Informal Politics in Turkey During the Özal Era (1983-1989)

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Abstract: *The use of informal politics, which have always remained as an integral part of the Turkish politics, highly increased during the rule of Özal governments in the 1980s. In addition to those that have been widely used throughout the republican era, such as neopatrimonialism, clientelism and corruption, new forms of informal politics emerged during the so-called Özal decade, such as circumvention of the parliament, violation of the rule of law, the involvement of the Özal family to politics, and so on. Yet, the existing studies on this decade tend to neglect analyzing this phenomenon, failing to provide a complete and accurate picture of the dynamics of politics under the rule of Özal's Motherland Party. This paper aims to understand why informal politics flourished and became more and more influential on political processes during the Özal era. Taking the broader hegemonic structures into account, which is often neglected in the relevant literature, it argues that two parallel processes of change, which had radically re-structured the socio-political and economic system in Turkey in the 1980s, played a critical role in preparing the ground for the increasing role of the informal politics during the Özal years. One was the neoliberal restructuration of the Turkish economy and the other was the transformation of the the socio-political system by the military. These two processes of change weakened formal institutions by creating instability, by decreasing their credibility, and by failing to develop effective mechanisms of enforcement. In addition to their weakness, the new political institutions were constituted in a way to exclude a number of social demands and interests. This environment provided the conditions for an ambitious and authoritarian leader like Özal to turn to informal politics to carry out the reform process rapidly, to represent the interests and demands of some social groups that were excluded from the formal politics, as well as to pursue his publicly unacceptable goals.*

Key words: Clientelism, neopatrimonialism, Turgut Özal, informal politics

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Introduction

Informal politics have always remained as an integral part of the Turkish politics. However, they had never been so widespread and manifest as they became during the rule of Özal governments in the 1980s. The use of those forms of informal politics that have always been prevalent in the Turkish politics to some extent, such as neopatrimonialism, clientelism, violation of the rule of law, and corruption, was substantially increased in this period. Besides, new forms of informal politics emerged, which included by-passing parliament in law-making process, heavy involvement of the Özal family members into the politics, Özal's attempt to keep, de facto, his leadership position in the Motherland Party and in the government even after he held the office of president, and so on. The widespread use of informal politics during the rule of Özal governments exerted a considerable influence on decision-making processes at the state level. Yet, the existing studies on this decade either tend to neglect analyzing this phenomenon, failing to provide a complete and accurate picture of the dynamics of politics under the rule of Özal's Motherland Party,[1] or they just identify the widespread use of informal politics, often without employing the concept of informal politics.[2] Moreover, by envisaging the use of informal politics as the outcome of personal choice and tendencies of Özal, most of these studies tend to explain the rise of informal politics as a function of agency. As such, they ignore the socio-political structures and explain the rise of informal politics only with the individual ambitions and motivations of Özal.

In this study, the author argues that two parallel processes of structural change in Turkey during the 1980s proved critical in preparing the ground for the increasing role of the informal politics throughout the Özal years. One of these processes was the restructuring of the Turkish economy in line with the general neoliberal trend in the capitalist world economy, whereas the other was the reshaping of the socio-political system by the military that had been in power between 1980 and 1983. As an outcome of these two processes, which involved either the creation of new institutions or the transformation of existing ones through the measures imposed from above, 'weak' and 'narrow' formal institutions emerged. This environment provided the conditions for an ambitious and autocratic leader like Özal to turn to informal politics to carry out the reform process in economy rapidly, to represent the interests and demands of some social groups that were excluded from the formal politics, as well as to pursue some of his personal goals that were not publicly acceptable.

Conceptualizing the Emergence of Informal Politics

While institutions refer to the 'rules of the game,' that is, the "rules and procedures that structure social interaction by constraining and enabling actors' behavior"[3] and formal institutions to the 'rule of law,' informal institutions refer to the 'rule of man.'[4] Formal rules and institutions are usually written, impersonal, and explicit. They are set by a formal authority, such as a king, emperor, president or parliament, and applied across issues and actors.[5] Unlike formal politics that is governed by formal rules and institutions, informal politics consists of "the use of illegitimate (albeit not necessarily illegal) means to pursue public ends."[6] This does not mean that informality necessarily refers to the absence of rules. By contrast, like formal institutions and politics, informal institutions and politics have some rules that shape and constrain actors' behavior.[7] However, since these rules are not determined by law but by those in power, informal politics is usually arbitrary, sporadic and concerned with the implicit realm of politics.[8] Yet, informal politics should not be seen as negative definition of formal politics or 'the dirty secret of formal politics.'[9]

Informal institutions and politics may shape politics to varying degrees in different contexts. It is usually underlined in the literature on informal politics that formal politics is mostly dominant over informal politics in Western countries, whereas informal politics is mostly dominant over formal politics in Latin America and Eastern Asia. Regardless of the degree of its

pervasiveness, however, informal politics is universal and informality is an integral part of social life.[10] Therefore, as it has been recently suggested in some studies,[11] an exclusive focus on formal politics and formal institutions may considerably impede our understanding of dynamics of politics.

