

Exam Of The Justice And Development Party On The Return Of The Government

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Siyasi İktidarın Dönüşümü Kavramı Üzerinden Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi

Abstract

The Justice and Development Party (AK Party) has demonstrated a sustained ability to maintain single-party rule for an extended period. Since its founding, the AK Party has reached its 22nd year at the time of this study. Over the course of its 22-year political life, the party has secured victory in a total of 18 elections: five general elections—which could be counted as seven if the repeated election of 2015 is included—five local elections, three constitutional referenda, and three presidential elections.

This study examines the significant political shifts and policy changes that the AK Party, as one of the most influential actors in Turkish political life, has undergone during its time in power. These developments are analyzed within a cause-and-effect framework. The periodization employed in this analysis is not based on a strict chronological timeline; rather, it is shaped by critical events and phenomena that have redefined the party's overall policy approach and modes of governance.

Within this context, the following events are identified as turning points for the AK Party:

- The March 1 Memorandum (March 1, 2003)
- The 367 Parliamentary Crisis and the April 27 E-memorandum (April 27, 2007)
- The Closure Case against the AK Party (March 14, 2008)
- The 2010 Constitutional Referendum (September 12, 2010)
- The Gezi Park Protests (May 28 – August 30, 2013)
- The December 17–25 Corruption Investigations and the National Intelligence Organization (MİT) Trucks Incident (December 17–25, 2013, and January 19, 2014)
- The 2014 Presidential Election (August 10, 2014)
- The July 15 Coup Attempt (July 15, 2016)

By evaluating the party's evolution in relation to these key milestones, the study aims to uncover the political transformations that have taken place within the AK Party as shaped by major societal and political developments.

Since coming to power in 2002, the AK Party has almost entirely renewed its founding cadre and has encountered numerous internal and external political developments. While some of these events can be attributed to intra-party dynamics, others are rooted in structural aspects of the country or broader global trends. The party, which initially set out to challenge the existing political order, gradually moved toward becoming its dominant force, with its leadership increasingly identifying itself with the state apparatus.

Having emerged in the early 2000s with one of the youngest leadership teams—headed by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, then in his mid-40s—the party now continues under the direction of a

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leader in his 70s with considerably consolidated authority. At present, it is notable that even candidates running for offices such as mayoralities campaign by primarily invoking the name and authority of the party leader, often prior to presenting their own agendas or qualifications.

Ultimately, it is a natural phenomenon for individuals and political ideologies to undergo transformation over time, shaped by changing circumstances and new realities. However, what is particularly noteworthy in this case is the emergence of a leadership model that is not held accountable for its past decisions or errors. This has led to the uncritical acceptance and support of even the most drastic policy or rhetorical shifts—an issue that raises serious concerns regarding democratic norms and institutional accountability within the party and the broader political arena.

Keywords: Ak Party, Political Science, Turkish Political Life

Özet

Ak Parti iktidarı uzunca bir süredir tek başına iktidarda kalma başarısını göstermiştir. Ak Parti kurulduğu tarihten itibaren bu çalışmanın yapıldığı süreçte 22. yılını doldurmaktadır. 22 yıllık siyasi hayatı boyunca Ak Parti 5 genel seçim -2015 yılında tekrarlanan seçimi saydığımız takdirde 7 genel seçim olarak da değerlendirilebilir-, 5 yerel seçim, 3 Anayasa değişikliği referandumu ve 3 Cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimi olmak üzere toplam 18 seçimi zafer ile tamamlamıştır. Bu çalışma kapsamında Türk Siyasi Hayatının en önemli aktörlerinden birisi olan Ak Parti'nin iktidar süreçleri içerisinde ortaya koyduğu kırılımlar ve politika değişiklikleri ele alınmıştır ve neden sonuç ilişkisi içerisinde açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu dönemsellik bakış açısı tarihsel kronolojik bir bazda olmayıp Ak Parti'nin genel politika yapma biçimini ya da politikalarını değiştiren olaylar ve olgular çerçevesinde ortaya konulmaya çalışılmaktadır.

Bu doğrultuda Ak Parti için dönüm noktası olarak sayılabilecek olan olaylar:

- 1 Mart Tezkeresi (1 Mart 2003)
- 367 Krizi ve 27 Nisan e-muhtırası (27 Nisan 2007)
- Kapatma Davası (14 Mart 2008)
- 2010 Anayasa Referandumu (12 Eylül 2010)
- Gezi Parkı olayları (28 Mayıs – 30 Ağustos 2013)
- 17 – 25 Aralık ve Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı (MİT) Tırları Operasyonları (17-25 Aralık 2013 ve 19 Ocak 2014)
- 2014 Cumhurbaşkanlığı Seçimi (10 Ağustos 2014)
- 15 Temmuz Darbe Girişimi (15 Temmuz 2016)

olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Dönemsellik değerlendirmesi bu noktalardan yapılarak önemli toplumsal ve siyasal olaylar çerçevesinde Ak Parti'de meydana gelen politik değişiklikler ortaya konulmaya çalışılacaktır.

Ak Parti iktidara geldiği 2002 yılındaki kurucu kadrosunun neredeyse tamamını yenilemiş ve birçok siyaset içi ve dışı olay ile karşılaşmıştır. Bu olayları ve gelişmelerin bir kısmı parti içi etmenler nedeniyle ortaya çıkmakla birlikte ülkenin yapısı ya da dünyadaki gelişmeler gibi birçok hadise tutum ve davranışları etkilemiştir. Mevcut yapı ile mücadele parolası ile yola

