INFLUENCE OF LEADERS IN POLITICAL PARTIES' INSTITUTIONALISATION PROCESS: ANAP AND AKP SAMPLE

LIDERLERIN SIYASI PARTILERIN KURUMSALLAŞMA SÜRECINE ETKISI: ANAP VE AKP ÖRNEĞI

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Özet

Siyasi Partilerin demokratik ve kurumsal karakterlerinin belirlenmesinde siyasi liderlerin rolü ve etkisi önemli bir faktör olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Liderler, siyasi partilerin politikalarını, kurumsal ve demokratik gelişmelerini güçlü ve karizmatik liderlik özellikleri ile önemli derecede etkileyebilirler. Fakat liderin parti içerisinde yükselişi partinin demokratikleşme ve kurumsallaşma sürecini negatif yönde etkileyebilmektedir. Türkiye'de siyasi partiler ağırlıklı olarak kurumsallaşmadan vazgeçen özellikler gösterme eğilimindedirler. Bu nedenle, liderler parti içeresinde bireysel bir güç olarak kolaylıkla yükselebilmektedirler. Liderlerin karizmatik özelliklerinin artması ve seçimlerde edinilen başarılar liderin parti içerisindeki etkisini daha da arttırmaktadır. Parti içerisindeki güçlü liderler parti dinamiklerini farklı yollarla yönetme eğilimindedirler. Örneğin, milletvekili adaylarını belirleme, kongredeki kararları etkileme veya parti içi muhalif kişileri partiden uzaklaştırma gibi kararlarda bu tip liderlerin önemli etkisi görülmektedir. Ancak, liderin parti içindeki etkisinin artması, siyasi partilerin ve genel olarak Türkiye'deki demokratikleşme sürecini olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir. Bu bağlamda, güçlü bir lider altında siyasi partilerin demokratikleşme ve kurumsallaşmasını incelemek önem taşımaktadır. Türkiye'de Anavatan Partisi *(ANAP)* ve Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi *(AKP)* güçlü lider figürünü deneyimlemiş iki siyasi partidir. Her iki parti için de partinin varlığının devam etmesi ve kurumsallaşması güçlü bir lider figürü olmadan problemli bir şekilde devam etmiştir. Bu çalışmada, liderlerin siyasi partilerin kurumsallaşması ve demokratikleşmesi üzerindeki etkileri *AKP* ve *ANAP* örnekleri üzerinden tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ANAP, AKP, Kurumsallaşma, Siyasi Partiler, Liderlik

Abstract

In order to determine the democratic and institutional characteristics of the political parties, the role and influence of the leaders have considered as an essential factor. Leaders can affect the political parties' policies, institutional and democratic structures intensively with their charismatic and robust leadership features. Individually rise of the leader within the political party may negatively affect the political party's process of democratization and institutionalization. In Turkey, parties mostly tend to show deinstitutionalize characteristics and features. Therefore, leaders can quickly rise within the parties as an individual power and control mechanism. Moreover, the charismatic and robust characteristics of the leaders, and victory in the elections are increasing the influence and dominance of the leaders in the party politics. In this case, leaders tend to control the party's dynamics in several ways. For instance, determine the candidate deputies, influence, or decide the main congress decisions and abolish the intra-party oppositions are the main issues that party leaders tend to make. However, the increasing dominance and influence of the leaders in the party, not only damage the democratic structure of the political party but also damage the democratization process of Turkey. In this context, it is crucial to examine the democratization and institutionalization of political parties under a strong leader. In Turkey, the Motherland Party (ANAP) and the Justice and Development Party (AKP) are the two leading political parties that have experienced the influential leader figure. For both parties, the survival and institutionalization of the party continued problematically without their influential leader figure. In this study, the effects of leaders on the institutionalization and democratization of political parties will be discussed through the examples of AKP and ANAP.

