining the consent of subordinate classes to these policies, ensuring electoral success. For Yıldırım, the AKP's implementation of neo-liberal policies and deepening marketization goes hand-in-hand with the increasing proportion of the exploitation of labour, insecure employment, and the suppression of social rights and unions. In other words, the market imperatives of neo-liberalism necessitate the disorganization and restriction of social rights. Therefore the AKP, in order to implement neo-liberal policies without any resistance seeks to eliminate any organized power or mass resistance against neo-liberal policies and suppress social rights. Through depoliticizing the masses, the party instead develops a direct and hierarchical relationship with the victims of neo-liberal policies and draws their support through populist policies based on the ethics of Islamic solidarity.

Neo-liberal populism is a free distributed course book. Yet, it is also the transfer of public resources to the market and a contribution to the capital accumulation because of millions of publishing of these books each year. In epitome, it is the marketization. Neo-liberal populism may appear as a reform in the health services and as the most popular policy of the AKP in the eyes of the impoverished sections of Turkish society. However, it also emerges as an immense rise on the health expenditures due to their resource transfer to the health facilities and drug monopolies. Neoliberal populism is the fulfilment of the dreams of the impoverished people to own a house with reasonable instalments. Yet it is the opening of the valued shanty house lands in the city centre to the capital and rent under the name of

urban renewal and mass- housing projects. (Yıldırım, 2009: pp.81-2, my translation).

Neo-liberal populism is a ruling strategy that deepens the neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey. It is also a mechanism employed by the AKP to take the consent of subordinate classes to neo-liberal policies. It progresses by suppressing social rights and depoliticising the masses while basing politics on populist discourse which appeals to disadvantaged segments of society who are losers of neo-liberalism. The neo-liberal populism of the AKP functions to replace the welfare state with the ethic of Islamic solidarity and philanthropy. A charismatic leader, as in the case of Erdogan, also plays a key role in both the perpetuation of neo-liberal policies and attracting the consent of the masses. Finally, in Gramscian terms, neo-liberal populism can be seen as a method of *co-optation*; a strategy to gain the consent of subordinate masses for the existing hegemony of the dominant class through offering them material incentives.

## **2.5 Concluding Remarks**

The main objective of this chapter was to set up a Gramscian framework whilst analyzing the rise and the rule of the AKP in Turkish politics. With this aim, the first part of this chapter illustrated the historical context within which certain political developments contributed to or affected Gramsci's political and theoretical endeavour. The second and third parts of the chapter discussed how Gramsci developed and used his concept of hegemony to analyze the distinctive nature of the modern state in Western societies and to reveal how the ruling class (bourgeoisie) wins the consent of the subordinated classes to its rule. The aspects of hegemony constituted the subject of the fourth part of this chapter. The aim of the fourth part was to shed light on basic notions that Gramsci developed in explaining the certain stages, which the dominant class follows whilst building its hegemony over the subaltern classes. Finally, the fifth part of this chapter discussed how contemporary hegemonic projects are formed and illustrated how neo-liberalism as a political and economic ideology

ascended to a hegemonic being in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and accordingly resorted to restructure the world economic system.

The final part of this chapter analyzed the Turkish experience of the neo-liberal hegemony starting from the 1980s until and after the rise of the AKP. The overall evaluation in the final section made it clear that the AKP emerged as an organic solution to the political and economic crisis of the neo-liberal hegemony in 2002. More significantly, the AKP's coming to power in 2002 and its stay in office for almost ten years revealed that the party became the new contractor and actor of the neo-liberal hegemonic project in Turkey. It was also discussed that the rise of the AKP, in accordance with Gramsci's ideas, represented a passive revolution as it did not only restore the neo-liberal hegemonic project in Turkey but also eliminated the counter-hegemonic potential of former political Islamist movements that the party hailed from in the past. In particular, it was emphasized that the rise of the AKP paved the way for former radical Islamists' absorption into the existing secular order and yielded them to merge into the logic and culture of a free market economy. The chapter finally disclosed that neo-liberal populist policies of the AKP carry utmost importance not only to deepen the neo-liberal agenda in Turkey but also to take the consent of the masses for the neo-liberal hegemony project that the party undertook. Within this perspective, the next chapter will elaborate a Gramscian framework to analyze another significant element; the relationship between liberal intellectuals and the AKP in the context of neo-liberal restructuring in Turkey.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE AKP AND LIBERAL INTELLECTUALS

The previous chapter analyzed the rise of the AKP as relevant to neo-liberal hegemony from a Gramscian perspective. The formation of neo-liberal hegemony on a global scale and the Turkish experience of it were analyzed in the light of certain economic developments that brought about its ascendance to hegemonic position. In particular, whilst analyzing the ways in which the AKP became a successful actor of neo-liberal hegemony, the neo-liberal populist social policies of the party were attributed to a key factor in understanding the party's deep societal links with the masses and its ability to construct consent from the masses for the neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey. However, the AKP did not only establish and perpetuate the neo-liberal hegemony by offering material incentives to the masses within the economic realm; it also established an ideological hegemony within the cultural and social spheres to gain consent among the masses for the neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey. In other words, alongside the hegemony that the AKP established within the economic sphere, there is a cultural, ideological and symbolic dimension to this hegemony. This chapter will focus on the function and role of liberal intellectuals in the establishment of such hegemony from a Gramscian perspective.

#### **3.1 The Origins and Development of the Relationship between Liberal Intellectuals and the AKP**

Ever since the AKP's coming to power in the 2002 national elections, there emerged a kind of relationship between the AKP rule and a group of intellectuals who classify themselves as liberals or democrats. Although these intellectuals showed heterogeneous features, they were mainly referred to as liberal intellectuals who mainly consisted of columnists in daily newspapers. The support of this intellectual group had been

significant for the AKP from various points. In particular, these intellectuals, by discussing that the AKP was a liberal democrat party, which adopted the language of human rights and respect for individual freedoms interpreted the rise and rule of the AKP as emancipation from the authoritarian regime of *Kemalism*. Therefore this intellectual stratum attributed to the AKP a key role in the normalization of the democracy in Turkey, especially in terms of the party's potential for the elimination of military guardianship and offering a solution to the Kurdish problem.

Eliminating military guardianship and assuming a reformist identity naturally helped the Justice and Development Party (AKP) attract enormous support from intellectual circles. The relative weakness of the intellectual segments of Islamic groups and their insufficient influence over the public made this support by secular intellectuals particularly important. In this way, for a long time, there has been an emphasis upon a coalition between the AKP and liberal intellectuals. It should be underlined that these intellectuals were actually a group of people displaying heterogeneous features who represented liberals and democrats<sup>xvii</sup>. But the reason for the support they offered was more or less the same: to make sure that the government, eager to take the necessary steps for the democratization of Turkey would be welcomed by secular circles. In other words, during this process, liberal intellectuals did not become AKP members. They did not maintain organic ties with the support base of the party. On the contrary, they preserved their independence and offered their support through an objective perspective. (Mahcupyan, *Today's Zaman*<sup>xviii</sup>, 2012).

The extract by liberal intellectual by Etyen Mahçupyan<sup>xix</sup> generally summarizes the reasons behind liberal intellectuals' support for AKP rule in Turkey. Although liberal intellectuals who supported the AKP rule and its policies come from different backgrounds, the common ground for their support can be related to the argument that they presumed that the AKP, by replacing the authoritarian Kemalist order, would simultaneously democratize and liberalize Turkey. Moreover, as in the case of Mahcupyan, most of these liberal intellectuals declared that they did not have any established organic ties with AKP rule and support base, but they continued to exert influence on the masses through propagating ideas

which promoted the AKP policies and rule in during the years between 2002 and 2011. In particular, by means of visual and media productions, and by arguing that the AKP was a liberal democrat party which adopted the discourse of human rights, economic and political liberalization, these intellectuals provided the AKP with an ideological leadership which contributed to the establishment of the hegemony of the party in Turkish politics and progress of neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey.