çıkan parti ve lideri belirli bir süre sonra mevcut yapının tek hakimi olma noktasına ilerlemiş ve kendisini devlet ile özdeşleştirmeye başlamıştır. 40'lı yaşlarının ortasında ve dönemin en genç liderlerinden ve kadrolarından birisi olarak yola çıkan Erdoğan ve partisi bugün 70'li yaşlarına gelmiş ve oldukça yüksek bir otoriteye sahip bir lider ile yoluna devam etmektedir. Bugün gelinen noktada belediye başkanlıkları dahil olmak üzere parti adına belirli görevlere aday olanlar bile kendi adaylıkları ya da projelerinden önce liderlerinin ismi ile seçmenden destek isteme noktasına gitmektedir. Netice itibariyle insanın ve siyasi fikirlerin zaman içerisinde değişime uğraması ve şartların getirdiği gerçekliklerle beraber fikirlerin değişikliğe uğraması oldukça doğal bir süreç olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Ancak burada en önemli dikkat çeken unsur bu değişimden ya da yapılan hatalardan sorumlu tutulmayan bir liderlik anlayışının siyasi arena ve parti içerisinde ortaya konulması bu nedenle çok keskin politika ve söylem değişikliklerinin bile sorgulanmadan kabul edilmesi ve destek verilmesi demokratik bir handicap olarak kabul edilmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Ak Parti, Siyaset Bilimi, Türk Siyasi Hayatı

Introduction

As a result of the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution, the existing system was forced by the bourgeois class and there was a process of transition to the modern state. This process, which resulted in the collapse of the empires of the period, created a new model of state-society relations in the world's history. The most important consequence of this is that the ark of the kingdom is taken from the kings and put on the head of the people. As a result, those who rule the society have now been forced to take power from the society and, at the same time, to base their rules on earthly resources in line with positivist principles. This has resulted in both a restriction of power and a questioning of the decisions taken under the name of "holiness". One of the most important consequences of this is that power has now come to fruition with elections. This has led to the fact that the demands of the people have been taken into account and that the powers have changed.

One of the most important elements of the modern state is the concept of democracy and elections. We see democracy as a system based on accountability, on which the sovereignty of the people is based. Politicians or those who exercise political power on behalf of the people have to stand in front of the public for a certain period of time and vote for confidence. The person or parties in power are generally forced to transfer power to new persons or parties after a certain phase, having a certain share of excess over time. This suggests that the candidates for power must be sensitive to constantly keeping themselves up-to-date and taking into account the demands of the public.

The Republic of Turkey declared the Republic in 1923 and proclaimed it to be governed in the form of a modern-national state. As a result, democracy and elections have emerged as one of the most important aspects in determining political power. Turkey, which has not yet solved all of its economic and social problems in the last 100 years since the founding of the republic, is attaching great importance and hope to the issue of elections. Given the elections and the established powers, the average length of government during the pre-Ak Party period is around 18 months. This shows that it faces a rather difficult situation for the ruling parties. One of the main reasons for the shorter duration of governments is that they have coalition governments. This constantly raises the issue of political crises and stability. Big problems arise at the point of producing lasting solutions to problems or obtaining the result of the solutions produced.

The above-mentioned instability disappeared with the election results of 3 November 2002 without changing the electoral system or making any legal changes. As a result of the general elections held on the date, the Ak Party has succeeded in gaining power alone. This situation has been systematically eliminated as a result of constitutional changes in 2007 and 2017 and system changes. After the 2002 parliamentary elections, the Ak Party won three presidential elections after a system change. This has given the Ak Party the chance to rule the country for almost a quarter of a century. Over the last 25 years, there have been serious changes in the electorate, reality and demands of the country and the world. When the Ak Party first came to power, individuals who had not yet been born had reached voting age. This also reflected the Ak Party's political understanding. The AK Party has changed and transformed in this process, due to many changes both inside and outside.

In this context, the study tries to explain how the AKP power has brought about changes as a result of the breakpoints in the process and why..

An Overview of the Ak Party Powers

The Ak Party has been in power alone for a long time. The Ak Party has been working for 22 years since it was founded. Over the course of his 22 years of political life, the Ak Party has won a total of 18 elections, including 5 general elections - if we count the repeated elections in 2015 as 7 - 5 local elections; 3 constitutional amendment referenda; and 3 presidential elections. The most remarkable thing in general, along with the periodic decrease or increase of the voting percentage in the process, is the fact that the elections are completed as a first party, with a clear gap of votes, and that they retain power on their own. The Ak Party is described by many commentators as an intra-party coalition similar to the 4th trend of the ANAP. This comparison was actually made by the voting masses, even though it was made by representatives. This confirms the claim that the Ak Party, as mentioned earlier, arose as a result of an underlying formation and developed its policy in accordance with the bases' demands. The most important proof of the fact that the Ak Party is a successful party and has a policy and a central party in Turkey is that it has achieved successful results in all regions of the country and has been able to vote for all sections of the population. Although the Ak Party is able to vote from all regions and the entire electorate, it does not seem possible for the policies it has followed to satisfy the whole public, including the electorate. One of the key indicators of this is the fluctuation in voting rates as a result of developments from internal and external sources. Particularly in the 2019 local elections, the loss of major city mayoral posts such as Istanbul and Ankara after 25 years is seen as an important indicator (Sayın, 2019). These developments have created various breaches in the Ak Party and Ak Party's politics and have resulted in policy change over time.

Moments of Collapse and Political Transformation of Ak Party Rule

This section will try to categorize the fact that the Ak Party has been divided into periods in an unprecedented manner. This perspective of periodicity is attempted to be presented not on a historical chronological basis but in the context of events and events that altered the AK Party's way of making general policy or its policies. In this regard, the events that could be considered a turning point for the Ak Party are: (Demirkol, 2022, s. 160-161)

- March 1st Memorandum. (1 Mart 2003)
- The 367th Crisis and the April 27th e-Memorandum. (27 Nisan 2007)
- Closure case (14 March 2008)

- 2010 Constitutional Referendum (12 September 2010)
- Gezi Park incidents (28 May – 30 August 2013)
- 17 – 25 December and National Intelligence Agency (MIT) External Operations (17-25 December 2013 and 19 January 2014)
- 2014 Presidential elections (10 August 2014)
- 15 July coup initiative (15 July 2016)

From these points, the periodicity assessment will try to identify the political changes that have taken place in the Ak Party in the context of major social and political events.