Despite its importance, however, the emergence and sustainability of informal politics have not attracted much scholarly attention.[12] There are only a few works dealing with the emergence of informal institutions. Levitsky and Murillo's studies are among these rare works.[13] According to these authors the degree of institutional strength is one of the most important factors that should be taken into account in attempting to understand the emergence and sustainability of informal politics. They argue that, two dimensions are important in conceptualizing institutional strength.[14] While one is enforcement, that is, the degree of compliance between the existing rules and practice, the other is stability, that is, the degree of the survival of rules. When rules are not stable, which refers to their often modification, and are not effectively enforced, that is, when formal institutions are weak, informal ones tend to replace them. It may also be the case that rules are enforced but unstable, or rules are stable but not enforced due to the inability or unwillingness of state elites to enforce them.[15] In these cases, too, informal politics may replace the formal politics.

As to the reasons of institutional weakness, Levitsky and Murillo take attention to two factors: institutional origins and the role of time. Concerning the first, they argue that institutions may be weak from the very outset. If some institutions are created just for window-dressing, they would probably not be enforced. The persistence of some institutions over time, on the other hand, would create expectations of stability, leading to their further enforcement. If, however, formal institutions are repeatedly overturned or rendered ineffective, the expectations of stability will be low, contributing to institutional demise.[16]

Like Levitsky and Murillo, Helmke and Levitsky also underline the role of institutional strength, or more precisely institutional weakness, in paving the way for the emergence and sustainability of informal institutions. They, specifically, identify four reasons behind the emergence of informal institutions.[17] First reason is the incompleteness of existing formal institutions. Informal institutions may emerge to address some problems that cannot be addressed by formal institutions. Second, some actors may deliberately create informal institutions instead of changing formal institutions, especially when it is too costly to change formal institutions and when the actors are not powerful enough to change formal institutions. Third, the weakness of formal institutions, which refers to the lack of credibility of formal institutions or lack of effective mechanisms to enforce formal rules, may lead to the emergence of informal institutions. Finally, actors may constitute informal institutions "to pursue publicly (or internationally) unacceptable goals."[18]

Thus, besides underlining the role of institutional weakness, Helmke and Levitsky also take attention to the role of both the agency factor and the 'incompleteness' of existing institutions in the emergence of informal institutions and politics. Taking the agency factor into account in understanding the emergence of informal politics is necessary because structural factors such as weaknesses or incompleteness of existing institutions do not directly generate informal politics. There may not be any formal or informal rules and politics may be characterized by extreme fluidity and uncertainty.[19] Therefore, weaknesses or incompleteness of formal institutions should be seen not as directly leading to the rise of informal politics but just as providing their conditions of possibility.

Helmke and Levitsky's underlining incompleteness of formal institutions in leading to the genesis of informal institutions and politics is also significant. Yet, Helmke and Levitsky consider the incompleteness of existing institutions in a rather narrow way. They conceive it as the failure of existing formal institutions to address some problems, interests and demands. However, it is impossible for formal institutions to be complete. They will always be incomplete to some extent. What is important here is the degree of incompleteness of formal institutions, that is, whether they exclude large amount of social interests and demands. This, in fact, has more to do with the

broader hegemonic socio-political and economic structures than with the institutions themselves. The broader structures, however, are taken into account neither by Levitsky and Murillo nor by Helmke and Levitsky in their attempt to understand the genesis of informal politics and institutions. Therefore, notwithstanding their invaluable insights, they say little about international and national socio-political and economic environment, as they tend to focus almost exclusively upon informal institutions and politics.

In this study, the author will, alternatively, regard formal institutions as parts of broader hegemonic structures, which are established through political struggles of not only national but also international forces. The concrete institutions of a hegemonic formation are shaped within this formation, on the one hand, and work as the tools of reproduction of the hegemonic formation, on the other hand. Drawing on the insights provided by Ernesto Laclau,[20] here it is argued that the way through which a hegemonic formation is constituted, which can be performed through winning the consent of the people and/or through the use of coercion, is critical in determining the strength and adequacy (completeness) of formal institutions.

