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A Reassessment of the Turkish Party System

Türk Parti Sistemi Üzerine Bir Yeniden Değerlendirme

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Abstract

Modern political institutions have a long history in Turkey but because of limited competition until 1945 and military interventions in 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997, the party system has not developed consistently. Moreover, the electoral system, particularly the 10% electoral threshold applied after 1980, directly affected the Turkish party system. Having been interrupted by non-democratic forces and attempted to be formed via political engineering, the development of Turkish political parties and party systems has not been linear. In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on the Turkish party system. However, since most studies were based on inadequate empirical data and limited to the 1990s and the 2000s, they have generally focused on the predominant party system and failed to critically review discussions on party systems. This paper analyzes Turkish party systems from 1950 to the present using the quantitative method. Adopting the criteria of the number of relevant parties and their relative strengths, this study applies different indicators such as the effective number of parties and fragmentation. This paper argues that Turkey has experienced four main different forms of party systems since 1950: a two-party system (1950-1960 and 2002), a two and a half party system (1960-1980), a moderate multiparty system with a balance among parties (1991-1999), and a moderate multiparty system with one dominant party (1983-1987, and 2007-2018).

Keywords

Party systems, Political parties, Turkish party system, the effective number of parties, the typologies of party systems

Öz

Türkiye'de modern siyasi kurumların geçmişi eskidir ancak 1945'e kadar olan sınırlı rekabet ve 1960, 1971, 1980 ve 1997'deki askeri müdahaleler nedeniyle parti sistemi istikrarlı bir şekilde gelişememiştir. Ayrıca seçim sistemi, özellikle 1980 sonrasında uygulanan %10'luk seçim barajı, Türk parti sistemini doğrudan etkilemiştir. Demokratik olmayan güçler tarafından kesintiye uğratılan ve siyasi mühendislik ile oluşturulmaya çalışılan Türk siyasi partilerinin ve parti sisteminin gelişimi doğrusal olmamıştır. Son yıllarda, Türk parti sistemi üzerine artan sayıda bir literatür bulunmaktadır. Ancak, çoğu çalışma yetersiz ampirik veriye dayandığından ve 1990'lar ve 2000'lerle sınırlı olduğundan, genellikle hakim parti sistemine odaklanmış ve parti sistemlerine ilişkin tartışmaları eleştirel olarak gözden geçirememiştir. Bu makale 1950'den günümüze Türk parti sistemini nicel yöntemle analiz etmektedir. İlgili parti sayısı ve partilerin göreli büyüklükleri kriterlerini benimseyen bu çalışma, etkin parti sayısı ve parçalanma gibi farklı göstergeleri kullanmaktadır. Bu makale, Türkiye'nin 1950'den beri dört temel parti sistemi biçimini deneyimlediğini öne sürmektedir: iki partili sistem (1950-1960 ve 2002), iki buçuk partili sistem (1960-1980), partiler arasında dengenin olduğu ılımlı çok partili sistem (1991-1999) ve hakim partinin bulunduğu ılımlı çok partili sistem (1983-1987 ve 2007-2018).

Anahtar Kelimeler

Parti sistemleri, Siyasi partiler, Türk parti sistemi, Etkin parti sayısı, Parti sistemleri tipolojileri

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Introduction

Compared to many new democracies, the institutionalization of political parties in Turkey is relatively high (Özbudun, 2000, p. 73). Modern political institutions have a long history in Turkey but because of limited competition until 1945 and military interventions in 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997, the party system has not developed consistently.[1] To illustrate, military elites banned all political parties after the 1980 coup and ruled the country without any formal party for about three years. The Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP, Republican People's Party) – the longest-lasting party in the present-day political arena and the party which has the prestige of having been formed by Atatürk – could only reopen in 1992. Moreover, the electoral system, particularly the 10% electoral threshold applied after 1980, directly affected the Turkish party system.[2] Since it was interrupted by non-democratic forces and attempted to be formed via political engineering, the development of Turkish political parties and party systems has not been linear.