The date on which the first signs of internal conflict or disagreement, even if small, within the party, which will be considered the first breaking point within the Party, and quite limited, is 1 March 2003. In the leadership of the Ak Party, it is seen as the first negative discrepancy between its management and its base (Kardaş, 2010, p. 371). The main reason for this was the difference in political attitude between the party's natural leader and the majority of the people, Erdoğan, who could not sit in the prime minister's seat because it was forbidden to vote, and the country's prominent name, Gül, who took the seat as prime minister instead of him. While Erdogan believes that the US should be involved in Iraq's intervention in the real-political context, Gül is cold about this military support. This has led the Ak Party, especially in foreign policy, to develop a periodic bi-cyclical policy and has become one of the most important issues of opposition within the party (Kardaş, 2010, p. 373). Erdogan and Gul were also exposing their differences in policy-making with close teams around them. Erdogan was working with Cüneyt Zapsu, a team of real-political concerns, careful about US support and pragmatic, with Egemen Bağış and Ömer Çelik. Gül, on the other hand, was working with Ahmet Davutoğlu, who was acting with civilizational ideological sensitivities with a more academic perspective (Kardaş, 2010, pp. 374-375).

The Turkish public was generally opposed, despite the differing sensitivities on the issue of war with Iraq. But what was most important here for the Party was the question of what the base thought about it and what attitude it took. The Ak Party government decided to move the matter to parliament on 1 March 2003. While the military wing was cautious and generally supported US military policy in the region at the February 28th MGK, this time it avoided showing a clear stance. In fact, the Ak Party planned to meet in Parliament after the meeting of the MGK, asking for a clear position of the army and the decision to awaken its image under the influence of the military. (Jenkins, 2010, p. 247). In this way, it was requested that an attitude and the consequences of the responsibility of the decision should be taken into account in the separation within the Party and that an image of the military decision be aroused in the public. However, the TSK has avoided leaving the responsibility entirely to the government in relation to this controversial situation in the public, avoiding the parliamentary decision or the public's impressive opinion in order to deepen differences of opinion within the Party. This led to a situation that began in January at a time when the ongoing crisis deepened. Erdoğan, who adopted a pragmatic approach, and Gül, who was more doctrinary, displayed a clearly different attitude during the crisis, while Erdoğan seemed more willing to have a US military intervention, while Gül showed a distinctly cautious attitude. At this point, the attitudes and statements of Erdogan's advisers were perceived as a threat to the Ak Party, using US tools.

Although the Ak Party describes itself as a "conservative-democrat" rather than a "Muslim-Democrat", this has led more independent viewers to move alongside a group that has an anti-US and anti-Israeli attitude based on Islamic sensitivities and nationalist tradition (Kardaş, 2010, pp. 374-375). In his speech to the party's delegates in the process, Erdoğan once again showed a pragmatic and realistic attitude, emphasizing the country's economic situation in particular, and referring to the importance of external support. Gül has never expressed such a clear stance on the issue and has always said that he hopes for a peaceful solution. In this context, it has not taken a step in preventing the opposition from increasing its support for the draft. The picture revealed that there were not only differences in leadership but also different groupings within the party. The party has begun to be classified as two distinct main groups of people of National Opinion origin and those from the Anavatan Party (Küçükşahin, 2003). The core of this distinction is, in fact, that of those who act on the basis of cultural and religious priorities and those who operate on a basis of pragmatic priorities. Besides names such as Abdülkadir Aksu, Cemil Çiçek, Vecdi Gönül, Ali Çoşkun and Erkan Mumcu, who have moved from right-wing parties to the Ak Party, Kemal Unakıtan, Hilmi Güler and Binali Yıldırım have expressed their personal commitment to Erdoğan and have clearly supported the high-profile dissertation and Erdoğan. However, another group, which is not exactly ideologically and fundamentally homogeneous, has generally emerged in the form of an anti-war coalition. Although members of the Cabinet, such as Abdüllatif Şener, Beşir Atalay, Zeki Ergezen and Hüseyin Çelik, who came from the National Opinion line and had a similar attitude to Gül's sensitivities, have influenced the majority of MPs with their attitudes, the attitudes of Members of Parliament of the era of anti-Sezer-based ideology, Bülent Arınç, who advocated President Sezer's attitude that there was no legal basis for the proposal, and those from countries where the Kurdish population was densely populated, have been similar. During the process, Erdoğan, despite not being a member of parliament, held a formal vote on his deputies, which resulted in his support for the draft. As a result, the motion, which was adopted on 1 March 2003 and, according to some, due to its outcomes in both party and foreign policy terms, received a majority of 264 votes in favour, 250 votes against and 19 votes by the vote. According to the Constitution, however, the draft had to be approved by a mere majority of the voters. The draft was rejected despite the majority's support. (Jenkins, 2010, p. 247). The outcome, which was welcomed positively across the country, led to the argument that there was a problem of unifying leadership within the Party (Kardaş, 2010, p. 378-379). The Ak Party could not take the risk of bringing another draft to Parliament. He was concerned that a new negative outcome could lead to a deep political split within the Party. The result reinforced the claim that there were pro-Erdoğan and pro-Gül groups within the Party, and that there was a power battle between them, and the claim moved to later years. This distinction has revealed that in 2007 Mumcu and some of his neighbors have advanced from the party to the party's breakdown, and that a separate formation has been more strongly articulated in 2019 about Gül, the president's term expired in 2014. Even though this distinction has been assessed over Gül, former Prime Minister Davutoğlu, who is close to the Gül team in the last days of 2019, formally revealed this differentiation by setting up a new party.