Key Words: ANAP, AKP, Institutionalisation, Political Parties, Leadership

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Introduction

Political parties are indispensable institutional structures of democratic societies that aspire to power in order to develop policies for social problems and propose solutions. Parties have different birthmarks, democratic structure and institutional characteristics. On determinant of these features of the political parties is the influence of the leadership. The political leader can affect all these features with his political position and popular image.

Political parties mostly have deinstitutionalised characteristics in Turkish politics.[1] In most cases, parties have not strong internal democratic structure. Therefore, leaders of the parties can maintain their seats within the party, even though it fails in the governance or lose elections. Although parties have different qualifications and outlooks, this assumption is accurate for both mass and cadre (ideological) parties in Turkey. In both types of parties, changing party leader becomes a painful process.[2] Therefore, in most cases forming a new party by leaving the party is seen as a more convenient solution rather than democratically handover a leader.

In this context, especially in the parties that we can accept as a mass party;[3] from a voter's point of view, the leader is a more popular figure than the party itself. In the polls, individuals' voting preferences tend to be shaped according to the charisma and power of the leader rather than the party's identity. Therefore, the party's democratisation and institutionalisation have come to question under this strong leadership.

It is an important debate on how to institutionalise the party under a strong leader. In this context, the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi* -ANAP) and the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* -AKP) are two mass parties facing with this situation in Turkish politics. While ANAP had experienced strong leadership with Turgut Özal, the AKP maintains its political power under the leadership and influence of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. For both parties, institutionalisation and the survival of the party without leaders has been a significant problem.

In this study, the effect of an influential leader figure on party institutionalisation will be discussed through the ANAP and AKP cases. Therefore, this paper seeks to tackle these questions: Does the fact that political leaders become an influential political figure with their

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[1] Özbudun, Ergun. *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation.* Lynne Rienner Publishers, (2000). p.73

[2] Turan, İlter. "Türk Siyasi Partilerinde Lider Oligarşisi: Evrimi, Kurumsallaşması ve Sonuçlari*." İstanbul Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, no:45, (October,2011). p.2

[3] *Mass parties endeavour to get votes from broad sections instead addressing small segment of the society.*

electoral victories and administrative power causes the deinstitutionalisation within the political parties in Turkey? Specifically, how Turgut Özal in ANAP and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in AKP affect their parties' institutionalisation with their charismatic leadership profile?

1. Role of Leaders in Political Parties

The impact of leaders on political life is a well-known and remarkable field of research for political science. The role of leaders, as well as political parties, is crucial to the economic improvement, democratisation and many other processes of countries. Therefore, since the ancient political philosophy, leaders have been examined in many aspects such as personality, talents and biographies.[4] At the same time, political leaders are an essential factor influencing voters' preferences in elections. The popularity of party leaders outperforms all other independent variables such as partisan affiliation or ideologies in the elections.[5] It is also called as candidate-centred politics.

Power figures are the most crucial determinant of political leadership; therefore, political leaders often viewed as power-wielders which means control and influence others.[6] The strong position of the leader, the ability of persuasion or the charismatic personality are influential over to voters' preferences in polls. Besides, the electoral victory of the leader bolsters its role in the party and makes it an absolute decision-making power. However, the leader's rise may cause partitions and cleavages resulting with the leaving of other factions, and power holders within the party. Also, it leads to the deinstitutionalisation of the party. In the political parties, deinstitutionalisation is reflecting a high level of volatility, fragmentation and polarisation as well as declining organisational structure and legitimacy. [7]

Turkey, which has an emerging democracy, has been experienced the strong influence of political leaders in politics. Leaders in 20th century Turkey was considered to have an important place in the creation of the democratisation process, leading to political history and establishing the liberal economic order. One of the reasons why leaders are an essential determinant in this process is that they retain absolute control of their political parties. Leaders manage party dynamics in many ways, such as identifying deputy candidates, supervising the activities of the board of directors, and removing intra-party opposition

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[4] Heper Metin and Sayarı Sabri. *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey.* Lexington Books, (2002). p.5.
[5] Arpacı, Işıl. "Küresel dönüşümler ekseninde siyasi partiler ve liderlik." *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi,* No:1, (January 2018). p.134
[6] Heper and Sayarı, *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey,* p.3
[7] Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation,* pp.149-150.

members from the party. This personal power is becoming more apparent in mass parties because of the electoral victories and the charismatic posture of the leader on the individuals' perception.