If a hegemonic formation is established through the use of force, ignoring social demands of diverse groups and thereby without the consent of these groups, this hegemonic formation and its institutions will be weak for two reasons. One is that their credibility will be low in the eyes of the people due to their exclusion of social demands of multiple social groups. Secondly, their enforcement capacity will be low due to their imposition from above through the use of force. People who are forced to accept the hegemony of a system will not identify with this system but just acquiesce under the force, and whenever there is a relaxation in the use of force, they will most likely not comply with the formal rules.

In addition to having weak formal institutions, such a hegemonic formation will also lack institutions to address social demands of various social groups simply because of its ignorance and exclusion of these demands. Informal institutions may also emerge to fill this gap created by the lack of institutions for addressing social demands. This is to say that the hegemonic regime may informally represent some demands that are excluded by the hegemonic structures instead of simply repressing them. The emergence of informal institutions in this way may become highly important for the sustenance and reproduction of the prevailing hegemonic formation. This is because, as aptly put by Laclau,[21] the excluded social demands and interests always pose a threat to the hegemonic order. The satisfaction of some demands through the use of informal ways serves to the elimination of, or at least to the minimization, of this threat and thereby to the sustenance of prevailing hegemonic systems. Therefore, informal institutions may be deliberately created by the hegemonic actors for the continuation of the hegemonic regime. The creation of informal institutions in this way creates ambiguous consequences. Although informal institutions are not created as part of a hegemonic formation as opposed to formal institutions, they serve to reproduce the hegemonic formation. Yet, they at the same time, contradictorily, impede both the expansion of a hegemonic formation in a way to absorb some excluded social demands, and, accordingly, the enhancement of the existing formal institutions.

In fact, regarding the relations between formal and informal institutions, recent studies also point to a complex interaction between them.[22] 'Informal groups' as Dittmer remarks "are often absorbed into formal structures, and formal structures in turn operate with a great deal of informality."[23] According to Helmke and Levitsky, there are four distinct ways through which informal and formal institutions may interact. For one thing, informal institutions may complement formal ones. When formal institutions fail to deal with some issues and problems, informal institutions may emerge to address them. Second, informal institutions may be accommodating in the sense that they, without changing formal rules, counteract the effects of formal institutions. Third, informal institutions may compete with the formal ones. One must violate formal rules to follow informal ones, as in the cases of clientelism and patrimonialism. Finally, informal institutions may be substitutive of formal ones. This type of informal institutions is used in place of formal institutions when the latter fail to produce expected outcomes.[24]

Informal Politics in Turkey: Historical Overview

As mentioned before, informal politics and informal institutions have remained an integral part of the Turkish politics since the establishment of the Turkish republic in the early 1920s. Although the institutionalization of the Turkish socio-political space within the legal-rational framework as opposed to traditional ones dates back to the first half of the 19th century, specifically the Tanzimat era of the Ottoman empire, it was after the foundation of the republic that it gained an unprecedented pace. This institutionalization, however, has been difficult due in part to the political culture that has been characterized by the pervasiveness of neopatrimonialism and clientelism partly inherited from the Ottoman past and partly developed after the foundation of the republic in response to various governing problems, and in part to the interruption of politics with frequent military interventions. While the neopatrimonial character of the Turkish state, which refers to the existence of patrimonial practices, i.e., arbitrary actions of the rulers, along with the bureaucracy of Weberian legal-rational state, has been weakening formal institutions by creating instability,[25] clientelism, which refers to the 'exchange of loyalty for rewards,'[26] has been impeding the development of formal institutions of political representation. The weakness of formal institutions has been furthered by the four military interventions that Turkey experienced from 1960 to date. By attempting to restructure Turkish socio-political landscape, military interventions created instability in the formal institutions

Both neopatrimonialism and clientelism have been pervasive in varying degrees since the very establishment of the Turkish republic. As it is widely underlined and well documented in the literature on the Turkish politics, the founding elite's project of the socio-political transformation, which was shaped under the guise of the official state ideology called Kemalism proceeded through authoritarian ways and sometimes in an arbitrary fashion. It was authoritarian because the socio-political space was restructured from above not through considering social demands of the various sectors of the society but according to the priorities of the state elites. It was arbitrary because when the founding state elites faced with serious opposition from various groups, they modified rules of the game in a somehow arbitrary fashion. Due to their attempt to establish the hegemony of Kemalism not through trying to win the consent of the masses but through coercion, the founding state elites faced with some difficulties that involved the emergence of some local resistances in the periphery. It was in response to the dissatisfaction of the periphery with the socio-political transformation that the state elites turned to informal channels. In an attempt to garner the support of the periphery, or at least to gain its acquiescence, they established clientelistic relations with the local notables.[27]