### **3.2 Liberal Critic of Kemalism**

In order to elaborate the relationship between liberal intellectuals and the AKP, an understanding of the development of liberalism as an ideology in the Turkish context is highly significant. The development of liberalism in Turkey as an ideology emanates from liberal critics of Kemalist ideology and the Kemalist modernization process. Therefore, the initial concern of this part is to reveal liberal intellectuals' engagement with Kemalism. As one such liberal intellectual, Ahmet Altan<sup>xx</sup> suggested about Kemalism: "If Ataturk had not done what he did, against the will of the people, we would have neither the Kurdish problem nor a problem about religion in this country." (Altan, 2009, p.18). And as another liberal intellectual and academic, Atilla Yayla<sup>xxi</sup> put it: "Kemalism corresponds to what is reactionary rather than to what is progressive." (Yayla, 2008, p.10).

These criticisms of Kemalism and the Kemalist modernization project made by two prominent liberal intellectuals represent a common and dominant view among the liberal intelligentsia. The liberal condemnation of Kemalism and its modernization project was based on the assertion that the secular Republic, which came into being as a result of the Ottoman-Turkish modernization process, was intrinsically authoritarian, nationalist and undemocratic. As Yayla argued; "the reforms implemented during the Ottoman era as well during the Republic, were with a few exceptions, aimed at saving or founding and strengthening the state, at the expense of individuals, rather than aimed at expanding and institutionalizing individual liberty." (Yayla, 2008, p. 8). For liberal critics, the Kemalist ruling elite

(bureaucracy and military) opted for a radical, top down and an authoritarian modernization project, which was based on harsh ethnic nationalism and rigid secularism. “This is remarkable considering the outright and official denial of the existence of its Kurdish population for many decades, Turkey’s vehement denial of the Armenian Genocide and its violent efforts to assimilate and repress cultural differences of its religious and ethnic minorities”(Ayata, 2012, p.5). In other words, for liberals “the top-down authoritarian implementation of secularism ultimately proved incapable of adapting the secular classes to the universal, libertarian values of the West.” (Mahcupyan cited in Karaveli, 2010, p. 93). In addition to these, for liberals, another reason for the lack of universal and libertarian values in Turkey was the development of capitalism in Turkey under the leadership of the Kemalist ruling elite. According to liberals, the Kemalist secular state initiated the capitalization process in Turkey by its own hand and created a secular bourgeoisie that was organically linked to the state. Therefore, the nature of the Kemalist modernization project did not allow for the emergence of a Western-type civil society which existed autonomously from the state as it was in the West. Instead, for liberals, the Kemalist secular state indeed created a state for itself. What is more, for liberal intellectuals, as the Kemalist ruling elite ruptured all ties with the authentic and Islamic culture of the Ottoman Empire, there emerged a kind of cultural estrangement between religious conservative people and the secular Republican ruling elite in modern Turkey. For liberals “on a mental level, secularization and modernization in Turkey replaced the immobilizing certitudes of the traditional world with the similarly immobilizing dogmatism of positivism.” (Mahcupyan, 2008, p. 89). Within this perspective, liberal intellectuals argued that the Kemalist secular Republic “did not show any signs of evolving along liberal lines and did not embrace Western ideas and symbols.” (Karaveli, 2010, p. 88). On the contrary, liberal intellectuals suggested that the Kemalist ideology and Kemalist ruling elite formed a military tutelage regime in Turkey through constantly intervening in civil politics and by staging four military coups

between 1960 and 1997. Therefore, for liberals the Kemalist modernization project resulted in the oppression of individual rights and freedoms in Turkey. As Yayla puts it: “My objection to Kemalism is that it is fashioned as an ideology and then forced on everyone by the state, with those dissenting from it being terrorized.” (Yayla, 2008, p. 66). It can, therefore, be argued that liberal criticisms of Kemalism and its modernization project are based on the view that Kemalism as an ideology did not embrace universal and libertarian values and led to state authoritarianism and the oppression of individuals.

The conditions which gave rise to “modern” Turkey created an individual that was condemned not to challenge restrictions on the freedom which had been offered: It was the individual which had accepted to remain within the confines of the freedom handed out by the state. Truly free individuals and a truly free society consequently did not emerge. (Mahcupyan, 2008, p. 88).

For liberals, the initial emancipation from the authoritarian regime of Kemalism emerged after the 1980 military coup under the leadership of liberal Prime Minister Turgut Ozal. Later on the Kurdish problem and Islamic movements, along with the end of Cold War paved the way for liberals to question the essence of Kemalism and its modernization project (Ayata, 2012, p. 5). In particular, during this process, liberals allied themselves with Kurds and Islamists to form a broad anti-Kemalist block. Therefore, as Karaveli elaborated, a decade prior to the rise of the AKP liberals were “ready to embrace any force that would present itself as the democratic alternative to Kemalism.” (Karaveli, 2010, p. 87). In this regard, it can be argued that the rise of the AKP in the 2002 national elections captured the liberal political sympathies as this new party appeared to represent both a viable and more liberal alternative to Kemalism.

### **3.3 Liberal Intellectuals and the AKP**

The relationship between the AKP and liberal intellectuals began to crystallize following the AKP’s success in the 2002 national elections.

Liberal intellectuals' condemnation of the Kemalist Republic and its values can be seen as the main reason for the emergence of liberal sympathy towards the AKP. The AKP's definition of its ideology as conservative democracy, and its declaration that the party is dedicated to EU membership, offered the prospects of improving democratic standards in Turkey and is also highly significant in terms of understanding the nature of the rapprochement between liberal intellectuals and the AKP.

For liberal intellectuals, as the modernization of Turkey was realized by the Kemalist establishment through authoritarian methods which excluded conservative Muslims, Kurds, Alevis and non-Muslims, they argued that Turkey needed a social contract based on a new political system, such as a Second Republic, which would grant equality and liberty to the all excluded segments of Turkish society. In this respect, the emergence of the AKP as a conservative democrat party that is committed to following the democratic standards of the EU marked a critical point which the consent of liberal intellectuals' for the party's mission to eliminate the Kemalist order through a concomitant liberalization of Turkish democracy. As Ahmet Altan, a liberal intellectual and editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper *Taraf*<sup>xxii</sup> put it;

Kemalist Republic was established under the authority of a single party and single man. Single man and Single Party equals to a dictatorship. Such a Republic, which was designed to rule an agricultural population of fifteen million, could not rule an industrial society of seventy millions anymore. Suppression of Kurds, Alevis, labourers and liberal demands by this dictatorship damaged this country a lot. However, military and judicial pressures finally came to an end. Now, a legitimate and soft transition from dictatorship to democratic Republic is realized...The old system is now shattering. While I am writing this article a lot of commissioned officers are now interrogated by the police because of their attempt to stage a military coup against an elected government (AKP). This is a breaking change, a change that the guardians of the old regime could not realize and accept. Generals and judges could not rule a country anymore whose export and production boomed and became the sixteenth economic power in the world. They did not have enough capacity to understand this transformation. Imagine a state that condemned and excluded Kurds, conservatives who pray in mosques, Alevis<sup>xxiii</sup> who pray in *Cemevis*<sup>xxiv</sup> and leftists who read Marx.

Who can say that such a state belongs to the whole nation? Fortunately, this system is changing. Dictatorship is now ending. The guardians of the old system (military elites) are now judged before the law. This means that Turkey will be ruled by an elected government and the demands of the people will be represented in politics. Kurds will be granted equal rights. Legitimate demands of Alevis will be accepted. Leftists will not be seen as an enemy anymore. The struggles of the military and judiciary to raise a monotype and homogenous generation will end. There will not be any interference in race, religion, ideas and the demands of the people. People will live according to their will. We will be a democratic Republic. (Altan, Taraf, My Translation).