Whereas, the leader's absolute position in the party both weakens the institutionalisation of the party and prevents the party to reach the public with its identity. Therefore, the political party is no longer a compelling and convincing factor in the eyes of the electorate after leaving the charismatic leader figure.

1.1. Motherland Party (ANAP) under the Shadow of Turgut Özal

Turgut Özal established the ANAP in 1983 when the decision of the military coup banned many of the previous well-known parties.[8] Özal benefited from these conditions which there were not much democratic and free competition in the elections. He facilitated from this condition for his adaptation in public. He joined the national elections at the same year and won the majority of seats in Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) with his victory in the elections and ANAP became a governing party.[9] During the Özal governance, the main polices was about the liberalising economy with export-led and market orientation and the freer socio-economic environment by privatising media and other institutions. He was willing to submit reformist policies on economy were eye-catching attempts in eyes of people.

Moreover, he was aware of the traditional background of the society and all his rapid change policies involving that manner as well. ANAP integrated with Özal's technocratic and liberal characteristics and his perspective on the society which based on the modern community that held together with a conservative background.[10] Therefore, ANAP became a wide political organisation by bringing centre-right, liberals and conservatives together.[11] He prioritised the economic reforms and created a free environment after the 1980 military control, and these attempts had strengthened his support by the people. Also, his soft interpersonal relations and sympathetic impression became primary influencer to the public instead party's identity.

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[8]Kalaycıoğlu, Ersin. "The Motherland Party: The Challenge of Institutionalization in a Charismatic Leader Party," in *Political Parties in Turkey*, ed. Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (London, Portland OR: Frank Cass, 2002), p.41.

[9] Kalaycıoğlu, Ersin. " Turkish Party System: Leaders, Vote and Institutionalization." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies,* 13:4, (December, 2013). p.484.

[10] Kalaycıoğlu, *"The Motherland Party: The Challenge of Institutionalization in a Charismatic Leader Party"*, p.46.

[11] Heper and Sayarı, *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey,* p.177.

ANAP was established as a disciplined political party which its administrative arm strictly controlled by a leader.[12] No opposition group was formed against this structure and Özal himself due to public support and success in the polls.

Özal's charismatic leadership and his exaggerative authority in party administration led to the dissolution of the party's identity and weakened in-party democracy. The party leaders who came after Özal like Yıldırım Akbulut and Mesut Yılmaz could not sustain this charismatic characteristic in order to gain voters preferences. Also, the relative failure of ANAP in the elections showed that party did not institutionalise independently from the leader. After 1989, the party lost its charismatic leader figure and experienced uncertainty in its identity. After this period, it took part in various coalitions in the government.

From this point of view, ANAP was formed under the leadership of Özal's leadership and maintained its identity with his powerful and charismatic personality. The development process of the party was also in line with Özal's ideas and administration. However, the success of the Özal in the elections and his charismatic role in the party's structure caused deinstitutionalise to ANAP. Although the party survived until 2009 and placed in government within the coalition until 2002, the party lost its credibility and identity.

1.2. Predominant Leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Justice and Development Party (AKP)

Unlike ANAP, AKP was not established with a single political figure. AKP formed by a group of elites as Abdullah Gül, Cemil Çiçek, Bülent Arınç or Abdülkadir Aksu who came from Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi- FP)* and *milli görüş* movement with the name of Reformists (*Yenilikçiler)* in 2001.[13] Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who was one of the leading reformists, joined the AKP after the controversial political process in 2001. In 2002, AKP won 66 per cent of seats in the legislature with an impressive victory in elections with 34.5 per cent votes.[14] As a single-party AKP had dominated the legislature and executive for three terms following 2002, 2007 and 2001 elections.