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on the Turkish party system (Çarkoğlu, 1998; Özbudun, 2000; Sayarı, 2002; Sayarı, 2007; Çarkoğlu, 2011; Gümüşçü, 2013; Ayan-Musil, 2015; Sayarı, 2016; Arslantaş, Arslantaş, & Kaiser, 2020). However, since most studies were based on inadequate empirical data and limited to the 1990s and the 2000s, they have generally focused on the predominant party system and failed to critically review discussions on party systems. Although Arslantaş and Arslantaş (2020) have analyzed the Turkish party system in detail by adopting a Sartorian approach, they could not distinguish different periods and categorized the whole period between 1961 and 2002 as "polarised pluralism".

This paper examines the characteristics of the Turkish party system by making a comparison between different periods based on the number of relevant parties and their relative strengths. Relying on the data of nineteen general elections between 1950 and 2018, this paper investigates the evolution of the Turkish party system since the establishment of the multi-party system. Based on Siaroff's typology (2000), this paper argues that Turkey has experienced four main different types of party systems since 1950: a two-party system (1950-1960 and 2002), a two and a half party system (1960-1980), a moderate multiparty system with a balance among parties (1991-1999), and a moderate multiparty system with one dominant party (1983-1987, and 2007-2018).

The Typologies of Party Systems and the Effective Number of Parties

The rise of comparative political analysis from the 1950s has opened the way for debates on party systems to be developed. The simplest and perhaps the most reasonable way of classifying different party systems is to determine how many parties are effective in a particular political system. Duverger was one of the researchers who used the criterion of the number of political parties to develop typologies: two-party systems and multi-party systems. Duverger also claimed that there was a correlation between election systems and party systems. According to him, the simple majority, single ballot system leads to a two-party system, whereas a two-round majority system and proportional representation lead to a multi-party system (Duverger, 1964). This traditional classification was also used

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1   For the history of military interventions in Turkey, see, (Karpat, 1988), (Hale, 1994).

2   For electoral systems in Turkey, see, (Hale, 1980), (Cop, 2017).

for more general comparison in political science. It was assumed that two-party systems produced "stable and consensual" democracies, while multi-party systems produced "unstable and conflictual" democracies (Mair, 2002, p. 89).

The number of parties has been the basis of almost all studies on the party system since Duverger. In addition to the number of parties, other criteria have also been taken into account such as the competitiveness of opposition (Dahl, 1966), the relative size of parties (Blondel, 1968), likelihood of single-party majorities, and distribution of minority party strengths (Rokkan, 1968), the ideological distance between parties (Sartori, 2005), the degrees of institutionalization (Mainwaring, 1999) and structures of competition (Mair, 2002).

Duverger's distinction between two-party systems and multi-party systems was fundamental. Nevertheless, it failed to differentiate between different types of multi-party systems. Thus, later studies attempted to disaggregate multi-party systems. Blondel's classification based on the relative size of parties is one of the first attempts to go beyond simple counting. According to the average share of the vote two major parties won in the elections between 1945 and 1966, Blondel divides Western democracies into four groups. Two-party systems are those in which this is more than 90% and the difference of vote between two major parties is remarkably small. Systems where it is 75-80% are called three-party or two and a half party systems as they generally have one smaller party along with two major parties. Blondel also disaggregates multi-party systems. Multi-party systems with a dominant party are those in which two major parties gain about 60% of votes but one of them obtains at least 40% of the electorate and generally gains about twice as many votes as the second party. On the other hand, genuine multi-party systems do not have a dominant party and three or four parties are equally well placed to form coalitions (Blondel, 1968).

Sartori's typology, on the other hand, is based on the number of parties, but rather than counting all parties in the parliament, he counts only relevant parties. He argues that "a party qualifies for relevance whenever its existence, or appearance, affects the tactics of party competition and particularly when it alters the direction of the competition of the governing-oriented parties" (Sartori, 2005, p. 108). In other words, parties are relevant only if they have either *coalition* or *blackmail* potential and alter the direction of the competition (Wolinetz, 2006, p. 57). The direction of party competition is determined by the ideological distance among parties. Thus, Sartori combines the criterion of the number of relevant parties with the criterion of ideological distance among parties, which is the *sine qua non* for his attempt to disaggregate multi-party systems.