Since Ak Party came to power in 2002, it has introduced a comprehensive legislative process and has worked hard to enforce EU compliance laws. In this process, the local elections held in 2004 were also successful. Although the Ak Party continued to be a powerful power in Parliament alone, it faced severe opposition, by the judiciary, within the bureaucracy. President Sezer of the time and the main opposition party, the CHP, had been able to bring many

legislative activities to the Constitutional Court with demands to be cancelled and get the result they wanted. After five years in a power struggle, the Ak Party and Turkey were approaching a major breakthrough in political life. President Sezer's seven-year term of office was due to expire in April 2007, and the issue of whose place he was, had begun to be debated publicly. The Ak Party seemed to have the power to elect the president of whoever it wanted, through the majority it had in parliament. This, however, seemed to be a major danger to the secular Kemalist bureaucracy and to those who regarded him as the real owner of the state. This would jeopardize the secular republic and threaten the regime. The agenda was constantly being moved to a breakdown within the Ak Party, with more conservative-liberal advocates, especially from central-right politics, leaving the party. The main reason for this allegation was that the choice had gained such a tendency and, as a result, made it possible for a centre-right party or formation to emerge on the political scene, which could divide the Ak Party's votes. The expectations raised in this direction have reached a level that will affect Turkey's politics, although not at the desired level. Erkan Mumcu, a centre-right politician of ANAP descent, participated in the Ak Party ranks before the 2002 elections, and served as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism alongside the National Education Ministry (MEB). However, as a result of a dispute within the party, he resigned from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Party on 15 February 2005 (Ak Parti'de İstifa Depremi Yaşanıyor, 2005). Following this resignation, Mumcu became the chairman of the ANAP and took the third party position, followed by the MPs who resigned from the Ak Party and the CHP and the Parliamentary AK Party and CHP (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi Meclis Haber, 2007). This situation has not produced the expected impact in the anti-Ak party public and has been attempted by merging Mumcu's ANAP with the DYP of Mehmet Ağar, who entered parliament in 2002 as the Independent Deputy of Elazığ and was later elected as the Chairman of the DYP and enabled his party to be represented with a seat in Parliament, in order to create an alternative in the eyes of the public. None of these efforts, however, will be ahead of the Ak Party's election of president in the April 2007 presidential election. In the post-election general election in 2007, he sought to block the Ak Party's power alone, even within the coalition, but was also trying to prevent an Ak Party president from being elected before the election. Therefore, the search continued vigorously. The first step in this regard came in a December 26, 2006 article in the Republic Gazette by the former Attorney General of the Court, Sabih Kanadoğlu. In the corresponding letter, Kanadoğlu expressed an opinion that the number of people in parliament in the presidential election should be 367 and that 367 should be the number for the decision for the first round, while also being considered a sufficient number of meetings. This view appeared to be the only obstacle to the Ak Party's election of the president, making it to the corner. The main reason for this view was for a presidential candidate approved by the central powers to be elected by the Ak Party. In that case, Erdogan appears to be the first candidate for the presidency, and he seems to be absolutely unacceptable, with either Gül or Arınç on the list. The most reasonable candidate to be accepted was National Defence Minister Vecdi Gönül, who is good with soldiers. The fact that Gönül's wife was not covering her head was more encouraging. But the point where the debate was most heated was the group meeting in April 2007, when the Ak Party announced its presidential candidate. The meeting was also declared by the Prime Minister and the President of the Ak Party, Erdoğan, the president's candidate is Gül with the words "Our presidential candidate Abdullah Gül is my brother" (367 Krizi Nedir? 367 Krizinde Neler Yaşandı? , 2017). This declaration marks the beginning of a new era in Turkish political life. 361 MPs voted in the first round of the presidential election on 27 April 2007. The Ak Party's presidential candidate, Gül, received 357 votes, with 3 votes cancelled

and 1 void. This sparked political turmoil and transferred the voting points to the Constitutional Court with the request for the cancellation of the CHP session (Meclis'te 368 kişi var iddiası, 2007). This was perceived as an attempt by law to shape politics, but the real breakpoint was a statement published on the TSK's website on the night of 27 April, known as the e-memorandum. E-Memorandum has clearly expressed a stance against Gül's presidency by warning about the fundamental principles of the Republic with the so-called non-essential emphasis (Bugün 27 Nisan e-muhtırasının yıl dönümü, 2018). At this point, Mumcu's declaration that he will not enter Parliament in the re-voting resulted in the fact that it was not possible to elect the President in Parliaments. As a result, early general elections had to be held on 22 July 2007. Some groups were convinced that, with the bureaucratic-laic-elite judiciary and the support of the TSK, it was once again achieved success after 28 February. The social sectors that supported the move this time were more hopeful. Because on April 14, 2007, in order to form a social opposition to Gül's presidential candidacy, he joined the Republic Meetings (14 Nisan 2007: Darbe Mitingleri Başladı, 2016). These rallies, supported and organized by retired generals alongside secular high-sensitivity civil society organizations such as the Atatürkçü Düşünce Association (ADD) and the Association for the Support of Contemporary Life (ÇYDD), have emerged with the aim of creating a picture of social opposition and raising a civilian opposition to Gül's candidacy. (Tafolar, 2013). The blockade of Gül's presidency by the republican elites and bureaucracy has brought the political design trauma of the February 28th process back to the public. The political manoeuvre of the ANAP Group, which was formed with the help of the CHP and the Ak Party's outgoing advocates, similar to the DTP and YTP moves of the 1990s, has caused disappointment and anger over the society in terms of democratisation and national will. But this time the point of change is the attitude of the Ak Party. On 28 April, the Ak Party made it clear that it would not step back in the response to the mouth that had been quoted by Erdoğan and his ministers, and once again stressed its determined stance (27 Nisan Muhtırasına Hükümetin Verdiği Cevap, 2015). The Ak Party's relentless and determined attitude has been an important factor in encouraging the public, and it has not fallen into the fearlessness mistake that the RP made on 28 February. As a result of the presidential elections on July 22nd, Ak Party, with 341 deputies, received 47% of the vote across Turkey, and regained power on its own. With 21% of the vote, the CHP – which is an alliance with its candidates in the DSP – has re-entered Parliament as the main opposition with 112 MPs. After the 2002 elections, the ANAP and the presidential election, which reached the number of group formations since the split between the Ak Party and the CHP, did not see support from the public, known as the DP, which is often included in the media. The main difference between the 2007 election results and the 2002 election is that a new opposition party has been placed in parliament by the people. The MHP obtained 70 seats in parliament with 14% of the vote (2007 Genel Seçim Sonuçları, 2007). In 2002, the electorate once again dismissed the parties he left out of parliament, wiping out all possible hopes. The only exception to this was the MHP, and since then it has become a growing actor in politics, although not every year in terms of voting rates. The Ak Party and the supportive public were delighted that almost one of the two voters supported the Party, while the opposing group was delighting that the Ak Party failed to reach 367. Turkey is once again concerned about the April process, the MHP said after completing the process. While noting that he will not support Gül, the MHP said that it will be voting in Parliament, ensuring that 367 issues have disappeared (2007'de yaşanan ve Abdullah Gül'ün hatırlattığı 367 kararı neydi o gün neler oldu, 2019). The presidential election, held on 28 August 2007, was completed with Gül being elected president by 339 votes in the 3rd round, in which 448 deputies participated. The results of the general