Neopatrimonialism and clientelism have continued to prevail in the Turkish politics after the transition to multi-party politics in the mid-1940s. It should be noted that ever since the Turkish politics adopted the multiparty system in 1945, those social demands that were not allowed to be formally expressed have in fact been voiced through informal ways, through patron-client relations. In addition to clientelist relations, neopatrimonialism has also been prevailed due to the tendency of Turkish governments to conceive themselves as absolutely powerful. It has been an ever-present tendency of the Turkish governments to attempt to fully control both the state bureaucracy and the legal system by modifying the formal rules according to the requirements of their policies.[28]

In addition to Turkish political tradition, the lack of strong formal institutions due to the frequent intervention of the military into the politics mainly through coups was also highly influential in the widespread use of informal politics. Until the Özal era, there had been three military interventions into the Turkish political life. All of these interventions aimed at reshaping the political life. Mainly because of these frequent military interventions into the politics, the Turkish political life has not been well institutionalized, and, in the absence of strong formal institutions, state elites turned to informal politics for various reasons.

Informal Politics During 1980s

Although the origins of informal institutions and politics date back to the foundation of the Republic and although they have persisted throughout the Republican era, their use had never reached to the degree that they were used in the 1980s. It is for sure that historical legacy of informal politics conditioned the use of informal politics in the 1980s, but the increased use of informal politics during the Özal era cannot be explained by relying only on political and cultural legacies. The widespread use of informal politics in the 1980s was rather related with the transformations that were taking place in the political and economic realms in Turkey in the 1980s. It can be said that the 1980s were a period of transition from a relatively liberal polity to an authoritarian one as well as from a centrally-planned economy to a liberal one, both of which led to the unsettling of previous, more or less, institutional stability in political and economic fields. As mentioned above, it is the main contention of this study that these broader re-arrangements in the socio-political and economic space and the associated wave of institutional change during the 1980s provided the conditions for the employment of informal politics during the rule of Özal governments between 1983 and 1989 to an unprecedented degree. More specifically, two main factors played critical roles in the rise of the use of informal politics: the weakness of the newly established institutions, and the narrow structure of the newly instituted formal politics. While the instability and the low credibility of formal institutions as well as the lack of enforcement mechanisms were the main factors leading to the weakness of formal institutions, the absence of formal institutions for representation of divergent interests and demands of different social groups was the main factor behind the narrow structure of formal politics. In what follows, it will be demonstrated how these factors became critical in providing opportunities for an ambitious and autocratic political leader like Özal for the use of informal politics to pursue his goals.

Conditions for the Rise of Informal Politics: Socio-Political and Economic Transformations in the 1980s

The socio-political and economic transformation of Turkey in the 1980s involved the transformation of the economy and the transformation of the state structure and state-society relations. The state would be more authoritarian but small and efficient, whereas the economy would be free market economy. It was the political alliance of the Turkish bourgeoisie and the state bureaucracy, particularly the military, which drove this transformation with the highly critical support and the encouragement of the leading actors of the world capitalism.

The transformation of the Turkish economy, which was started in January 1980, involved the adoption of a 'structural adjustment program' to restructure the economic field according to the changing configurations of the world capitalism. The centrally-planned and regulated 'import substitution industrialization,' which characterized the Turkish economy in the 1960s and 1970s, was left behind and a stabilization policy imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was adopted. This new policy was based on the export-led growth model containing such measures as suppression of wages, a balanced budget, social spending cuts, tight money, deregulation, devaluation, and liberalized trade and foreign investment policy.[29] As was the case with many other developing countries,[30] the process of transformation was directed not only by the internal forces but also external ones, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The transformation of the Turkish politics, on the other hand, began with the intervention of the Turkish army into the politics in September 1980. As stated in 'The Number One Declaration of the National Security Committee,' the army aimed at preventing anarchy, protecting the indivisibility of the country, restoring the national unity, and re-establishing the state authority.[31] Accordingly, in the three years following the coup, the military regime attempted to radically re-structure the state and the political institutions within the framework of a rewritten

Constitution, changing the rules governing the relations between the organs of the state as well as state and society.

This, however, is not all about the 1980 coup because the military aimed at restructuring not only political system but also economic system. One of the principal concerns of the military was to provide the necessary environment for the implementation of the structural adjustment program in the economic realm, which had been adopted nine months before the coup. To this end, the military, using its force and authority, took a number of measures such as closing down labor unions, banning strikes, and freezing wages. Establishing an authoritarian and oppressive political regime in this way for the implementation of the structural adjustment program, the 1980 intervention of the military largely served to the interests of the Turkish bourgeoisie.[32]

Özal worked as a technocrat during the military regime. As being the key individual in charge of the economic affairs, he had extensive power in implementing the structural adjustment program for the neoliberal economic transformation. The highly authoritarian setting that the military regime established served well for the smooth implementation of this program because the force of the military became instrumental in silencing those social groups who were negatively affected by this program.