Sartori first separates systems into "one-party lump" and "multiparty lump". The first group includes one-party systems where only one party is allowed to exist, hegemonic party systems where other parties are permitted to exist only as second class, and predominant-party systems where other parties exist as legal and legitimate competitors but the same party continuously (for four consecutive legislatures at least) manages to win the absolute majority of seats in the parliament. Sartori states that "the predominant-party system actually is a more-than-one party system in which rotation does not occur in fact" (Sartori, 2005, p. 173). The multiparty lump, on the other hand, consists of two-party systems, moderate pluralism, polarized pluralism, and atomized systems. Two-

party systems are characterized by the competition between two major parties with similar strengths, having the chance to form a single-party government, and the rotation in power. Thus, the difference of seats between two major parties is the main factor to determine whether the system is predominant or two-party. Moderate (limited) pluralism contains between three and five parties, none of which attain an absolute majority of seats. The system is moderate in the sense that it lacks anti-system (extremist) parties. Consequently, there is a relatively small ideological distance among parties, and the direction of competition is centripetal. Polarized (extreme) pluralism, on the contrary, has more than five or six parties including anti-system parties. The main features of polarized pluralism are the existence of bilateral oppositions, the high ideological distance among parties, the low degree of consensus, and centrifugal competition. Compared to moderate pluralism, polarized pluralism is not only fragmented but also ideologically polarized. Finally, atomized systems are those in which the level of fragmentation reaches such a point that the number of parties makes almost no difference since no party has any noticeable effect on any other party.

With Sartori's typology, it seemed that there was nothing left to say about party systems. Political systems, however, have seen significant developments since the 1970s that provoked a reconsideration of party systems. There has been a tendency particularly in advanced democracies towards the change in the organizational structures of parties[3] (Panebianco, 1988), the decrease in partisan identification (Dalton, 2000), the growth of electoral volatility and political fragmentation (Dalton, Mcallister, & Wattenberg, 2000), the decline of party membership (Biezen, Mair, & Poguntke, 2012), the growth of green parties (Mair, 1997), the rise of populist radical right parties (Mudde, 2014), and the increase in the number of new parties (Emanuele & Chiaramonte, 2016).

Moreover, the discriminating power of Sartori's typologies has clearly been reduced because as a general phenomenon, two-party systems and polarized pluralism have shrunk while moderate pluralism has begun to take on greater prominence (Mair, 2002). While Sartori's work is one of the most influential typologies in the classification of party systems, it fails to disaggregate overloaded moderate pluralism. As the ideological distances among parties and the presence/absence of extremist parties are the main factors to determine whether the pluralism is limited or polarized, his study has little to offer for quantitative analyzes. Blondel's model of the relative size of parties, on the other hand, is very useful since it not only distinguishes different types of multiparty systems but also considers the potential balancing role within two-party systems of smaller or half parties (Wolinetz, 2006, pp. 55-6). However, one of the weaknesses of Blondel's classification is that it fails to consider the effect of electoral institutions on the disproportionality between the vote distribution and the seat distribution because it is based on vote-shares, not seat-shares. Nevertheless, as noted by Golosov (2011, p. 541) "modified versions of Blondel's taxonomy remain widespread".

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3   The organizational structures of political parties have changed over time with the universal suffrage, the diversification of working-class composition, the professionalization of political communication and the deemphasis of the *classe gardée*. The literature on political parties defines different models such as cadre party and mass party (Duverger, 1964), party of individual representation and party of democratic integration (Neumann, 1956), catch-all party (Kircheimer, 1966), cartel party (Katz & Mair, 1995), electoral-professional party (Panebianco, 1988), and business-firm party (Hopkin & Paolucci, 1999).

Siaroff's work (2000) is one of the most detailed classifications built on Blondel's typology. His classification is based on the seat-shares and the relative size of parties, but also takes into consideration the patterns of government formation (Golosov, 2011, p. 542). Siaroff (2000, p. 69) uses four quantitative measures to classify European party systems:

1) the mean number of parties with at least 3 percent of the seats (P3%S);

2) the mean two-party seat concentration (2PSC);

3) the medium seat ratio between the first and second party (SR1:2);

4) and the medium seat ratio between the second and third party (SR2:3).

Based on these criteria, Siaroff develops an eightfold classification. Along with two-party systems, he disaggregates moderate and extreme multiparty systems in detail.