As it is in the case of Altan, it can be suggested that liberal intellectuals viewed the AKP as an antidote against Kemalism and posited the AKP as the agents of Turkey's transformation along liberal lines. In this respect, it can be argued that the rapprochement between liberal intellectuals and the AKP emerged as a result of two different but interrelated reasons; elimination of the Kemalist order and democratization of Turkey along liberal lines. As another liberal intellectual, Ali Bayramoğlu<sup>xxv</sup>, a columnist in a daily newspaper *Yeni Şafak*<sup>xxvi</sup> suggested, the transformation process that Turkey underwent during the party's initial tenure in power (2002-2007) was characterised by the following developments:

The initial tenure of the AKP remarked that dissolution of the old historic bloc (Kemalist statu quo). Kemalist judiciary, military, bureaucracy, and universities dramatically lost their power and authority. These developments were complemented by the replacement of military tutelage regime by transparent law and order that yielded to the democratization and expansion of civil liberties to a large extent. (Bayramoğlu, *Yenisafak*, 2011, my translation).

Within this perspective, it can be suggested that liberal intellectuals also attributed to the AKP a key role in terms of its potential to build a new pluralist and liberal democratic Turkey within which all ethnic and religious differences exist in diversity. In particular, the AKP's origins outside of Kemalist state ideology and from a political Islamist movement which had been suppressed and victimized by the Kemalist order had a significant influence on liberal intellectuals' ascribing to the party a liberal and pluralist

character. As another liberal intellectual, Mustafa Akyol<sup>xxvii</sup>, a columnist in *Hurriyet Daily Newspaper*<sup>xxviii</sup> puts it; “the AKP folks get that, because they are not brainwashed by the “state ideology. This doesn’t guarantee that they won’t make mistakes, which they do. But it means that they have the mental capacity to understand reality and act accordingly.” (Akyol, Hürriyet Daily News). Therefore, it can be argued that liberal intellectuals approached the AKP with an intuition, which presumed that the AKP had a liberal agenda and pluralist perception of Turkish society. More significantly, with reference to a number of steps taken by the AKP to deal with ethnic and religious problems, liberal intellectuals claimed that the AKP’s policies were leading to more open and diverse society in Turkish. As Mahçupyan elaborated it;

To confess, Turkey is currently ruled by the most democratic and modern government since the Ozal era. The prime minister of this government (AKP) is the first prime minister who talks to Kurds in Kurdish. This proves how prime minister is sincere to solve the Kurdish problem. Although such a prime minister is supposed to be toppled over by official ideology (*Kemalism*), he is opening an official Turkish TV channel that broadcasts in the Kurdish language. (Mahcupyan, Taraf, 2009, my translation).

Unlike the Kemalist state, liberal intellectuals suggested that the AKP took reformist steps to solve the Kurdish issue and create a more open and diverse Turkish society. According to liberal intellectuals, the Kemalist state and Kemalism as an ideology claimed that there were no Kurds in Turkey. “They are not supposed to exist on the face of the earth. If they live in Turkey, they are called “mountain Turks.”(They at best can be a trivial branch of the glorious Turkish race).”(Akyol, 22 November 2007, Hürriyet Daily News). In this respect, liberal intellectuals suggested that the long-standing denial of the Kurdish Question by the Kemalist state began to change with the AKP government. As Bayramoglu affirmed it, during the first phase of the AKP rule:

Substantive rights and freedoms expanded, official constrains upon language and identity were removed therefore demands of Kurds for freedom of speech, to a great extent were satisfied. Official ideology



recognized that Kurdish problem stems from the legitimate demands and disadvantaged position of Kurds. (Bayramoglu, Yeni Safak, 2011, my translation)

In a similar vein, another prominent liberal intellectual, Hasan Cemal<sup>xxx</sup>, a columnist in the daily newspaper *Milliyet*<sup>xxx</sup> elaborated the initial democratic steps taken by the AKP towards the Kurdish problem;

Prime Minister Erdogan stated ‘the AKP rule has removed all state based denial, exclusion and assimilation policies. To look on the full side of the glass, under the AKP government, the application that bans Kurdish families to name their children with Kurdish names ended. Kurdish citizens gained the right to open language courses and official Turkish TV, TRT ŞEŞ, for the first time in its history broadcast in the Kurdish language. Some universities opened Kurdish departments. The laws that ban Kurd’s freedom of speech and the right of Kurdish organizations were substantially removed. All of these developments were promising and good developments. (Cemal, Milliyet, 2011, my translation)

In addition to these, liberal intellectuals also argued that the AKP accomplished something that the “Turkish state has never been very successful in doing: Winning Kurdish hearts and minds.” (Akyol, White Path, 2007). Unlike the traditional policies of Ankara, which were based on the Turkification of Kurds by banning their language and culture, liberal intellectuals asserted that the AKP recognized Kurdish identity and culture. As Akyol put it: “Erdoğan became the first prime minister in Turkish history to acknowledge, “ the state made mistakes about the Kurdish issue,” and has repeatedly emphasized the Kurds’ right to express their culture and identity.”(Akyol, White Path, 2007). For liberal intellectuals, as AKP members tended to come from non-Kemalist tradition and especially from the line of Islamic-liberal synthesis, a tradition that was represented with Turgut Özal in early 1990s, they were successful in winning the hearts and minds of Kurdish people. As Akyol put it; “today President Gül and the Erdoğan government continue with the tradition of President Özal. When the Kurdish citizens look at them, they do not see sinister autocrats that look down upon them, but modest democrats who share their values and understand their yearning for freedom.”(Akyol, White Path, 2007).

Alongside the Kurdish Problem, liberal intellectuals also suggested that the AKP paved the way for the formation of a public sphere within which new ethnic and religious identities existed in diversity. In particular, with reference to the globalization process, liberal intellectuals suggested;

All the diversity that exists within Turkish society is becoming more visible and vocal. We now have Kurds, Sufi orders, other Sunni communities, Alevis, Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Arabs, Assyrians, Protestants, Shiites, and so on. Unlike neighbouring Iran, we even have gays and lesbians... (Akyol, White Path, 2010) Kurds, who are not "mountain Turks" anymore, are demanding (and at least partly achieving) civil liberties that they could not have imagined in the 80s. Turkish Armenians, members of a community that has kept its head down since the beginning of the Turkish Republic (for reasons you can imagine), now have public intellectuals who influence our national discussions. What exactly happened to their forefathers in 1915 is being discussed freely on television for the first time. (Akyol, White Path, 2007)

To evaluate the general attitude of liberal intellectuals, it can be argued that liberal intellectuals viewed and presented the AKP as a political party that had an aim and a capacity to normalize democracy in Turkey along liberal lines. In particular with reference to certain developments that emerged between the years 2002 and 2011, which also corresponded to the establishment of the hegemony of the AKP in Turkish politics liberal intellectuals argued,

From a liberal perspective, the past Turkish decade has largely been a pleasant one. The Turkish military, which has ousted four elected governments since 1960, has been gradually pushed to where it should be in any democracy. Systematic human right abuses, such as torture and summary execution, have disappeared. Reforms encouraged by the European Union have expanded the rights of Kurds, Christians, women and basically all minority groups. (Akyol, Hürriyet Daily News, 2012).

Based on these assumptions liberal intellectuals embraced the AKP as a harbinger of a new, democratic, pluralist Turkey and supported certain policies of the AKP as they believed that the party was transforming Turkey along liberal lines and normalizing democracy by emancipating the country

from the authoritarian regime of Kemalism. Such an interaction between the AKP and liberal intellectuals in turn gave the party a liberal image that was to its advantage, especially during the years between 2002 and 2007. During this period, the blessing bestowed by the liberal intellectuals was crucial in constructing the image of the “post-Islamist” AKP as a party of liberal and democratic reform (Karaveli, 2010, p. 85). However, the AKP’S ten years tenure revealed that the relationship between liberal intellectuals and the AKP has not been unproblematic.

### 3.4 Liberal Disenchantment with the AKP

In the past few weeks, the incumbent Justice and Development Party, or AKP, and particularly Prime Minister Erdoğan have managed to alienate many liberal intellectuals who have been supportive of their cause. This took place via a series of reckless statements. First, on the Kurdish issue, Erdoğan made a speech emphasizing the “oneness” of Turkey, neglecting the demands for political decentralization and more freedom for the Kurdish language. Then he bashed a statue in Kars – the “Monument to Humanity” – and called for its removal. His party released a confusing package of regulations on alcohol, and Erdoğan, while trying to say that his party respects all ways of life, spoke about drinkers in a way that sounded offensive to many. He also sued Ahmet Altan, the editor-in-chief of the liberal daily *Taraf*, which has been supportive of many AKP policies, for “insulting” him in his column. Meanwhile, AKP Minister Faruk Çelik made a quite illiberal remark on the Alevi issue. He said granting the status of “house of worship” to *Alevi Cemevis* would be against “the revolutionary laws,” the laws imposed by Atatürk, which was a surprising thing for an AKP minister to say. (Akyol, Hurriyet Daily News, January 2011).