election and the election of Gül as president have been more competitive with the seizure of an important castle like Çankaya than with the slowing down of traditional social competition. The Ak Party has decided to change its strategy based only on EU membership and more democracy, realizing that democratization steps alone will not be enough to sustain the process, and has also begun to struggle with the institutional order in different parts of the country. Especially the EU's passive stance during the 367 crisis has disappointed the Ak Party and led to the notion that EU support alone is unreliable. The Ak Party has conducted its politics through the separation between the elite, i.e. the "white Turks", and the peoples. Particularly in the political endeavour to get rid of the military-bureaucratic scourge. An important breakthrough in the struggle against this situation was an e-memorandum that was uploaded on the website of the TSK on 27 April 2007 by the Chief of the General Staff, General Yaşar Büyükanıt, which emerged in the form of a new-generation repetition of February 28 called the post-modern coup. It emerged as a reflection of old habits as a result of the presidential candidacy of Abdullah Gül, whose wife is head-covered. However, Ak Party has not stepped back in the process, which will go until the closure case. During this process, when the social opposition was mobilized by the Republic Meetings, the Ak Party has placed greater emphasis on democracy. (Bora, 2018, p. 479). After these processes, the Ak Party faced a case of closure, but in the 2007 elections, it reached 47% of the vote and received the support of almost half of the population, believing it was a victim of public opinion. The main reason for this is that the social opposition that has been activated is the secular-Kemalist section. From that time on, the section suffering from the Ak Party is confined to the secular-Kemalist section. The public therefore joined the Ak Party in order to give a lesson to this section, and sought to open the door to politics that was being held in custody. This painting, which emerged in 2007 in particular, led to an open battle between the Ak Party and the secular-Kemalist bureaucracy. Ak Parti set out to lift the penalty and, in particular, the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases, which hit the military penalty significantly. During the process, the government tied close ties with the Gülen Community, and the subsequent process revealed that almost all of the police chiefs and judges who conducted these cases were FETO/PDY members. As it turns out that some sections of the public and those operations supported by the government to remove the charges involve major manipulation by the FETO/PDY, this has almost taken the form of silencing an opposition to the Community/Government. These processes, conducted on a fairly unlawful basis, have undermined the perception of the rule of law in society, as it has damaged the Ak Party's democratic personality. As the voices of those who have suffered injustice and the victims, Ak Party and Erdoğan have formed a new mass of victims. As a result, it was found in 2018 that the Ergenekon case was manipulated with false documents by the Gülen community following the July 15 attempted armed coup attempt. Although some of the dismissed have denied the accusations, the result of this process is that Kemalism, called the ruling ideology, is now in opposition. (Bora, 2018, p. 185).

In a 2008 speech, Erdoğan used the phrase "the anger is also an art of speech" in response to Erdoğan's criticism of his aggressive actions against opposition groups. This could also be seen as a sign that Erdoğan would become even harder. Following this traumatic process, Ak Party has officially launched the Ergenekon case, a historic milestone in Turkey's political and social processes, with 27 hand bombs seized in a ghetto raid on 12 June 2007 in Uttar Pradesh with the aim of clearing up the secular - Kemalist bureaucracy (BBC News Türkçe, 2013). In this process, the Ak Party was closely associated with the Güleni factory and left the management of the operations largely in the hands of the community police and judges. The government is

fully supportive of the operations, and then Prime Minister Erdogan used the words "I am the prosecutor of this case" on July 15, 2008. Again, Deputy Prime Minister Arınç expressed his support for the operation by saying "Turkey is cleaning its intestines". In a speech in 2013, Akdoğan described the case as "the greatest legal calculation in Turkey's history" (Sözcü Gazetesi, 2016). Per the most important reason for the Ergenekon case's change in political power and position in the community and its loss of credibility was the arrest of former Chief of the General Staff, İlker Başbuğ, for the creation of a terrorist organization (İlker Başbuğ Tutuklandı, 2012). The Ergenekon case was revealed in 2018 by the decision of the 4th Istanbul Criminal Court (Özçelik, 2018), an operation conducted by the FETÖ/PDY against the TSK.