Two-party systems are those in which the P3%S value is around 2 but always less than 3, the mean 2PSC is at least 95% and naturally, one party wins the majority of seats (ENPP: 1.92). Moderate multiparty systems or two-and-a-half party systems are characterized by a mean P3%S of 3 to 5, a mean 2PSC of between 80 and 95 percent, a median SR1:2 below 1.6, and a median SR2:3 of 1.8 or more (ENPP: 2.56). That is, the gap between the second and third parties is wider than the gap between the first and second parties. Consequently, one of the two largest parties tends to have the majority of seats. Moderate multiparty systems with one dominant party are those in which the mean P3%S is 3 to 5, and the median SR 1:2 is 1.6 or more (ENPP: 2.95). The dominant party is considerably stronger than the other parties and is likely to gain the majority of seats. Moderate multiparty systems with two main parties differ from those systems in that neither of the two main parties has the majority of the seats (ENPP: 3.17). Moderate multiparty systems with a balance among the parties are the systems where the mean P3%S is 3 to 5, the median SR 1:2 is below 1.6, and the median SR2:3 is below 1.8 (ENPP: 3.69). In other words, there is no big gap between the first and the third parties. Extreme multiparty systems with one dominant party are identified with a mean P3%S of more than 5, and a median SR 1:2 of 1.6 or more, which means that the dominant party is unlikely to have a majority of the seats (ENPP: 3.96). Extreme multiparty systems with two main parties are characterized by a mean P3%S of more than 5, a median SR1:2 below 1.6, and a median SR2:3 of 1.8 or more (ENPP: 4.41). These systems are also likely to have a median 2PSC of 55 to 75 percent. Lastly, extreme multiparty systems with a balance among the parties refer to a mean P3%S of more than 5, a median SR 1:2 below 1.6, and a median SR2:3 below 1.8 (ENPP: 5.56).

Despite being complicated, given the diversity of categories, Siaroff's classification is best developed (Golosov, 2011, p. 542). As noted by Wolinetz (2006, p. 58), Siaroff successfully disaggregates multi-party systems, particularly moderate pluralism. However, his eightfold classification lacks the predominant party system. Thus, Siaroff (2003) later reexamines party systems by taking into account the predominant party system and defines four main categories as follows: One-party predominant systems are those in which the median SR 1:2 is at least 1.8 and the same party permanently manages to have at least 51 percent of the seats. Two-party systems are those in which rotation occurs between two main parties which gain more than 95 percent of the seats. Multiparty

systems are those in which larger parties get less than 80 percent of seats and no party gains a dominant share. Finally, two-and-a-half-party systems are those in which larger parties win 80 to 95 percent of the seats and no party achieves the majority of the seats.

These studies reviewed here indicate that the number of parties, as well as the relative size of parties, are important in the classification of party systems. Thus, one should focus on how fragmented a parliament is to distinguish party systems because the seat distribution between parties has a direct impact on party systems, particularly on government formation. The number of parties taking into account their relative size was best calculated by the Laakso-Taagepera (1979) index. As it produces values (the effective number of parties) that can be viewed in the familiar context of the number of parties, the Laakso-Taagepera index has a great advantage (Lijphart, Bowman, & Hazan, 1999, p. 31). For example, when there are two equally strong parties, the effective number of parties (ENP) is exactly two, which means a two-party system. If one party's strength is much greater than the other, the ENP is lower than two, which indicates that it is no longer a two-party system but moving towards a predominant party system. If there is a more competitive system where multiple parties have the potential to alter the direction of the competition, the ENP is more than three. Finally, when two major parties get almost all votes but neither of them can achieve the majority of seats, the ENP is likely to be around 2.5, which means a two and a half party system. The ENP also falls close to Sartori's number of relevant parties because it represents in a sense the number of parties that have the coalition potential.

Nevertheless, the ENP is not perfect as it has difficulties detecting predominant party systems. For instance, when the seat distribution is 0.45, 0.43, 0.11, 0.1, it clearly tends to be a two and a half party system and the ENP is around 2.5 as a result. When the seat distribution is 0.6, 0.1, 0.1, 0.1, 0.1, it is certainly a predominant party system, but the ENP is exactly 2.5, which inaccurately indicates a two and a half party system again. To overcome this problem, Taagepera (1999) suggests a supplementary indicator (), which is the inverse of the largest share. A value of < 2 always refers to an absolute majority.