Following the military regime, the Motherland Party, established by Özal in 1983, ruled the country from 1983 to 1989. Like his contemporaries in office namely Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, Özal constituted a political discourse by articulating conservative elements with liberal ones, being as such the representative of the 'new right' ideology in the Turkish context. This populist discourse appealed to large segments of the population, including even the ultra-nationalists and Islamists.[33] The ban of old political figures by the military regime also played a significant role in the electoral success of the Motherland Party. After coming into the rule, Özal did not intend to make considerable changes in the new political arrangements imposed by the military. In fact, conceiving economic development as the solution to many problems that the country was facing, he gave the utmost importance to transition to free market economy, which, as given above, had been started but not completed during the rule of the military. Özal envisaged even political liberalization and democratization as well as social justice as dependent on economic liberalization (see Motherland Party Program).

Özal was a highly autocratic party leader and there was no inner-party democracy in the Motherland Party, though this is not surprising considering the fact that all political parties in Turkey have been run through undemocratic ways especially since the 1980 coup. In establishing the Motherland Party, in constituting government, and in appointing the ministers, Özal controlled all the relevant processes, and took almost all decisions by himself.[34] It is even claimed that some ministers learned their appointment from the mass media. In appointing the ministers, the most important criterion for Özal was not merit but loyalty of the candidate figures to himself and the party.[35] Although Özal's autocratic leadership became subject to criticism of some party members, it can be said that the party members were mostly obedient and loyal to Özal. In return of submissiveness and loyalty, they were rewarded with some positions in state institutions. For instance, Özal established 'advisory boards' in state institutions to place those party members who had not been elected as deputies.[36]

Özal's tendency to make all decisions personally was also relevant for the government policies. It is exemplary in this regard that after elected as president, he appointed Yıldırım Akbulut, a political figure highly loyal to Özal, as his successor with the aim to maintain his control on the government as well as on the party. Moreover, he often attempted to by-pass the parliament, state bureaucracy, and even the Council of Ministers in taking decisions concerning both internal politics and foreign affairs.[37] In addition to his autocratic leadership style, Özal also displayed a leader profile not respectful to the rule of law as amply highlighted by his statements such as 'my civil servants know how to look out for themselves', 'getting things done', and 'no harm would be done by violating the constitution once'.

As being autocratic and weakly committed to legal norms, Özal exploited the opportunities for the employment of informal politics, which, as mentioned before, were provided

by the weakness of formal institutions and the narrow structure of formal politics. Specifically, it can be said that Özal created or adopted formal institutions to use them in informal ways. For instance, as it will be explained below, Özal used governmental decrees and extrabudgetary funds, both of which were formal institutions, in a highly arbitrary way either for personal interests and gains or in the patron-client relations. We see in this the operation of formal structures, as Dittmer puts it, 'with a great deal of informality.'[38] In fact, it was not only by Özal but also by the Özal family and by many others in the Motherland Party, in the Özal government, in the state bureaucracy as well as in the business circles that informal politics were used as a means to achieve personal ends. It can even be said that informal politics became so common during the Özal decade that formal politics often provided no more than a facade.

The Uncertain and Fluid Context of Transition: Weak Institutions

As mentioned before, Özal came to power during the early years of the imposition of the neoliberal hegemony, when a fluidity and uncertainty prevailed because of the neoliberal transition. It should be said that Özal did not only use the opportunities that this uncertain context of transition provided, but also deliberately contributed to the development of such an environment. This was so because uncertainty was providing Özal an enormous discretionary power to pursue his goals rapidly through by-passing bureaucratic procedures and control mechanisms.

An important outcome of the transitory process was the emergence of weak formal institutions. There were three factors causing to the weakness of the then existing formal institutions: low credibility, instability, and the lack of effective enforcement mechanisms. While the repeated modification of the existing institutions was the main factor behind institutional instability, the imposition of the changes from above without winning the consent of the masses as well as the adoption of some rules just for window-dressing but not for substantive change were the factors that laid behind the low credibility of formal institutions. The lack of enforcement mechanisms, on the other hand, was due to the over-empowering of the executive by the military regime.