The aforementioned words of Mustafa Akyol as a liberal intellectual who has been supporting and sympathizing with the AKP generally summarize the reasons behind the disenchantment between liberal intellectuals and the AKP. In fact, the AKP’s second electoral victory in 2007 signalled the beginnings of liberal intellectual’s disenchantment with AKP rule. After that time, liberal intellectuals gradually began to blame the AKP for the latter leaving its initial reformist agenda and turning into a traditional Ankara party. As another liberal intellectual Mehmet Altan<sup>xxxi</sup> explains it;

The AKP initially took very important steps to follow the democratic standards of the EU. Without any hesitation, I can say that the AKP had very positive actions. During the first phase of AKP rule, Turkey underwent a sociological normalization and the tutelage of the military regime lost its influence over civil politics to a great extent. I supported the AKP during this era and if it takes the same steps today, I can support the AKP again. However, after the elimination of the military guardianship regime, the AKP tended to stop democratization. Maybe the aim was not to democratize Turkey but to eliminate the military guardianship for a transition to religious Kemalism. I never thought that the AKP would make such a big mistake. So far, I resisted secular Kemalism and from now on I will resist religious Kemalism. (Altan in Aksam, 2012, my translation).

As it can be seen in the words of Altan as a liberal intellectual, certain political developments during the AKP's second and in particular third tenure in power paved the way for the liberal intellectuals' disenchantment with the AKP. Liberal disappointment with the AKP emerged as a result of liberal intellectuals' bemoaning the authoritarian turn of the party's policies by unveiling its religious, conservative and nationalist leanings. In fact, this changing posture of liberal intellectuals' towards the AKP stems from their priorities when they supported and promoted the party during its initial tenure in power. During this period, liberal intellectuals, whilst promoting AKP rule, did so in order to eliminate the Kemalist system, which in turn prevented them from seeing the real ideological orientation of the AKP; religious conservative nationalism. Such a delusion gradually resulted in liberal disenchantment with the AKP. As Akyol put is:

I have sympathized with the AKP most for their unravelling of Kemalism. They have broken many taboos, ranging from the Kurdish issue to rights for non-Muslims, from Cyprus to the military's dominance. The fact that they accomplished these liberal reforms as a post-Islamist party has made the AKP experience even more valuable for me, due to its significance for the Muslim world. However, in the past year, the reformist edge of the AKP has dramatically waned. The "Kurdish opening," which promised a liberal and peaceful solution to the country's decades-old conflict with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), was replaced by a more hawkish policy of "counter-terrorism." Various journalists were arrested for "propaganda on behalf of terrorism," with indictments that would not be considered serious in most democratic countries. Prime Minister Erdoğan's intolerance to

criticism continued, with “insult” cases opened against even friendly journalists. (Akyol, August 2012, Hurriyet Daily News).

As it can be understood from the words of Akyol, most liberal intellectuals supported the AKP as they believed that it was eliminating the Kemalist order and normalizing democracy in Turkey along liberal lines. Yet for liberal intellectuals, recent political developments, which emerged after the AKP’s second electoral victory and has been gradually increasing ever since revealed that the AKP deviated from its liberal image. In fact, within the last five years, certain political steps taken by the AKP unveiled the party’s religious conservative and nationalist leanings. In particular, the AKP’s recent approach towards the Kurdish problem and demands of Alevis, which also alienated liberal intellectuals, revealed the AKP is not a promising party for liberal intellectuals anymore.

Liberal intellectuals recently criticized the AKP as the latter left its initial attempt to solve the Kurdish issue through constitutional citizenship and turning it into a kind of security issue between the PKK and Turkish military. In addition, Prime Minister Erdoğan’s adaptation of an exclusive discourse against Kurdish politicians with a call to love Turkey or leave it in 2008 further alienated liberals from the AKP. The adaptation of such a discourse by Prime Minister Erdoğan was interpreted by some liberal intellectuals as the replacement of a democratic-oriented Prime Minister and the AKP with an over-riding focus on security. Yasemin Çongar<sup>xxxii</sup>, the deputy editor-in-chief of the liberal newspaper *Taraf* explained her disillusionment with the Prime Minister by saying; “these are not the words of a reformer.” (Çongar, *Taraf*, 2008). In a similar vein, Hasan Cemal added that “Erdoğan changed the whole discourse. This is the kind of disillusionment we have been having.”(Cemal, *Milliyet*, 2008).

Liberal disillusionment with the AKP can be better understood whilst having a look at more recent developments that unveiled the AKP’s religious conservative nationalism. On May 5 2012, speaking before the AKP convention in the city of Adana, Erdoğan emphasized that the AKP has

four red lines; “one nation, one flag, one religion, and one state”. Within this perspective, Saracoglu (2011) and Mert (2012) suggest that the AKP’s recent attempt to solve the Kurdish problem was indeed based on the politics of religious brotherhood. In particular, Mert suggests that in 2012 the AKP, with reference to Sunni Islamic values as binding elements between Kurds and Turks and by recalling the multi-ethnic and religious structure of the Ottoman Past (under the authority of Sunni Turkish rule) simply opted for the Kurds to abide by the rule of the Turkish state: “That is why Turkish conservatives feel genuinely disappointed and betrayed when Kurds ask for more than what they had under an Ottoman-style system of benevolence and obedience.” (Mert, July/09/2012, Hürriyet Daily News). Such a monolithic approach to Turkish society and emphasis on oneness and the unitary structure of Turkey can also be observed in the AKP’s engagement with the latest demands of the Alevi. A recent Alevi request in early July for Cemevis to be recognized by the state as an official worship place for Alevi was dismissed by AKP parliamentary speaker Cemil Çiçek on the grounds that “Alevism is not a separate religion,” and that the house of worship for Alevi, as for other Muslims, is the mosque. (Cicek cited in Schwartz, July 18, 2012). To this was added a further dimension when Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdağ claimed that “Alevism was an interpretation within Islam and that Alevi are all Muslims. Therefore, the place of worship for all Muslims around the world is the same; their common house of worship is the mosque.” (Bozdog, cited in Schwartz, July 18, 2012). Such an exclusive attitude towards the demands of Alevi, and the emphasis on Alevism as not a separate religion within Islam in fact reveals the AKP’s homogeneous perception of religion in Turkey. The AKP’s emphasis on religious unity reveals that Sunni Islam, which the majority of Turks adhere to, is seen as the only official religion in Turkey. This conservative perception of religion can be better understood whilst looking at the recent overhaul of the education system. The new education legislation, which is known as 4+4+4 introduced a set of new elective courses on the Quran, the life of Prophet Mohammed and

Essential Religion Information for high schools. The legislation was criticized by the main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP) as an attempt to introduce a stronger religious component into the education system and was seen by certain segments of Turkish society as an attempt by Erdoğan and his government to raise a religiously-minded young generation; these criticisms were dismissed by Prime Minister Erdoğan as follows;

Do you expect the conservative democrat AK Party to raise atheist generations? This may be your business and objective but not ours. We will raise a generation that is conservative and democratic and embraces the values and historical principles of its nation." (Erdoğan, AKP gathering, January 2012).

Disappointed by Erdoğan's statements, Hasan Cemal, as a leading liberal commentator, answered Erdogan as follows:

I am asking the Prime Minister: What can I do if I do not want my child to be raised as religious and conservative? The Kemalist state was concerned with rising Kemalist youth. Now is it time to raise a conservative youth? Does this comply with democracy? Do you think that an education system that aims to raise a homogeneous and prototype human being can comply with the colours and diversity that democracies prioritise? I am not against religious or conservative people. I respect them all but I don't have to be like them. If a Prime Minister says 'we will raise a conservative and religious generation', it makes me worried about democracy. If the Prime Minister is following this type of policy, this means that we are leading towards authoritarian rule. (Cemal, February 2012, My Translation).