The Turkish Party System between 1950 and 2018

The history of political parties in Turkey can be traced back to the Second Constitutional Era (1908-1918) in the Ottoman Empire. That period saw the emergence of political parties established for political competition. However, the competition between parties was generally based on an intra-elite competition due to the lack of mass support (Sayarı, 2012, p. 183). Thus, parties in that era can be defined as "elite parties". Elite parties emerged in proto-democratic societies with restricted suffrage in the nineteenth century and were characterized by a small cadre of individuals with high socioeconomic status, the absence of extra-parliamentary organizations, the lack of mass support, and loose coordination between party members (Neumann, 1956; Duverger, 1964; Krouwel, 2006).

The period from the establishment of the Republic to the end of World War II (1923 – 1945) was characterized by a non-competitive regime. It was a single-party era ruled by the CHP without any oppositional party. As opposed to socialist or conservative parties in England or Germany in the early twentieth century, the CHP did not rely on a specific social class rather it was supposed to be a reflection of society's political will. The party's

conception of society was based on the corporatist idea that the society was classless, fused, and an organic whole. The CHP aimed more at building a modern nation through economic development and cultural policies than simply at representing the constituency. Therefore, when the multiparty system was adopted in 1946, the CHP could not easily get used to canvassing while the Demokrat Parti (DP, Democrat Party) was very successful at political propaganda especially on religion. The DP, which was first a faction of the CHP in the mid 1940s, came to power in 1950 and had the majority of seats for ten years.

In terms of the social origins of representatives between the CHP and the DP, there were clear differences. For example, as opposed to the CHP, the DP had fewer representatives from military/civil bureaucracy (Zürcher, 2017, p. 223). Thus, it was seen as a conflict between bureaucratic/secularist/statist forces and democratic/religious/anti-statist forces or between "the center" and "the periphery" (Mardin, 1973). Nevertheless, it was again an intra-elite competition. That is, it was far from being a political expression of the economic contradiction between social classes. Social cleavages started to play an important role only by the 1970s as a result of rapid modernization (Çarkoğlu, 1998, p. 546).

The electoral system used in Turkey in the 1950s, which was the simple majority system with party lists in multi-member districts, inevitably produced a two-party system.[4] The number of parties in parliament was three in 1950 and 1954, and four in 1957 though the average two-party vote (the DP + the CHP) was above 90%. Although "the system displayed the characteristics of the typical two-party system" (Özbudun, 2000, p. 74), the alternation in government, which is a fundamental component of the two-party system, could not be achieved. Since the electoral system produced great disproportionality, other than the DP, political parties in the parliament had no impact on policy outputs. For example, in three consecutive elections, the DP gained an average of 54% of votes but 82.6% of seats. As a consequence, the effective number of parliamentary parties during the 1950s was lower than two. Therefore, it was argued that the party system in the 1950s was somewhere between a two-party and a predominant party system (Sayarı, 2002, p. 12).

The simple majority system has never been used since the 1950s. Following the 1960 *coup d'état*, the system of proportional representation with the *d'Hondt* method was adopted and that has characterized the electoral system in Turkey. Table 1 shows the electoral systems used throughout Turkish political history since 1950.

Table 1
Electoral Systems Used in Turkey

Election	Electoral System
May 1950	the simple majority system with party list
May 1954	the simple majority system with party list
Oct. 1957	the simple majority system with party list
Oct. 1961	the proportional representation system with constituency-level threshold
Oct. 1965	the national remainder system
Oct. 1969	the proportional representation system without electoral threshold
Oct. 1973	the proportional representation system without electoral threshold

4   For the relationship between the electoral system and the party system in Turkey, see (Arslantaş, Arslantaş, & Kaiser, 2020).