Instability: The Frequent Changes in the Existing Institutions

As mentioned above, while Özal gave the utmost importance to economic development of the country, reducing, in fact, all other aims of the government to economic development, he envisioned the establishment of a market economy as the only way to economic development. Yet, he did not attempt to form a legal infrastructure for the establishment of the free market economy, and for the economic development.[39] He governed the economy in a rather arbitrary way, leading to the formation of a highly unstable environment. As a result, the rule of the Motherland Party "led to a chaotic development at the level of economy and economic institutions."[40] Although economic and political uncertainties have always prevailed due to the neopatrimonial characteristic of the Turkish state, they increased in an unprecedented way during the Özal decade. It appears that Özal wanted to govern the economy in the way he had done when he was a technocrat during the military regime, that is, without going through standard parliamentary procedures and constraints and without facing any opposition.

Due to Özal's almost exclusive focus on economical issues, and his tendency to take decisions alone, most of the informal politics took place in this field. This is mostly done through the expansion of the executive power to the expense of legislative power. In order to escape from the control of the parliament, Özal centralized economic decision-making process by delegating extensive authorities to the Council of the Ministers. In fact, even the authorities of the Council of

the Ministers were narrowed to enhance the prime ministerial power. In this way, main economic decisions were taken at the center either by narrow boards or personally by the Prime Minister.[41]

Another way for Özal to enhance the power of the government as well as to escape from the control mechanisms was the widespread use of the extrabudgetary funds. As stated by Ahmet Kurtcebe Alptemoçin, who had been in the cabinet of Özal, the extrabudgetary funds, most of which were controlled only by the Prime Ministry, were created in order to rapidly intervene in some economic problems through by-passing bureaucratic procedures.[42] The government could use these funds without getting the approval of the parliament. More than 150 funds were created in order to escape the parliamentarian control. Although they were institutional tools, they were used in a highly arbitrary fashion, raising significant doubts and public debates. For instance, they were used to provide credits at preferential rates to some individuals,[43] or for promoting the Motherland Party during elections. The arbitrary use of the funds, which amounted nearly half of the budget, disrupted financial discipline and led to an instability that marked not only 1980s but also 1990s.[44]

Another source of instability in the economic field was the frequent modification of the formal rules and institutions. During the 1980s, government frequently changed its economic policies. For instance, only in 1987, interest rates were changed nineteen times, creating a highly uncertain environment particularly for business activities.[45] Moreover, and more importantly, the rules of the game for the determination of interest rates were also frequently changed by the government.[46] Similarly, obtaining the authority to change the tax rates by decree, Özal government also frequently modified the tax system.[47] In fact, not only economic policies but the whole legal system and bureaucratic rules often became subject to changes. As Buğra notes, they were modified whenever they were seen as not conforming to the economic and social policy objectives of the government.[48]

Özal's distrust to the state bureaucracy and his related disregard of bureaucratic processes were another source of government-induced instability. Regarding bureaucratic rules as well as bureaucrats as impediments to the reform process, Özal often disregarded, modified or circumvented bureaucratic rules, and filled some important positions in the bureaucracy with market-oriented young technocrats.[49] Although these young technocrats, called by the mass media as 'Princes of Özal', were mostly loyal to Özal, they did not have much experience in state matters. Moreover, in an attempt to weaken the bureaucracy, Özal also delegated some authorities of the bureaucrats to the politicians. For instance, during his second term in office, as regards the regulation of rents created by the economic decisions of the state, he delegated the authority of the bureaucracy to political cadres.

The instability of formal institutions created a tendency in the political and economical actors not to comply with the existing rules. Instead of investing in and relying on formal rules and institutions, they established contacts and developed personal relations with the policy makers and/or members of the Özal family to survive in the context of uncertainty and instability. The Özal government, as Buğra remarks, was often "instrumental in the creation of huge fortunes"[50] for some business groups through making policy changes in their favor. The government also created considerable difficulties for those business groups who did not develop such relations or those who were not politically affiliated with the Motherland Party.[51]

Moreover, in response to the uncertainty and fluidity that the rule of Özal government created, business groups turned to engage in rent-seeking activities that refer to the transfer of wealth to certain companies under the auspices of the state.[52] In addition to the arbitrary policy making style of the Özal government that provided business groups or individuals with opportunities to engage in rent-seeking activities to obtain easy profits, Özal government was also blamed for deliberately creating rents for certain business groups and individuals. As outlined by Boratav, the economic rents were created through the use of State Economic Enterprises for personal interests, the transfer of public funds to the shareholders of those banks that declared bankrupt, the corruption in the procedures of big state contracts, the changes in development and construction plans, the corruption in the export subsidies system, the insufficiently regulated stock

market, the credits with low rates, the changes in the law and incentive system, and the corruption in privatization process.[53]Furthermore, the government did not take any serious step for punishing those who commit crimes by exploiting the export subsidies, what is known as 'fictitious exports.'[54] As a result, 256 firms attempted to exploit the export subsidies between 1983 and 1991.