Based on these, it can be argued that current widespread opinion among many Turkish liberal intellectuals is that the AKP is not a promising party anymore that is leading democratisation efforts in Turkey along liberal lines. Rather, the governing party is criticized by liberal intellectuals for its increasingly authoritarian style, and even for creating its own authoritarian establishment. Liberal intellectuals' disappointment with the AKP can be related to their realization that the AKP's religious conservative and nationalist tendencies. In particular the denial of demands of Kurds and Alevis with a particular emphasis on religious and national unity added a further dimension to the disenchantment between the AKP and liberal

intellectuals. In other words, liberal intellectuals realized that the AKP did not have a pluralist and democratic perception of Turkish society, which won their sympathies and support for the AKP especially during the party's initial tenure. Finally, liberal intellectuals realized that the AKP aimed to design Turkish society according to rigid conservative lines, which was for liberal intellectuals another type of social engineering project that the authoritarian Kemalist regime used to impose on Turkish society beginning from the establishment of the secular Republic in 1923. In short, it could be suggested that certain political developments<sup>xxxiii</sup> that emerged after the AKP's second electoral victory and which have continued up to the present resulted in a parting of the ways between liberal intellectuals and the AKP. However, it is a fact that liberal intellectuals disseminated their perception of the liberal AKP that was leading to democratize the country in the last decade. The next part will analyze the further implications of this relationship between the AKP and liberal intellectuals with reference to AKP's self defined ideology of conservative democracy which appealed to liberal intellectuals and resulted in emergence of their support towards the AKP rule.

### **3.5 Liberal Intellectuals and Translation of the AKP's Conservative Religious Nationalism into Liberal Theses**

The previous section proved that liberal intellectuals interpreted the rise and rule of the AKP as an opportunity to emancipate from the authoritarian regime of Kemalism and embraced the party as a harbinger of new democratic, pluralist and liberal Turkey until realizing its conservative religious and nationalist leanings. It was also illustrated that liberal intelligentsia suggested that the rise and rule of the AKP in Turkish politics signified a democratic political transformation in contrast to the pre-2002 Kemalist era. In particular, it was revealed that liberal intellectuals introduced the AKP as a liberal democrat party that had a desire to eliminate Turkey's democratic deficit and to transform Turkey's ongoing political and social development on the basis of liberal democracy. Although liberal intellectuals attributed to the AKP a key role in terms of its



potential for the elimination of military tutelage (*vesayet*) and normalization of democracy in Turkey and viewed the AKP as a liberal democrat party, their recent experience that the AKP has turned into a more religious, nationalist and conservative party paved the way for the liberal disenchantment with the AKP. In fact it can be argued that liberal disenchantment with the AKP emanated from liberal intellectuals' attribution of a liberal character to the AKP's self-defined ideology as a conservative democracy whilst sympathizing with and supporting the AKP. Therefore, understanding the AKP's ideology in terms of conservative democracy can present a critical insight in understanding the ideological orientation of the AKP and contribute to the analysis of the role played by liberal intellectuals in the establishment of the hegemony of the AKP in Turkish politics and in the context of neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey.

In fact, from its foundation, the AKP defined itself as a conservative democrat party, which was reformist and modern at the same time. "Regarding the 'democratic' aspect, the emphasis was on a vision of Turkish society 'where differences were perceived not as a source of conflict but as richness.'" (Cosar and Simten, 2010, p. 63). The programme of the party also strongly emphasized that the AKP acknowledged and aimed to promote human rights, such as accepting different beliefs, and ethnic and linguistic differences, the right of free expression, the right of association, and the right to life (Hale, 2009, p. 547). In addition, as part of its democratization programme, the party declared that "it considers that diversity is not a source of differentiation, but cultural richness that reinforces solidarity." (The AKP 2002b, art, 4, cited in Hale, 2009, p. 547). Moreover, "the AKP also used the EU as an umbrella symbol that embodies the democratic, reformist and modern aspects of the party's identity." (Cosar and Simten, 2010, p. 63). Based on these, it can be suggested that the democratic feature of the AKP was based on a pluralist perception of Turkish society as the party declared that it respected individual rights, different beliefs, races, languages and values participatory democracy (Cosar and Simten, 2010, p.63).

On the other hand, the AKP's conservatism was based on the party's posture towards modernization and social change. Despite popular belief, the AKP's conservatism was not a kind of romanticism that resisted social change and modernization. Kalaycioglu (2009) suggests that "the AKP's conservatism can best be described as an attitude in favour of natural and evolutionary change, and a posture against social engineering." (Kalaycioglu, 2009 p. 549). The AKP's conservatism was based on the view that modernization and social change should go hand in hand with preservation of social norms and values of Turkish society. As the party president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, made clear:

All efforts that impose or order certain principles and aim at a homogeneous society, or are based on social engineering are obstacles to a healthy democratic system. Our identity as conservative democrats makes us oppose all kinds of social and political engineering. (Erdogan cited in Hale and Ozbudun, 2005, p. 549).

It was claimed that with such a synthesis of conservatism and the AKP aimed to reproduce the local and deep-rooted values of Turkish society in harmony with the universal standards of political conservatism. In other words, the party advocated that the social and cultural traditions of Turkey needed to be preserved whilst leading an evolutionary, gradual and natural social transformation (Hale, 2006 p. 549; Joppien, 2011, p. 10). As one of the former main spokespersons of the AKP, Dengir Mir Mehmet Firat elaborated this point:

an understanding of conservatism that does not carry the past into today [:] yet its roots are established in the past, its face is turned to the future, contemporaneous and novelty seeking in essence, so that it provides for the co-existence of the local and universal, tradition and modernity, and produces change while preserving continuity and thus seek[ing] the objective opening up to the contemporary world. (Firat cited in Kalaycioglu, 2007, p. 240).

Based upon its programme, it can be suggested that the AKP cannot be distinguished from a liberal or a conservative democrat party. According to Hale, "although the party describes itself as 'conservative democrat' there

is very little emphasis on conservative values in its programme, except for the passage supporting family values and emphasizing the need to strengthen family. ” (Hale, 2009, p. 249). Therefore, a critical insight into the AKP’s perception of family can reveal the real conservative face of the party.

Kalaycioglu suggests that the politics of conservatism in Turkey is based on promotion of “traditions, mores, and customs, as well as institutions that values and sustain patterns of behaviour, which are tied to traditions.” (Kalaycioglu, 2009, p. 241). Moreover, for Kalaycioglu, “the family, religion, localism, and nationalism as sub-elements of traditionalism seem to be tied to such a system of core values of conservatism” (Kalaycioglu, 2009, p. 241) and consist of ideological tenets of the right-wing belief system in Turkey. Within this perspective, it can be argued that the AKP’s emphasis on the family can be seen as a traditional element of politics of conservatism and a core value of right-wing beliefs.

The AKP’s conservative perception of the family can be related to its promotion of the role of traditional institutions such as family, customs and religion to preserve the unity and order of Turkish society whilst leading a societal transformation. In other words, the conservative democrat ideology of the AKP views traditional institutions as binding elements between social change and preservation of the unity and order of society in Turkey. Within this perspective, the AKP assigns a crucial meaning to Turkish family structure to preserve the traditional structure of Turkish society whilst leading social change. In particular, by employing religious elements, the party imagines the Turkish family with reference to principles’ of Sunni Islam. The party attributes to the ethos and principles of Sunni Islam a key role to maintain the social and moral pattern of the traditional Turkish family. The party also imagines the traditional Turkish family as a homogenous entity that has an organic unity and within which people live together happily and are observant of Islamic customs and traditions, which solve their problems internally. Such a vision of the family has two

significant outcomes. This conservative perception of the family also manifests itself in the AKP's vision of Turkey as a nation. As Cosar and Simten suggest "the conservative feature of the AKP is expressed in the perception of Turkish society as a big family with a common fate, sharing bitter and sweet memories." (Cosar and Simten, 2010, p. 63). Moreover, the AKP's conservative imagination of the Turkish nation can be better understood whilst looking at the statement that the party declared before the 2002 national elections in Turkey.