Jun. 1977	the proportional representation system without electoral threshold
Nov. 1983	the proportional representation system with constituency-level threshold and 10% national threshold
Nov. 1987	the proportional representation system with quota and double electoral threshold
Oct. 1991	the proportional representation system with quota and double electoral threshold
Dec. 1995	the proportional representation system with 10% national threshold
Apr. 1999	the proportional representation system with 10% national threshold
Nov. 2002	the proportional representation system with 10% national threshold
Jul. 2007	the proportional representation system with 10% national threshold
Jun. 2011	the proportional representation system with 10% national threshold
Jun. 2015	the proportional representation system with 10% national threshold
Nov. 2015	the proportional representation system with 10% national threshold
Jun. 2018	the presidential system with pre-election alliances and 10% national threshold

The proportional representation system and the struggle for the inheritance of the DP closed by the *coup d'état* immediately produced fragmentation and even led to a hung parliament in the 1961 election. The number of parties gaining parliamentary seats was four in 1961, six in 1965, and eight in 1969. In 1965, the national reminder electoral system, a variant of the proportional representation that produced much less disproportion, was applied. In this way, for the first time, the far-left Türkiye İşçi Partisi (TİP, Turkish Workers Party), entered the parliament by gaining 3.1% of seats. Moreover, the number of parties winning at least three percent of the filled seats rose to five in 1965. Nevertheless, the parliament was dominated by two big parties during the 1960s; the CHP on the center-left and the Adalet Partisi (AP, Justice Party), the successor of the DP, on the center-right, although the average share of two-party seats decreased to around 80%. Other parties were very small and only one or two of them had some coalition/blackmail potential as "a half party". Similarly, the mean score for the effective number of parliamentary parties was 2.7. However, at least for a limited period, the AP was in a strong position having the majority of both votes and seats in 1965 and the majority of seats in 1969. In the late 1960s a predominant party system was likely to have emerged, but the AP could not maintain its hold on the right-wing electorate (Ayan-Musil, 2015, p. 6). The pro-Islamist Milli Selamet Partisi (MSP, National Salvation Party) and the nationalist Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP, Nationalist Action Party) each played their part in fragmentation. For example, parliamentary fragmentation (*PFRG*) rose from 0.57 in 1969 to 0.70 in 1973.

During the 1970s, the party system in Turkey experienced a process with high fragmentation, ideological polarization, and electoral volatility (Özbudun, 2000, p. 74). The 1973 and 1977 elections produced hung parliaments. The average two-party vote decreased to 71%. Although the CHP won both elections, the level of competition between the CHP and the AP was very high. Because of the ideological polarization, nearly all right-wing parties were coalition partners. However, governments were weak and short-lived. The voting behavior in the election of 1977 indicated that people voted for a single-party government. Although there were still four parties winning at least three

percent of the filled seats like in 1973, the CHP and the AP became stronger. To illustrate, the share of the two-party seat increased to 89%. Yet, it was a hung parliament. Economic crisis and political violence also contributed to increasing political instability. Thus, Sayarı noted that in the late 1970s, the Turkish party system gradually turned to polarized pluralism (2002, p. 15). This system ended with the 1980 military coup. From a broader perspective, it is also possible to define the period between two military interventions (1960-1980, 5 elections) as a two-and-a-half party system.

One of the main outputs of the 1980 military intervention on the party system was the closure of all existing political parties and the introduction of a 10% national electoral threshold and high constituency thresholds. Although two centrist parties dominated the 1960s and 1970s, the fragmentation of the right, which contributed to political instability, became increasingly evident in the late 1970s. Thus, to ensure political stability, the military regime aimed at "transforming the party system into a more manageable two- or three-party system" with electoral engineering (Özbudun, 2000, p. 75). By political bans and interventions on electoral institutions, it was expected that parliamentary majorities would more easily be achieved and that extremist groups such as pro-Islamist and pro-Kurdish parties would be prevented from having seats in the parliament. Consequently, the system produced a manufactured majority as well as great disproportionality. To illustrate, although the Anavatan Partisi (ANAP, Motherland Party) could win only 36.3% of the votes in the 1987 general election, it achieved 64.8% of the seats in the parliament.

However, this interim period did not last long and in the 1990s, despite the high electoral threshold, the number of parties in parliament rapidly increased and this led to coalition governments. Two-party seats steadily decreased and dropped under 50% in 1999. The seat gap not only between the largest party and the second largest party and but also between the second largest party and the third-largest party diminished. Likewise, the level of fragmentation rose and the mean score for the effective number of parliamentary parties reached 4.28. All of this indicated a multiparty system with a balance among the parties.