At the early era of a party, although AKP itself established within an Islamic political structure, it re-defined its conservative ideology by adding embrace of democracy, human

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[12] Heper and Sayarı, *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey,* p.171.

[13] Yeşilada Birol. "The Virtue Party" in *Political Parties in Turkey*, ed. Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (London, Portland OR: Frank Cass, 2002), p.68.

[14] Pelin Ayan Musil, "Emergence of a Dominant Party System after Multipartyism: Theoretical Implications from The Case of The AKP In Turkey." Southeast European Society and Politics, 20(1) (October,2014): p.8.

rights and the rule of law which were perceived as universal values.[15] By that time AKP appeared as a dominant party in Turkish politics. Therefore, their previous political success in the elections was based on the modern and liberal-conservative ideas of the party. In fact, in the ongoing process, although AKP continues its dominant role in the execution and legislation, its overall policies and ideologies have changed in time, mostly based on voters' preferences.

Erdoğan became an influential political figure in both AKP's administration and Turkish politics. Therefore, AKP party identification began to replace with the Erdoğan's popular image. Indeed, according to Turkish voting population, Erdoğan is by far the most famous leader.[16] In this case, Erdoğan's progressive electoral victories enabled him to be a prior and dominant figure in the party. Although AKP was born with the oligarchical and institutionalised structure, Erdoğan strengthened his position in the process; whereas, other founding members lost and their position and even left the party. Therefore, similar to ANAP, AKP became the leader- party in Turkish politics.

Under these circumstances, like ANAP or many other parties in Turkish politics which experienced the dominant leadership figure, the success of Erdoğan in elections may become a threat for AKP's institutionalisation. In the AKP, there was strong obedience to the Erdoğan's opinions and administration, and there were no opposition group or coalition within the AKP structure -until recently- against him. Therefore, unlike ANAP, although AKP established with the group of powerful names, Erdoğan had raised as the charismatic leader among them after the great victories in the polls and surrounded party's identity with his political figure.

Conclusion

In Turkey, political leaders have played an essential role in both the democratisation process of the country since 1945[17] and other developments in economics and politically socialisation of the society. Country's evolution with failures and success has been virtually done by the strong influence of the leaders in politics. Also, political leaders have been influential in the political parties and its institutionalisation process. In many political parties in Turkey, leader became the primary figure on the eyes of the public instead party's identity.

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[15] Ümit Cizre (ed.) *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party*, London and New York: Routledge, (2008).

[16] Kalaycıoğlu, "Turkish Party System: Leaders, Vote and Institutionalization", p.493.

[17] Heper and Sayarı, *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey,* p.217.

However, together with success in the polls, leaders' dominant position in the party caused that parties have been disintegrated to the democratic consolidation in its inner structure, experiences deinstitutionalisation and identity crises. After the charismatic leader bows out form its position, the party experienced crumble and even disappearance in Turkish politics.

ANAP and AKP are two major political parties which can be considered as mass or popular parties in Turkish politics. Although these two parties had a different establishing process, political agenda and organisation structure, both experienced influential leader figure. For ANAP, Turgut Özal, who was also a founder of the party, became legendary. Although his party brought together different groups as centre-right, conservatives or liberals, his strong position in the party blocked to opposition groups during his administration. ANAP did not catch the same characteristics and identity after Özal. Therefore, although the party continued until 2009, its strong position in governance crumbled and disappeared after his effect went down.

On the other hand, although AKP established with such dominant coalition with the group of political figures, after the progressive success on the polls, strength Erdoğan's position in the party and his charismatic leadership identity replaced with the party's in public. There is no precise data about how AKP continues after Erdoğan. However, his absolute administrative power over the party and steady obedience by members indicated that AKP's identity, ideology, in-party democracy and institutionalisation process have been weakening under the strong leadership figure.

In consequence, ANAP and AKP case with the experience of influential political leaders, support the initial assumption of the research, which estimated that political leaders caused the deinstitutionalisation of the parties in Turkey.

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