The Turkish nation comprises of people who share each others' sorrow and happiness in this region. The values that hold this family together should be reproduced within the light of contemporary developments and customized accordingly. (The programme of the Justice and Development Party, 2012, my translation)

Based on this declaration, it can be suggested that the AKP's vision of Turkish society and nation was based on certain tenets of conservatism and the party imagines Turkey as a homogenous organism whose organic unity had to be maintained with traditional elements. In other words, the AKP, rather than imagining Turkish nation on the basis of ethnic differences, it envisaged it as a community that had a common past and whose cultural formation was given shape by certain traditional and Islamic values<sup>xxxiv</sup> (Saracoglu, 2011).

When conservative and democratic ideology of the AKP was considered in all aspects, it can be argued that the party expresses its commitment to democracy with reference to individual rights, liberties and tolerance towards difference, which recalls faith in the liberal democratic model (Cosar and Simten, 2010, p. 64). However, a closer and critical analysis of the relationship between the AKP's definition of democracy and concomitantly its imagination of the Turkish nation as a homogenous entity with a metaphorical reference to the family reveals the party's conservative ideological orientation. In this respect, it can be argued that that the AKP's ideological orientation was largely been shaped by an idiosyncratic combination of Islamic conservatism and nationalism, in which the

symbolic and discursive content of the latter had been predominantly shaped by the main premises of the former. (Saraçoğlu, 2011).

### **3.6 Liberal Intellectuals and the AKP: A Gramscian Perspective**

In order to analyze the position of liberal intellectuals from a Gramscian perspective and under the Gramsci's concept of intellectuals, Gramsci's theory of hegemony will be the focal point because as he developed his concept of intellectuals as an aspect of his theory hegemony. As this thesis applied Gramsci's concept of hegemony to the rise and rule of the AKP and as relevant to neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey, the role of intellectuals will be seen to have played a critical role in the rise and rule of the AKP and continuation of neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey. Therefore whilst analyzing the relationship between liberal intellectuals and the AKP, the primary focus will be to expose the ways in which liberal intellectuals contributed to the continuation of the neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey through promoting the AKP rule.

Gramsci's endeavour to examine the question of intellectuals arose from his attempt to understand how the ruling class established its hegemony in advanced capitalist societies. Gramsci viewed that any social movement, organization or a class aim to ascend to a hegemonic position cannot construct its hegemony without intellectuals. In other words, for Gramsci, "there was no organisation without intellectuals, that was, without organisers and leaders." (Gramsci, 1971, p. 334). Gramsci's definition of intellectuals started with a certain distinction; "all men are intellectuals... but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 9). For Gramsci every human being had a unique intellectual capacity to interpret the conditions and social relations in which he/she existed. In other words, for Gramsci, everyone was a philosopher; everyone thought about ideas but only some played a specific role in working with and disseminating them (Humphrys, 2011, p. 3). What set intellectuals apart from those who merely engaged in intellectual activity and reflection was their "organisational function" within the economic,

cultural, or political spheres (Gramsci, 1999, p. 97). Within this perspective, this thesis focuses the position of liberal intellectuals in terms of their organisational function in the establishment of the hegemony of the party and neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey through the agency of the AKP.

As it is analyzed in previous chapters, prior to the rise of the AKP in 2002, neo-liberal hegemony had entered into a period of political and economic deadlock in Turkey and the country was experiencing one of the severe financial crisis, which in turn discredited traditional parties of both left and right. When the AKP came to power in such a conjuncture, established by former political Islamists, the party needed an ideological leadership that would booth soothe the worries of the secular Kemalist establishment and legitimize the party as democratic Islamist in the eyes of the Western world which was itself searching for an example of “moderate Islam” in the wake of the September 11 events. Although the AKP members read such a conjuncture carefully and the party defined itself as conservative democratic and committed to following the democratic standards of the EU, it still needed an ideological leadership to legitimize itself in the eyes of the secular establishment and Western leaders. At this juncture, the rise of the AKP was interpreted by liberal intellectuals, who used to view Kemalism as the main hindrance to the development of democracy in Turkey, as a democratic alternative to Kemalist order and this intellectual stratum welcomed the AKP as a harbinger of new democratic and liberal society. In other words, there emerged a kind of strategic convergence between the political interests of liberal intellectuals and the ideological leadership that the AKP needed. Such an interaction in turn paved the way for liberal sympathy towards the AKP, leading the AKP, in Gramscian sense, to found an intellectual stratum that would provide the party with an ideological leadership to ascend a hegemonic position. Indeed, as noted above, liberal intellectuals introduced the AKP as a liberal party that held an agenda of democratization along liberal lines which would emancipate Turkey from the authoritarian regime of the Kemalist establishment, thus provided the

AKP with an ideological leadership that was crucial for the party to establish its hegemony..

In other words, liberal intellectuals legitimized the rise and rule of the AKP to the Turkish people whilst at the same time de-legitimizing the Kemalist establishment. By arguing that the AKP had a reformist and liberal agenda to solve the Kurdish problem and to expand fundamental human rights and individual liberties, this intellectual stratum presented the AKP as a political party whose liberal leanings predominate over its conservative and religious leanings, widening the AKPs appeal to non-religious and more progressive sections of Turkish society. Moreover, since most of these intellectuals were columnists, they disseminated their perception of the AKP through visual and written media productions and by doing so contributed to the formation of an assertive public opinion that would perceive the AKP as a political party which was democratizing the country along liberal lines. Such a liberal appeal also gave the AKP a post-Islamist party image which, unlike its predecessors, did not adopt the National View Ideology which had threatened the Kemalist establishment in the past.

All in all, it can be argued that liberal support towards the AKP 'proved instrumental in legitimizing the party not only in the eyes of large sections of the Turkey and Kemalist establishment' but also "in the eyes of liberal opinion makers in the West, particularly in Europe." (Karaveli, 2010, p. 86). Liberal sympathy and support towards the AKP constantly continued until the second electoral victory of the AKP in 2007. The second electoral victory of the party signalled liberal disenchantment and complaints that the AKP gradually began to unveil its authoritarian tendencies. The important point here is to grasp that the AKP's need for ideological leadership of liberal intellectuals began to diminish in conjunction with its progress towards the establishment of its own hegemony in Turkish politics. In other words, during their initial tenure in power, as Birch (2011) notes "Erdogan and his colleagues have been transformed from fiercely anti-Western Islamists into outspoken defenders of Western-led globalization." (Birch, 4

February, 2011) and the AKP, more or less began to establish its own hegemony over the Kemalist establishment. However, after the AKP's second tenure in power (2007) the need for ideological leadership underpinned by liberal intellectuals lost its initial importance and the AKP began to unveil its real ideological orientation; religious conservative nationalism, which in turn paved the way for the liberal disillusionment with the AKP.

Although the present relationship between the AKP and liberal intellectuals are progressing towards a significant disengagement between the two, yet this does not change the fact that the latter provided the former with an ideological leadership to establish its hegemony in Turkish politics. This tactic on the part of the AKP proved critical in the continuation of the neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey as it had entered into a period of political and economic deadlock prior to the rise of the AKP. In this respect, the initial rise and rule of the AKP marked the resurgence of neo-liberalism in Turkey. Indeed, during the AKP years between 2002 and 2007 Turkey experienced a third wave of neo-liberal structural reforms with an intense phase of privatization and rise in inequality. Liberal intellectual's constitution of a post-Islamist AKP image that is liberalizing the country rendered Turkey more attractive for global business and paved the way for Western transnational capital to flow into Turkey. Moreover, this intellectual stratum, whilst sympathizing with and supporting the AKP, had also opted for neo-liberalism as a 'taken for granted', common sense approach to the economy and thus was inclined to provide a positive presentation of the AKP as a democratic, liberal alternative to Kemalism.