The Ergenekon case will take its place on the stage of history as an important period for Turkey's political life in terms of its process and consequences. Although the process is carried out through retired soldiers, it has eventually extended to the civilian sector and has emerged to eliminate the Kemalist - secular soldier / civilian bureaucracy, which is at the heart of the state. In this process, the Ak Party went into close co-operation with the community, and the most important phenomenon for the AK Party has led to comments in the form of a shift from the EU axis, a weakening of the perception of the rule of law, and authoritarian tendencies in the AK Party. The widespread illegal practices in the judicial proceedings that have emerged during this process have left a negative impact on public conscience, although the satisfaction of the destruction of the military weapon. During this period, which we will call the 2nd period of the Ak Party, we have come to the conclusion that it has brought about a serious change in Ak Party's political perception. The Ak Party has periodically used the Ergenekon case as a stumbling block to silence its opponents, and the progress and desire for EU membership has almost come to a standstill. The rule of the Ak Party and the Islamist section, the critic of Ali Bulaç, have already entered the social engineering system. As a result, intervention efforts in cultural and social life have begun in many areas that were once in the hands of Western, secular, and Kemalist White Turks. This was widely expressed in the written and visual press. Especially after 2013 – which is considered a milestone of separation from the Gülen Community – it was beginning to form an opposition to power within itself. In particular, the removal of Davutoğlu from the prime minister's office and the reduction of Gül's influence on the party have caused such an impact on the close audience. This has progressed until the debate on the new parties that will emerge within the Ak Party in 2019. In particular, the inner opposition criticised some of the practices that followed the July 15 attempted armed coup, but noted that the authorities did not make sufficient self-determination with regard to co-operation with the Community. The possibility of a new party coming out of this Ak Party, which has been repeatedly voiced as a result of this actual situation, has become concrete with former Prime Minister Davutoğlu's Future Party (Sayın A., 2019), and these developments have continued with the official announcement of the Party's initiative by Ali Babacan, one of the leading names of the Ak Party (Ali Babacan'ın kuracağı parti için tarih verildi, 2019). In the process of completing the work, Babacan officially announced his party.

As a result of the trauma of the Ak Party's strengthening exit from the 2007 elections and the call for a new 28 February process to be launched, it now felt that it was impossible to pursue its path by agreeing to the established order, and since its confidence in the EU declined, it has begun to conduct the Ergenekon case and derivative proceedings with a clearance process that is occasionally far beyond the law. At this point, the sign of the victory for institutional settlement was given in 2011 by the removal of the e-memorandum from the archives of the TSK's website. However, the arrest of the former Chief of Staff Başbuğ in 2012 caused a huge

public uproar and even disturbed his power. Though at the end of the process the secular-Kemalist phenomena were eliminated, these moves did not remain irrevocable, and in 2008 the Ak Party was charged with being the focus of acts against secularism, and the court prosecutor-general of the Republic at the time, Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya, opened a closure lawsuit (AKP'ye kapatma davası açıldı, 2008). We are faced with this case as the final act of prosecution by the court of law against the Ak Party. The closure lawsuit and the related proceedings, which appeared in the Ergenekon cases as a remuneration, revealed a very difficult period for the Ak Party and the public. With the current structure of the Constitutional Court, the vast majority of the public was expecting the AK Party to be shut down, and commentaries had begun on what the new policy would look like. In the end, however, Ak Party condemned acts against secularism by a vote of 10 out of 11 members of the Constitutional Court, which President Haşim Kılıç voted in favour of resigning the case. However, the vote on the request for the closure of the Ak Party was also closed to 6 members, 4 members were deprived of the treasury assistance and 1 member voted in favour of the resignation of the case (Ak Parti kapatılmasını kararı çıktı, 2008). The fact that the Ak Party was recorded by a court ruling that its actions against secularism focused on it was of no importance to both the Party and the public, and the decision not to close it led to the beginning of a new era for Ak Party. It was once again understood that it was time to take action in the case of Ergenekon and Balyoz, and that, along with the ongoing struggle with publicly denigrated military charges, it was also important to fight with the charges that arose in the trial.

The AK Party has continued its fight against civilian and military bureaucracy, starting with the process of gaining power during the RP, despite the periodic strategic change. With the 367 crisis, this bureaucratic construction clearly showed that it would never go to compromise with the Ak Party. As a result, the EC realized that moderate policy, or at least clearly not going into a conflict, would no longer be useful, and launched a clearance process based on military bureaucracy, with the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases. The proceedings in the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases appear to have ended with a court ruling in 2018 that it was a crash. Although it seems to be a legal issue, this period, with its political and social consequences, has resulted in a major change of mind in Turkey, with the destruction of the military system and the military bureaucracy operating under the authority of civilian power. But the closure trial we mentioned above has aroused the Ak Party's belief that the civil bureaucracy needs to make changes, especially on the judicial side. In this regard, the Ak Party has decided to confront the public with the emphasis on democratisation and the demand for an end to the judicial system, especially with the high court, which is struggling with it, and with proposals to change the structure of the Supreme Court of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK), change the structures of the Constitutional Court and make it more difficult to close the party (Referandum'da Neyi Oylayacağız?, 2010). The date chosen for the referendum, which was brought to the public due to the struggle with civil affairs, has been very carefully presented. The people went to the box for the Constitutional Amendment Referendum on 12 September 2010. The amendment to the Constitution was adopted by 58% of the votes (2010 Referandumı: Evet, Hayır ve Boykot Cepheleeri Ne Demişti?, 2017). The constitutional amendment was adopted after a period of propaganda, which was strongly based on the Ak Party's emphasis on the elimination of poverty. Following the outcome of the referendum, the Star Gazette published a banner entitled "The People's Government took over" with this emphasis (Halk Yönetime El Koydu, 2010). The AK Party and the SP, which often faced each other in this process, met on the same front and benefited from the effects of the incident, and the referendum in the SP supported the AK Party.

The referendum amendment was introduced to destroy the notion of civil justice, in the highest jurisdiction. But the criticism of the anti-referendum front has intensified, because of the strong support for the referendum by Fethullah Gülen, the head of the Gülen movement, and the use of phrases such as "remove the dead from the grave and vote if necessary". This has raised concerns on the opposition side and in some sections of the public that due to some practices in the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials, the judiciary will be completely politicized and pass to the community's control. The liberal communities, which supported power with the slogan 'not enough but yes' for the 2010 referendum, began to reduce that support in the 2011 elections, where Ak Party votes were 50% and was the last to openly support power. This has been caused by factors such as the hardening of power, the deviation from purpose of the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases because they contain moves to silence social opposition, the transition of democratic steps expected to be put into the Kurdish issue with very limited moves, the prominence of police violence in social events and the increase in cases of disproportionate use of force, and the priority of religious-conservative lifestyle, especially in the field of education-culture. The fact that Aziz Babuşçu, who served as Istanbul County Chairman of the Ak Party in 2013, who later became a Member of Parliament, said that the construction period would not be the way the liberal sector wanted it to be, predicted that the divide would deepen. The referendum, in which the Presidential System of Government was adopted, in particular, in 2017, and the presidential elections in 2018, have shown this more clearly. Liberal İhsan Dağ, which initially approached and supported the Ak Party positively, revealed their changing opinion in 2015 by saying that "a Muslim minority is dependent on a conservative majority". (Bora, 2018, s. 409).