The allegations about higher level officials for taking bribery and corruption also highly increased during the rule of the Motherland Party. It was particularly the widespread use of the extra-budgetary funds, which had a highly complicated legal structure, that was leading to the abuse of power. In fact, the funds almost became the private budget of the government and served as a means for bribery and corruption.[55] As a result, a high-profile corruption scandal was broken up in 1985 that involved a Minister of State, İsmail Özdağlar, who was one of the closest names to Özal, and a businessperson. It was alleged that the Minister backed up the businessperson in return for a large amount of money.[56]

Low Credibility of Existing Formal Institutions

The creation of the new socio-political institutions by the military after the 1980 coup appears to be of particular significance in eroding the credibility of formal institutions. This is because the military created new institutions according to its own interests and convictions, on the one hand, and forcefully imposed them upon the society, on the other. For instance, following the coup, the military closed all political parties, and closely supervised the establishment of the new ones. Even after the civilian governments took the power, the military maintained supervising the political process.[57] Although the authority of the military had an institutional base, it was so extensive that it made possible for the military to interfere in almost all political matters in an arbitrary way, raising doubts and questions about the legitimacy of the parliament, the government, and even the judiciary. The dramatic increase in the intervention of the military to the politics diminished the credibility of formal political institutions in the eyes of the general public. Combined with the harsh measures taken by the military to depoliticize the masses, the decreased credibility of formal political institutions led people to use informal political channels instead of formal ones to advance their interests and demands.

More importantly, some, if not most, of the new institutions were created by the military regime just for window-dressing. For instance, although the transition to civilian rule in 1983 was also called the transition to democracy, the new regime was far from being a democracy. There were severe restrictions on electoral competition as well as on the political participation of many social groups. There were also gross violations of basic civil and political rights, and, as mentioned above, an inordinate degree of the ongoing power of the military over which elected government would not have any authority. Hence, the transition to so-called democracy and the creation of related formal institutions was not genuine. The formal political institutions, therefore, were not enforced. In fact, as it will be explained below, enforcing mechanisms were deliberately not created to open a space to the arbitrary measures of the state.

As a result, informal ways were widely used in the 1980s by the state to control the society. It was particularly in dealing with the political opposition, mainly the leftist and the Kurdish opposition, that the state resorted to informal ways. There were gross human rights violations in all over the country: torture was widespread and systematic in prisons, detainees were being ill-treated in police custody, and extrajudicial killings by the security forces were considerably increased.[58] Özal government turned a blind eye to all these matters, leaving them to the security forces. This was so despite the fact that Turkey ratified in 1988 international conventions for the prevention of the torture.[59] Since these agreements were signed just for window-dressing under the international pressures, particularly the pressures of the EU, they were simply ignored in practice.

Lack of Enforcement Mechanisms

With the 1982 constitution, the power of the executive and the power of bureaucratic apparatuses were considerably increased against the power of the parliament and judiciary within the state structure. Within the executive, the presidential power was expanded to the expense of the governmental power. Moreover, the two parts of the executive, government and president, were not directly held responsible against the voters. More importantly, as mentioned before, the power of the military within the state structure was also highly enhanced, giving the military almost an autonomous position and a permanent power and authority in the political life.

The 1982 constitution also extended the authority of the use of governmental decrees, opening the way for the executive encroachments on legislative and judicial power as well as restricting the checks on the executive power. Özal, who did not want to be blocked by the parliamentarian mechanisms in pursuing economic reforms, made extensive use of the decree power even in taking highly critical decisions such as those concerning privatization process and the tax structure. The expansion of the discretionary power of the executive in this way eroded the checks and balances mechanisms and resulted in the dominance of the executive over legislative and judicial branches of the state. This weakened democratic accountability of the executive and opened a space for informal politics.

Narrow Structure of Formal-Institutional Politics

The formal political field in the 1980s was deliberately structured by the military in a narrow way to block the political expression of social demands and interests of various social groups, such as students, workers, ethnic groups, religious groups and so on. Specifically, the military limited civil and individual freedoms and the freedom of the press, and prohibited trade unions and strikes. It also disbanded existing political parties and banned their leaders from political activity, prohibited new political parties from having state officials, teachers, academics, and students as their members as well as from maintaining ties with associations, foundations, professional organizations, and unions. With these restrictions on political parties, only a limited number of interests and social demands that were considered as 'legitimate' by the military were allowed to be expressed through formal political channels. As such, political parties were turned into instruments for imposing state policies on society, as opposed to instruments to formulate a political will.[60]