However, after stabilizing its hegemony, the AKP's need for liberal intellectual leadership gradually waned. Therefore, the party unveiled its conservative religious nationalism and progressed towards the establishment of an authoritarian regime, which in turn paved the way for the liberal intellectual's disenchantment with the AKP. However, in the



mean time “there is no doubt that the neoliberal transition in the country under the AKP’s rule has been realized through its fusion, as elsewhere, with conservatism in social values” (Cosar and Özcan, 2011). Liberal intellectuals indirectly played a key role in the realization of this transition by transforming the conservative religious nationalist ideology of the AKP into the liberal theses. Such a transformation not only helped to consolidate the AKP’s hegemony in Turkish politics but also allowed the AKP for the perpetuation of neo-liberal hegemony that the party took up in 2002. In other words, liberal intellectuals contributed to the perpetuation of the neo-liberal hegemony by providing the AKP with intellectual leadership.

Considering that Gramsci assigned a crucial and unique role to intellectuals and engaged with them as organizing elements of a cultural and social hegemony of a economically dominant or privileged class, it can be concluded that liberal intellectuals by providing the AKP with an ideological leadership gave the party a homogeneity and awareness to establish its ideological hegemony in Turkish politics. Finally, this intellectual stratum, by offering the AKP an ideological leadership contributed to the perpetuation of neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey which had emerged as a new class project of global capitalism in early twenty first century.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis elaborated the relationship between the Justice and Development Party and liberal intellectuals in Turkey from a Gramscian perspective. As was explained in introduction, the main concern of this thesis was to analyze the relationship between the liberal intellectuals and the AKP within a larger context of neo-liberal hegemony. This thesis, by focusing on the certain ideas that are promoted by liberal intellectuals in order to promote the AKP rule especially between the years 2002 and 2011, (especially during the initial tenure of the party) which also corresponded to the establishment of the hegemony of the party in Turkish politics revealed that liberal intellectuals contributed to the establishment of the hegemony of the AKP and their critical support to the party paved the way for the perpetuation of neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey. Although this intellectual stratum explained the main reason behind their support for the AKP as a democratization of Turkey along liberal lines, they did not give a particular importance to the AKP's ideology of conservative democracy, which in turn resulted in disenchantment of this intellectual stratum with the AKP rule. This thesis, by developing a critical analysis to the AKP's definition of conservative democracy suggested that the real ideological orientation of the AKP was religious conservative nationalism that sharply contrasted with liberal intellectuals' imagination of the AKP as a political party whose liberal and democrat identity predominated over its conservative leanings. This proved to be right when liberal intellectuals realized that religious conservative and nationalist ideology of the party whilst the party was dealing with the ethnic and religious problems of Turkey. At this juncture, it can be argued that the AKP took some reformist steps to solve ethnic and religious problems of Turkey and indeed gave an image of post-Islamist party that is eager to transform Turkish state and society along liberal lines. Therefore, the liberal sympathy and support towards the AKP can be legitimized at least during the party's initial tenure. However, a critical insight to the conjuncture that the AKP found itself when it came to power in 2002 reveals that the AKP as a political party, which

was established by former Islamists needed to an ideological leadership that would present the party as a liberal democrat one, which would neutralize secular worries of Kemalist establishment and legitimize the party in the eyes of Western world as a democrat party. In fact, this thesis made it clear that such an ideological leadership provided the AKP with liberal intellectuals and the opinions that they disseminated regarding ideological orientation of the party and what it signifies in Turkish politics. Although the AKP's need for such an intellectual leadership gradually lost its initial importance as the party consolidated its hegemony in Turkish politics at a gradual pace, this does not change the fact that the liberal intellectuals contributed to the establishment of the hegemony of the AKP and the perpetuation of neo-liberal hegemony by the agency of the party in Turkey. This thesis by employing Gramsci's concept of hegemony and intellectuals analyzed the multiple dimensions of the complex and manifold relationship between the AKP and liberal intellectuals and revealed that certain ideas promoted by the latter regarding the former's ideological orientation and its significance in Turkish politics fulfilled the ideological leadership that the AKP needed during the establishment of its hegemony in Turkish politics. This thesis, by considering the fact that the rise and initial rule of the AKP marked the perpetuation of neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey, concluded that the promotion of liberal ideas during the AKP periods by liberal intellectuals also (directly or indirectly) contributed to the deepening of neo-liberalism in Turkey.

The study finally proved that the main function that Gramsci attributed to intellectuals in the establishment of a particular hegemony still keeps its actuality in contemporary political and social developments. Considering that the main function that Gramsci attributed to intellectuals, which was the translation of the economic hegemony of the dominant class (bourgeoisie) or class projects into political and cultural hegemony, this thesis revealed that liberal intellectuals acted as organizing elements both

in the establishment of the hegemony of the AKP and perpetuation of neo-liberal hegemony in Turkey.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> The coup was organized by a right-wing military junta on September 12 1980 and led by General Kenan Evren by claiming in justification that the cause of the worsening economic conditions and political turmoil that the country had faced was due to the escalation of armed conflicts between rightist and leftist movements. The coup resulted in establishment of a martial law, abolition of political parties, trade unions and democratic rights.

<sup>ii</sup> The emergence of political Islamist movements in modern Turkey can be related to the establishment of Republic of Turkey as a secular state under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. After Mustafa Kemal Ataturk established Turkey in 1923, religion was subordinated to the state. The state aimed to suppress basic Islamic education by unofficial actors in the 1930s and 1940s. However during this period Islamist ideas and practices were preserved in tariqahs which remained underground until 1950s. In the 1950s and 1960s, Islamic activists started to organize in communities, informal networks, magazines, publication houses, and fringe political parties. It was at the end of 1960s that they decisively came together under the roof of Necmettin Erbakan's Islamist National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi 1970-1971).

<sup>iii</sup> In the Turkish context, liberalism and being a liberal is generally associated with opposition to Kemalist ideology and Kemalist modernization project that Turkey began to undergo beginning from 1923. In this respect, liberal intellectuals can be categorized as intellectuals who object to Kemalism and strive for its replacement with a democratic and alternative order. Most of these intellectuals are currently columnists in Turkish newspapers and they disseminate their political ideology regarding Kemalism and the AKP through visual and media productions.

<sup>iv</sup> The concept was originally introduced by Şerif Mardin in 1973 as a framework that proposes Turkish society had a centre and periphery and that the confrontation between centre and periphery was the most important social and cultural cleavage underlying Turkish politics and one that seemed to have survived more than one century of modernization. (See Mardin, 1973, p. 170).

<sup>v</sup> Kemalist ideology, "Kemalism" is the ideology that defines the fundamental characteristics of the Republic of Turkey. The ideology promoted by Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) and his associates after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. It can be recognized as the official ideology of the secular state. Liberal condemnation of Kemalism was based on the fact that Kemalist ideology employed top-down methods to modernize Turkey and criticised it for intrinsically being Jacobin.

<sup>vi</sup> It should be noted that while each perspective will be given under different divisions, the ideas given in one perspective can intersect with the ideas given in another perspective or the ideas of one scholar focused in one perspective can set a theoretical or methodological framework for another scholar in another perspective.

<sup>vii</sup> The 28 February Process refers to the decisions declared by Turkey's army leadership on a National Security Council meeting at 28 February 1997 which precipitated the resignation of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan of the Welfare Party and the end of his coalition, Refah-Yol. The process was later labelled a "postmodern coup."

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[http://www.dha.com.tr/31-addresses-raided-in-28-february-postmodern-coup-investigation\\_298030.html](http://www.dha.com.tr/31-addresses-raided-in-28-february-postmodern-coup-investigation_298030.html)

<sup>viii</sup> The term is used by Metin Heper (1992) in defining the state tradition in Turkey. Similar to Mardin, Heper's analysis of Ottoman state-society relationships is based on the centre and periphery paradigm. Heper explains the underdevelopment of civil society in Turkey as relevant to the Ottoman Empire being bureaucratically very organized and its disinclination not to share its authority with any power.

<sup>ix</sup> Here Insel introduces the concept of the high (*havas*) and the low (*avam*) that is very similar to Mardin's center- periphery paradigm.