The fragmentation in the 1990s was mainly related to the weakening of center-right and center-left tendencies (Özbudun, 2000, p. 78). After the banning of the two traditional centrist parties by the 1980 military coup, in the 1990s new parties emerged to inherit these traditional parties' grassroots. This resulted in fierce competition on the center-right between the ANAP and the Doğru Yol Partisi (DYP, True Path Party), and on the center-left between the CHP and the Demokratik Sol Parti (DSP, Democratic Left Party). In other words, the main competition was not inter-blocs but intra-blocs. While the centrist parties became weaker, the extremist parties became stronger and played important roles during the 1990s (Sayarı, 2002, p. 19). To illustrate, in 1995 the pro-Islamist Refah Partisi (RP, Welfare Party) became the big partner of the coalition government by gaining 21.4% of the votes and in 1999 the nationalist MHP won 18% of votes and joined the coalition government. The percentage of votes that the pro-Kurdish Halkın Demokrasi Partisi (HADEP, People's Democracy Party) gained also increased but because of the national threshold, the HADEP could not get any seats in parliament. The controversy between the center and the periphery culminated in the overthrown of the RP by a postmodern coup. Finally, the 2001 economic crisis intensified political instability. Thus, in the early 2000s,

there was huge dissatisfaction against existing political actors. For example, according to a survey conducted by the Türkiye Sosyal, Ekonomik ve Siyasal Araştırmalar Vakfı (TÜSES, Turkish Economic Social and Political Research Foundation) in 1998, 52% of the voters stated that they did not trust politicians (Erder, 1999).

However, in the 2000s, the party system radically transformed from coalition governments into single-party majorities, from moderate pluralism into a predominant party system, from a highly fragmented structure into a more stable structure. The 2002 electoral earthquake left all parliamentary parties at the threshold and changed the party system dramatically. The electoral volatility rose to the highest level (50.2%) in Turkish political history (Sayarı, 2007, p. 200). After 2007, a multiparty system with a dominant party was established. Except for the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP, Justice and Development Party), in Turkey since the 1950s only three parties, the DP, the AP, and the ANAP, have managed to form a single-party majority government. Ranking first in all general elections, the AKP has been one of the most powerful parties in Turkish political history. In the 2010s, the AKP, which successfully mobilized the center-right and pro-Islamists constituency, reached a voting potential of 45%-55%. The electoral threshold led to the votes being collected in larger parties and the electoral volatility has decreased. Table 2 summarizes election results between 1950 and 2018 in Turkey.

Table 2

Key Election Indicators between 1950 and 2018

Election	P3%S	N∞	2PVC	2PSC	SR1:2	SR2:3	PFRG	ENPP
May 1950	2	1.17	94.8	99.6	6.03	69.0	0.25	1.33
May 1954	2	1.08	93.5	98.7	16.23	6.2	0.13	1.15
Oct. 1957	2	1.44	90.0	98.7	2.38	44.5	0.43	1.76
Oct. 1961	4	2.60	71.5	73.6	1.09	2.9	0.69	3.26
Oct. 1965	5	1.88	81.6	83.1	1.79	4.3	0.62	2.62
Oct. 1969	3	1.76	74.0	88.7	1.79	9.5	0.57	2.35
Oct. 1973	4	2.43	63.1	74.2	1.24	3.3	0.70	3.32
Jun. 1977	4	2.11	78.3	89.3	1.13	7.9	0.60	2.47
Nov. 1983	3	1.89	75.6	82.2	1.80	1.6	0.60	2.52
Nov. 1987	3	1.54	61.1	86.9	2.95	1.7	0.51	2.05
Oct. 1991	4	2.53	51.0	65.1	1.55	1.3	0.72	3.58
Dec. 1995	5	3.48	41.0	52.7	1.20	1.0	0.77	4.40
Apr. 1999	5	4.04	40.2	48.2	1.1	1.2	0.79	4.87
Nov. 2002	2	1.52	53.7	98.4	2.0	n/a	0.46	1.85
Jul. 2007	3	1.61	67.5	82.4	3.0	1.6	0.56	2.26
Jun. 2011	3	1.68	75.8	84.0	2.4	2.5	0.58	2.36
Jun. 2015	4	2.13	65.8	70.9	2.0	1.7	0.68	3.13
Nov. 2015	4	1.74	74.8	82.0	2.4	2.3	0.59	2.45
Jun. 2018	5	2.03	65.2	73.5	2.0	2.2	0.67	3.07

Finally, Table 3 presents Turkish party systems according to Siaroff's typology. There are four different types of party systems that emerged between 1950 and 2018. Party competition in Turkey resulted in a two-party system in the 1950s, a two and a half party system in the 1960s and 1970s, a moderate multiparty system with a balance among parties in the 1990s, and a moderate multiparty system with one dominant party in the

1980s and after 2002. Like in the 1950s, the 2002 election also brought in a two-party system.