The exclusion of many social interests and demands from the domain of legitimate politics paved the way for the use of informal politics. Özal frequently employed informal ways to appeal to those groups for whom the formal politics was closed. Foremost among these groups was the Islamist ones. In fact, the military regime, regarding Islam as an antidote to leftist tendencies, had also employed 'Turkish-Islam synthesis' to pacify the masses. Yet, the use of Islam by the Motherland Party was different than its use by the military. Özal, who himself was an affiliate of an informal religious brotherhood called *Naksibendi*, represented the interests of the Islamist groups, particularly those of *Naksibendi*s, through the use of informal politics.[61] In place of formal institutions and mechanisms, personal relations and informal channels were used in the representation of the interests and demands of Islamist groups. It was particularly the economic growth of religious groups that Özal encouraged and supported through informal ways.[62]

Özal's turn to informal politics rather than trying to expand the hegemonic formation in a way to incorporate the excluded social demands can be explained with the overall pragmatic attitude that he had. During his terms in office, he did not attempt to change the institutional framework imposed by the military. Rather, he mostly appeared in cooperation with the junta leaders. In fact, Özal envisaged the authoritarian politics instituted by the military as necessary for ensuring the smooth transition to neoliberal order. Yet, to appeal to various social groups, he also

needed somehow to satisfy the demands of these groups. Instead of adopting a coherent position, therefore, he tried to have good relations with the military, on the one hand, and to represent the excluded demands through the use of informal politics, on the other hand.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature on informal politics by demonstrating the critical but neglected role that broader hegemonic structures play in the emergence of informal politics. Drawing upon the Turkish case, it shows how the transformation of broader structures provides the conditions for the use of informal politics. It is argued that the unprecedented increase in the use of informal politics during the Özal years was due to two parallel processes of change, which had radically re-structured the socio-political and economic system in Turkey in the 1980s. One was the neoliberal restructuring of the Turkish economy and the other was the transformation of the socio-political system by the military. These two processes weakened formal institutions by creating instability, decreasing their credibility, and failing to develop effective mechanisms of enforcement. In addition to their weakness, the new political institutions were constituted in a way to exclude a number of social demands and interests. This environment provided the conditions for an ambitious and autocratic leader like Özal to turn to informal politics to carry out the reform process rapidly, to represent the interests and demands of some social groups that were excluded from the formal politics, as well as to pursue his publicly unacceptable goals.

The examination of the broader hegemonic structures takes our attention not only to domestic factors but also to the very important role of international factors in the emergence of informal politics, which are mostly neglected in the literature on informal politics. Notwithstanding their invaluable contributions, most of the existing studies on informal politics and institutions fail to consider international factors in the emergence and the use of informal institutions and politics. They usually view informal politics as rooted in the domestic conditions of the countries in question. Yet, as the neoliberal transformation of the Turkish economy with the urging and support of IMF and the World Bank indicates, the late-industrializing countries that have different sorts of international dependencies might be forced by external powers to make frequent changes in their politics. Similarly, some autocratic leaders, who tend not to comply with formal rules, might be backed by external powers.

This study implies that the use of informal politics may serve to the reproduction of the prevailing hegemonic order. Although some particularistic informal institutions that were used in the Özal years, such as neopatrimonialism, corruption and clientelism, competed with the formal institutions since their use required the violation of the formal rules, the informal ways that were used to address those demands that were excluded from the domain of formal politics complemented formal institutions. By satisfying excluded social demands to some extent, informal institutions and politics eliminate or at least minimize the threat that excluded social demands pose to the hegemonic order. As such they serve to the reproduction and sustainment of the existing hegemonic formation.

The use of informal institutions in this way, however, creates ambiguous and double-edged consequences. While serving to the reproduction of hegemonic formation, this sort of informal politics also, contradictorily, impedes the expansion of a hegemonic formation in a way to absorb some excluded social demands, and, accordingly, the enhancement of the existing formal institutions. In other words, they produce both positive and negative consequences. While their positive consequence is the representation of the interests and demands of some social groups that were excluded from the formal politics, their negative consequence becomes hindering the expansion of a hegemonic formation through the constitution of formal institutions for the representation of these interests and demands.

NOTES

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[6] Lowell Dittmer, "Conclusion: East Asian Informal Politics in Comparative Perspective," in L Dittmer, H. Fukui and P.N.S. Lee (eds.), *Informal Politics in East Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 292.
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[16] *Ibid.*
[17] Helmke, and Levitsky, "Introduction," 20-23.
[18] *Ibid.*, 20.
[19] Helmke and Levitsky "Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics."
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[44] Öniş, "Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy."

[45] Buğra, *State and Business in Turkey.*

[46] *Ibid*., 147-148.

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] *Ibid.*

[49] Buğra, *State and Business in Turkey*; Öniş, "Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy."

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[51] *Ibid.*

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