<sup>x</sup> The "Biennio Rosso" (Two Red Years) identifies the period between 1919 and 1920 when Italy seemed to be on the verge of a revolution. Social and industrial protests of unprecedented intensity and scale broke out all over the country. The failure of this insurrectionary movement and the subsequent reaction of industrial and landowner elites with the use of fascist violence, and the support of a middle class frightened by the spectre of "bolshivism," have long been regarded as crucial factors in determining the failure of the liberal state and Mussolini's rise to power. ([http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/uid=87/tocnode?id=g9781405184649\\_yr2012\\_chunk\\_g9781405184649205](http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/uid=87/tocnode?id=g9781405184649_yr2012_chunk_g9781405184649205))

<sup>xi</sup> Nikolai Bukharin (1888- 1938) was a prominent Russian communist executed by Stalin after one of the great show trials of the 1930s. In *The Theory of Historical Materialism: A Manual of Popular Sociology* he attempted to provide a popular account of Marxism aimed at a non-scholarly audience.

<sup>xii</sup> See Boothman, 2008 for a detailed analysis of Political and Literary sources in Gramsci's concept of hegemony,

<sup>xiii</sup> Although these alternative strategies constituted the aspects of Gramsci's concept of hegemony, this thesis will not employ all of them whilst analyzing the relationship between the AKP and liberal intellectuals. As aspects of hegemony, the thesis will mainly apply the concept of *passive revolution* whilst analyzing the rise and rule of the AKP and *intellectuals* to examine the relationship between liberal intellectuals and the AKP in the context of neo-liberal restructuring in Turkey.

<sup>xiv</sup> Gramsci does not totally ignore the fact that in certain conditions war of manoeuvre can also be an effective tactic to resort to, especially whilst achieving the seizure of state power in advanced capitalist societies. It depends on conjectural developments that would occur during the revolutionary process. For a detailed analysis of the dialectic relationship between the war of manoeuvre and war of the position during the revolutionary process, please see, Sassoon, 1987, pp. 193- 204.

<sup>xv</sup> Gramsci does not limit the notion of passive revolution merely to the strategy employed by dominant classes to absorb potential threats posed by subaltern classes or revolutionary forces to its hegemony. Definitionally, it can be a technique of statecraft which an emergent class may deploy by drawing in subaltern social classes while establishing a new state on the basis of the institution of capitalism, as in the Risorgimento, or the expansion of capitalism as a mode of production, as in the cases of Americanism or Fordism (Morton, 2010, p. 318).

<sup>xvi</sup> This phenomenon has been most salient in Latin America, with the election of presidents such as Carlos Menem in Argentina, Fernando Collor in Brazil, Carlos Salinas de Gortari in Mexico and Alberto Fujimori in Peru (See, Filc, 2011, pp. 221-222).

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<sup>xvii</sup> While liberal intellectuals can be categorized as intellectuals who advocate that individual freedoms must be at the centre of any type of economic, social and political progress, democrat intellectuals can be categorized as intellectuals who advocates welfare state and public interest.

<sup>xviii</sup> Today's Zaman is an English Language newspaper and the sister newspaper of Zaman, which is the biggest print media outlet of the islamically oriented Gülen Movement, which is known for its affinity with the AKP government. Zaman has the biggest daily circulation in Turkey, which is around 800.000 and daily circulation of Today's Zaman is around 4000. Both Zaman and Today's Zaman became the biggest media supporter of the AKP ever since the party came to power in 2002. Both of the Newspapers host conservative and liberal columnists.

<sup>xix</sup> Etyen Mahçupyan is a Turkish Armenian journalist and writer. He is well known for his liberal ideas in Turkish media. He currently writes articles for two Turkish national Dailies, *Taraf* and *Zaman*.

<sup>xx</sup> Ahmet Altan is a liberal Turkish journalist, novelist and writer. He wrote articles for various Turkish Newspaper; *Hurriyet*, *Milliyet*, *Radikal* and produced news programming for different TV channels. In 1995, he was fired from *Milliyet* because of writing a column titled ""Atakurd"" which represented the alternate history of Turkey and criticised the official Turkish history. Altan became one of the leading founders of a liberal daily newspaper, *Taraf* in 2007. He is currently the editor of chief and lead columnist of *Taraf*.

<sup>xxi</sup> Atilla Yayla is a Turkish liberal political thinker and academic. He is known for being staunch advocate of liberal democracy and harsh critic of Kemalism. He is also one of the founders of Association for Liberal Thinking in Turkey. Yayla published many books and articles in English and Turkish on the issues ranging from terrorism, liberalism, constructivist rationalism, social justice to Friedrich Hayek. His articles are also published in the daily national Zaman newspaper.

<sup>xxii</sup> *Taraf* ("Side" in Turkish) is a liberal newspaper in Turkey. It has distinguished itself by opposing the interference by the Turkish military in the country's social and political affairs. It is distributed nationwide, and has been in circulation since November 15th, 2007. *Taraf* obtained an unprecedented position in Turkish media landscape. Its news shaped the politics and public opinion in Turkey. Its daily circulation is around 50.000. It is known for its support for the AKP ([http://www.ejc.net/media\\_landscape/article/turkey/](http://www.ejc.net/media_landscape/article/turkey/)).

<sup>xxiii</sup> Alevi is the term used for a large number of heterodox Muslim Shi'a communities with different characteristics and they constitute the largest religious minority in Turkey.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Cemevis are the places where Alevis worship and perform other social and cultural activities.

<sup>xxv</sup> Ali Bayramoğlu is a liberal writer and political commentator. He is currently a columnist in the Turkish daily newspaper *Yeni Safak*. His writings can be seen as a synthesis of between liberalism and Islamism.

<sup>xxvi</sup> *Yeni Şafak* ("New Dawn") is a kind of liberal-conservative Turkish daily newspaper. Daily circulation of newspaper is around 100.000. ([http://www.ejc.net/media\\_landscape/article/turkey/](http://www.ejc.net/media_landscape/article/turkey/))

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<sup>xxvii</sup> Mustafa Akyol is a son of well known former right wing (now conservative liberal) journalist, Taha Akyol. Akyol writes regular columns for two Turkish dailies, *Star Hürriyet Daily News* and for a blog called *White Path*. His writings generally promote a pluralist society and liberal order. He is known for being both against Kemalism and Islamic extremism. Until recently, his articles have mostly been friendly towards the AKP.

<sup>xxviii</sup> The *Hürriyet Daily News* is the oldest current English-language daily in Turkey, founded in 1961. Daily circulation of newspaper is around 5500.) ([http://www.ejc.net/media\\_landscape/article/turkey/](http://www.ejc.net/media_landscape/article/turkey/))

<sup>xxix</sup> Hasan Cemal is a liberal journalist and writer. He graduated from Ankara University, Faculty of Political Science. He currently writes for Milliyet.

<sup>xxx</sup> Milliyet (Turkish for "*nationality*") is a major Turkish daily newspaper founded in 1950. Its daily circulation is around 250.000. ([http://www.ejc.net/media\\_landscape/article/turkey/](http://www.ejc.net/media_landscape/article/turkey/))

<sup>xxxi</sup> Mehmet Altan is a writer and professor of economics at Istanbul University. He is the inventor of the concept of 'Second Republic' which he developed to explain Kemalist Republic needs to be replaced with a democratic Republic. He used to write articles for a daily newspaper *Star* but allegedly was fired because of his criticisms of Prime Minister Erdoğan and the AKP government.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Yasemin Çongar is a writer and currently columnist in liberal daily Newspaper, Taraf.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> These can be added circumscriptions on the freedom of expression (Nearly one hundred journalists are presently held in prison in Turkey) and the recent announcement of the Erdogan that the government is preparing to introduce a bill that will outlaw abortion.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> The AKP' vision of the ideal history of the Turkish nation was based on the Ottoman past within which the religion of Islam (Sunni) was at its peak. See, Saraçoğlu (2011) for a comprehensive analysis of the employment of the Ottoman past in the AKP's imagination of Turkish nation.



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