In the process of fighting the prosecution initiated after 2007, the Ak Party, through the law and through trials, abolished the military proceedings - at which point in 2011 the removal of the memorandum from the TSK's internet archive is seen as an important sign that the military prosecutors have completely ended - and by a referendum, the judicial proceeding has been removed. This has been supported by various sections of society, especially the liberal sections, who have given priority to freedom and civil policy. However, during the process, the Ak Party has been criticized for concerns that some of the practices, especially in cases, seriously undermine the rule of law and occasionally create a perception of silencing opponents. Moving away from the EU's goal and will, which was not unilateral from the point of view of the Ak Party, has set a distance to its relations with Turkey in the EU. These processes have brought with them the authoritarian criticism of the Ak Party, which has accumulated power in its own hands and centralized politics. One of the most important criticisms at this point is that the community has a very effective image in these processes, that the processes act as the principal owner, and that they tend to silence those who oppose them in particular. Many criticized the community's efforts at the time to develop a new system of custody within the state. As a result of the very strong exit of the Ak Party from the 2011 general elections, the reduction in monitoring mechanisms and, in particular, the failure to take some of the expected democratization steps, has led some sections - among which the liberal sections have an important place - to begin to move away from the AK Party. The Ak Party has begun to get the impression that the community has become stronger and that it is abusing its co-operation with it at some points, and in particular the processes such as the arrest of the Chancellor have started to create discomfort in the public conscience and within the Party.

In addition to the Ak Party's covert struggle with the community, it had to deal with the rising non-party social opposition. This social opposition was able to turn into a goat in the hands of the community and the public at the point of the fall of the Ak Party. On 27 May 2013, a group of young people came to the Gezi Park to protest the demolition of the trees in connection with the arrangements the government intends to make in Taksim Square and tried to stop the machinery to prevent the destruction/destruction. In response to this process, a very violent raid was carried out by the police on the morning of 31 May against the activists who set up tents in the Gezi Park, and the protesters' tents were burned there (Gezi Parkı olayları neden ve niçin başladı, neler yaşandı? , 2019). This led to the start of one of the most remarkable civilian protests in Turkish political history and remained on Turkey's agenda for 40 days (Gezi Park Eylemleri: Protestolarda Gün Gün Neler Yaşandı?, 2019). This process is still considered a highly controversial process in Turkish political life. Though people close to the authorities advocate the view that the period's police violence was raised by the community as awareness in order to activate social opposition, the period is seen as a sign that Prime Minister Erdogan's remarks, in particular, showed authoritarian tendencies and that the government's "I keep 50% hard at home" was hardened in terms of social division and freedoms.

Following the 2010 referendum, the community's power within the state had increased, and a new phenomenon of opposition had begun to emerge in the name of the government. Although many sections of society rejoiced over the abolition of the charity, they were uncomfortable with the strengthening of the state and its practices of charity. The implementation at this point was viewed as a policy of the state, and the responsibility was politically on the AK Party. Criticism was rising from journalists and thinkers close to the Ak Party about what the period community was doing. The operation was launched on 7 February 2012 due to the opening of the congregation's distancing approach to UNMIT Secretary Hakan Fidan, following the collapse between the community and the government (Özışık, 2015). Even if this operation fails, it is the first step towards a serious loss of confidence. The peak of tensions between the government and the community, however, is the government's decision to close the conference halls on 13 November 2013 (Cemaat ile Hükümet Arasında Dershane Gerilimi, 2013). This is a very critical decision for liberal education practices. In some parts, this situation is perceived as a restriction of freedom under the name of struggle with the community and is criticized in this context. In retaliation for the move, the community police and judiciary extension conducted an operation called the corruption and bribery operation against the government and its ministers, known primarily as the December 17-25 operations, which were an important breakthrough for the Ak Party and Turkish political life. The situation has caused a shock in the public and within the Party, and has subsequently reached the culmination of conflict with the process known in public as the operation of MİT, which was launched in January 2014 with the aim of extending it directly to the Prime Minister (December 17-25). This has caused a serious trauma to the government and society, and has led to the beginning of the process of reclaiming the power and privileges the government shares with the community. At this point, the government is entering a serious process of distrust and is beginning to increase its tendency, to assemble power and dominance. The process of losing the Liberals' support for the Ak Party, as mentioned earlier, has accelerated during this period.

The 2014 presidential election is one of the strongest signs of change in the Ak Party and Turkish political life. In a constitutional referendum in 2007, the issue of the election of the

president by the people was approved, and this has not been much of an issue during Gül's presidency, only that some discussions have been held about the deadline for the term of office. Although the period has been quite limited, it has been attempted by the opposition in particular to ensure that a Gül-Erdoğan competition within the Ak Party can intensify. In the presidential election on 10 August 2014, Erdoğan won 52% of the vote and became the first president elected by the people in the first round (Cumhurbaşkanlığı Seçim Sonuçları, 2014). This election was different from the other presidential elections. Erdoğan said he would not be a president as he used to be and would use all his powers. This was described as the first step in the presidency system, which was voted out in 2017, and is actually referred to as the implementation of the Presidency System. The main reason for these criticisms was Erdoğan's assertion that he was gathering power and moving away from liberal practices and liberal governance. Opposition parties were building their strategies of criticism of Erdoğan and the government on this step. Especially Erdoğan's failure to rule alone in the 2015 general elections, although he is not a party member, has sparked single-man criticism of Davutoğlu's refusal to form a coalition with the CHP by using his influence in the Party and bringing the country back to elections and forcing Prime Minister Davutoğlu, who received 49% of the vote, to resign about a year later, and has been seen as important steps towards centralizing power (Davutoğlu işaret etmişti: 7 Haziran – 1 Kasım arasında neler yaşandı? 2019).