Table 3
Party Systems in Turkey between 1950 and 2018

Election	Party System
May 1950	Two-party system
May 1954	Two-party system
Oct. 1957	Two-party system
Oct. 1961	Two and a half party system
Oct. 1965	Two and a half party system
Oct. 1969	Two and a half party system
Oct. 1973	Two and a half party system
Jun. 1977	Two and a half party system
Nov. 1983	Moderate multiparty system with one dominant party
Nov. 1987	Moderate multiparty system with one dominant party
Oct. 1991	Moderate multiparty system with a balance among the parties
Dec. 1995	Moderate multiparty system with a balance among the parties
Apr. 1999	Moderate multiparty system with a balance among the parties
Nov. 2002	Two-party system
Jul. 2007	Moderate multiparty system with one dominant party
Jun. 2011	Moderate multiparty system with one dominant party
Jun. 2015	Moderate multiparty system with one dominant party
Nov. 2015	Moderate multiparty system with one dominant party
Jun. 2018	Moderate multiparty system with one dominant party

Conclusion

The aim of the present research was to examine the Turkish party system from 1950 to the present using the quantitative method. Adopting the criteria of the number of relevant parties and their relative strengths, this study has applied different indicators such as the effective number of parties and fragmentation. This paper has identified four distinct forms of party systems since 1950 in Turkey: a two-party system (1950-1960 and 2002), a two and a half party system (1960-1980), a moderate multiparty system with a balance among parties (1991-1999), and a moderate multiparty system with one dominant party (1983-1987, and 2007-2018).

As Duverger mentioned , there seems to be a correlation between the electoral system, particularly the electoral threshold, and the number of parties in the parliament. According to the Parliamentary Election Laws (no.2839) enacted in 1983, political parties which do not obtain more than 10% of all of the valid votes in Turkey are not permitted to enter parliament. The reduction of the number of parties in parliament after 1983 indicates that the electoral threshold has a huge impact on the party system. To illustrate, the average number of parties in parliament reduced from 5.1 between 1950 and 1977 (8 elections) to 3.7 between 1983 and 2011 (8 elections).

However, this cannot fully explain everything because the average number of parties in parliament fluctuated even after 1983, in such a way that, in all three elections in the 1990s, five political parties exceeded the electoral threshold. Since nearly two-thirds of the voters preferred right-wing parties in each election, the system may evolve into a

predominant party system if only a powerful center-right party can unify the right-wing constituency by eliminating potential right-wing rivals to capture the center and as a consequence reach 50% of the votes. In Turkey, only after periods of deep political and economic crisis, parties that mobilized right-wing constituencies were able to achieve a majority. The DP came to power after the war, the AP formed a single-party government after the tragic overthrown of DP by military intervention, and the ANAP had the majority after a period of long political and economic instabilities that resulted in the military intervention. Finally, a series of political and economic complications such as the rise of the Kurdish political movement, the intensification of the *Kulturkampf*[5] between pro-Islamist and pro-Republican, the overthrown of the RP by a postmodern coup, and the 2001 economic crises provided proper conditions for the AKP. However, among the parties , only the AKP has been successful at having the majority in more than three elections.

The last five elections in Turkey produced a moderate multiparty system with one dominant party or, in Sartorian terms, a predominant party system. Will the dominant party maintain its power or will a more fragmented system emerge? The answer depends on the intensity of competition on the center-right, the newly formed parties' performances, and possible changes in electoral institutions.

In sum, notwithstanding its limitations, this paper contributes to recent debates concerning party systems. It establishes a quantitative framework for separating different party systems in Turkey. Further research, using a comparative perspective, could shed more light on party system changes.

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5   For a discussion on the concept in the context of the constitutional referendum in 2010, see (Kalaycıoğlu, 2012).

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