As Erdoğan was the first president elected by the people and increased his power and the struggle with the community under the name of the FETÖ/PDY, the community got stuck in the corner and felt the need to take a final move at the point of breaking Erdoğan's power (İstanbul Emniyeti ilk kez 'FETÖ' dedi, 2015). This move emerges as the July 15 coup initiative, which will never be forgotten in Turkish history. On July 15, 2016, the Gülenist constitution aimed at overthrowing the elected government through a military coup, within the military bureaucracy, and in this regard, it planned to subdue the administration, through expansions in the Air Force. The coup attempt was prevented after a 24-hour period of intense conflict/exodus prevention as a result of the public appearance in the squares (Dakika Dakika Darbe Girişimi 15-16 Temmuz 2016, 2016). As a result of calls by Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on the night of 15 July, 248 people were killed and 2169 injured in the streets in response to people's rallies against supporters of the coup (15 Temmuz Darbe Girişiminin Acı Bilançosu, 2017). The government has declared a state of emergency (OHAL) following this traumatic process. OHAL lasted about 2 years and was extended 7 times for 3 months and ended on 19.07.2018 (Türkiye’de OHAL sona erdi, 2018). Many people have been removed from their duties due to their membership of the terrorist organization, including the announced OHAL and the Decrees on the Rule of Law (KHK). This number reached 125,678 as of the beginning of 2019 (15 Temmuz Darbe Girişimi En Fazla İhraç Emniyette, 2019). Many schools, non-governmental organizations and health institutions have been closed as part of the NGOs due to their contacts with the FETO/PDY. This has caused a reaction from the opposition, and criticism has been expressed that the government has silenced the social opposition and failed to distinguish the criminal from the culprit fairly (CHP’den KHK Eleştirisi: Biz yaptık size tebliğ ediyoruz diye bu işler yürümez, 2016). These criticisms have been voiced not only by the opposition but also by those close to the government. Criticism has been expressed, in particular, over the increasing victimity complaints, the length of the OHAL, the use of KHKs in areas outside the fight against the FETÖ/PDY, and the tendency to authorize (Öztürk, 2017). The issue of the lack of sufficient fighting by the political foot of the FETÖ/PDY, in particular, has always been on the agenda and has become a subject of periodic specialization. Although

the government has developed a security and protection reflex, some of the steps and practices taken have been regarded as restricting freedoms and undermining the rule of law. It has been criticised that the government has uncovered areas of KHKs and its application in such a way as to contradict, in particular, liberal policies. Following this, the Ak Party and President Erdogan have taken on a more controlling structure, and the process of transition to the Presidential Government System, also known as the 'Turkish-type Presidency System', in particular, to enhance the government's governing power. In the process, the Ak Party increased its statist and partially nationalistic appearance as a result of the Republic Alliance, which has moved away from liberal and liberalistic policies, centralised power and formed with the MHP. As a result of this change in policy and attitude, Ak Parti has been captured by Turkey's security-centric policy and internal enemy-generating reflexes, which Turkey experienced a lot in the 1990s. This has negatively affected some sections of society and its allies in the outside world, where the Ak Party has long its freedoms. But, in particular, the protection of FETÖ/PDY members by the EU and the US, efforts to establish a terrorist state under different names, on the Syrian border, the terrorist organization PKK and its affiliates, Turkey's isolation with regard to the number of Syrian refugees, whose official numbers are close to 3.5 million, and especially the economic crisis in 2018 and the disruption of relations with the United States, reveal the legitimacy of these safeguards and closure policies. The processes and developments that have taken place have highlighted the importance of tighter and more security policies, by the government and Erdoğan, and have put the phrase "Beka" at the centre, especially in the policy language.

Conclusion

The period in which human nature lives, it renews itself and continues to live in change. This is also reflected in the political ideas and life-view where man is the main actor. This is reflected in the attitudes and speeches of politicians, as is the case in people's political preferences. The attitude and behaviour of parties, especially those with leadership or executive staffing changes, to certain subjects and circumstances may change over time. But in Turkey, in this sense, the political arena has undergone a different process in the last 22 years. This is the result of an uninterrupted power structure that runs alone and with a single leader.

By the time the Ak Party came to power in 2002, almost all of its founding staff had been renewed and faced many political and non-political events. While some of these events and developments arose as a result of intra-party actors, they influenced many situations and behaviors, such as the country's structure or developments in the world. After some time, the party and the leader, who set out to fight the existing structure under the slogan of struggle, have become the sole judge of the current structure and have begun to identify themselves with the state. Turning out in his mid-40s and being one of the youngest leaders and cadres of the era, Erdoğan and his party are now on their way with a leader who has reached his 70s and a very high level of authority. At this point today, even candidates for certain positions on behalf of the party, including mayoral positions, go to the point of asking for support from the electorate before their own nominations or projects with the name of their leaders.

As a result of the experience of state governance and the sense of ownership, the view of the state phenomenon and the institutional arrangement has begun to change, and reflexes similar

to what has long been referred to as statecoco have been sought to be developed. As a result of a movement to democratize the country, the road to solving the country's problems has resulted in incidents and a reflection of preserving the current position of political competition, resulting in a centralistic structure. While there was a more balanced central government within the party at the establishment stage, the party began to be filled with members who depended on the power of the leader, especially those who had the ability to object to decisions in the party over time, which made the leader even more cultured. People's unlimited and uninterrupted support, despite changing policies, has made the leader stronger, but the staff around the leader has become more dependent on the leader over time.

In the end, it is quite a natural process that people and political ideas change over time, and that ideas change with the realities brought about by the circumstances. But the most important element here is that a sense of leadership that is not held responsible for the change or the mistakes made in the political arena and in the party, so even the very sharp changes in politics and speech are regarded as a democratic disadvantage to be accepted and supported without questioning.

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