

COMPARING THE JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY WITH THE POLITICAL EXPERIENCE OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERS IN EGYPT

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Abstract

This article compares the political program and style of Turkey's Justice and Development Party (JDP) with the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) of Egypt. The article explores significant similarities between two parties and traces them in common political and economic background conditions. These two conservative parties share in their style of politics characterized as pragmatist, pluralist, gradualist, multilateral, and internationalist with their common goals to bring solutions to decades old solution-waiting economic and political problems of the countries shortly identified as economic underdevelopment, unemployment, poverty, lack or violation of basic human rights and liberties. For the same purpose, the parties share in their support for democracy, human rights, rule of law and economic rationalism. The parties differ in their view to the role of religion in public life, however, for while JDP is characterized as a secularist party of liberal type, the FJP is known with the goal to Islamize the Egyptian political system much as permitted by democratic norms.

Keywords: Justice and Development Party, Freedom and Justice Party, Liberal Conservatism, Turkish Politics, Egyptian Politics

ADALET VE KALKINMA PARTİSİYLE MİSİR'DAKİ MÜSLÜMAN KARDEŞLERİN SİYASİ TECRÜBELERİNE KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR BAKIŞ

Özet

Bu makale Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisiyle (AKP) Mısır'da faaliyet gösteren Özgürlük ve Kalkınma Partisini (ÖKP) siyasi programları ve üslupları yönünden karşılaştırmaktadır. Makale iki parti arasında önemli benzerlikler olduğunu keşfetmekte ve bunun sebebinin sahip olunan benzer siyasi ve iktisadi şartlara bağlamaktadır. Bu iki muhafazakar parti siyasi üslup yönüyle pragmatist, çoğulcu, tedrici, çok taraflı ve çok yönlü olmaları; programları yönüyle de her iki ülkede yıllardır çözüm bekleyen iktisadi kalkınamamışlık, işsizlik, fakirlik, temel insan hak ve özgürlükleri ihlali gibi sorunlara çözüm getirme çabası içinde olmaları konusunda büyük benzerlikler taşımaktadır. Yine aynı üslup ve gayelerle her iki parti ciddi anlamda demokrasi, insan hakları, hukuk devleti ve iktisadi akılcılık yanlısı olmaları noktasında birbirine son derece yakındır. Fakat bu iki parti dinin siyasi hayattaki rolüyle ilgili görüş ve uygulamalar konusunda birbirinden ayrılmaktadır, çünkü AK Parti liberal bir laiklik savunusu sürdürürken ÖKP Mısır siyasi sistemini demokratik normların izin verdiği ölçüde İslamlaştırma gayesi taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, Özgürlük ve Adalet Partisi, Liberal Muhafazakarlık, Türk Siyasal Hayatı, Mısır Siyasal Hayatı

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1. Introduction

Socio-political movements with conservative character tend to share some commonalities in the category of countries classified according to their level of development. Presence of similar conditions drives the movements to adopt some common organizational and programmatic features. Developing and poor countries, contrasted to developed countries, tend to have some such common background conditions like military dictatorship or tutelage, bureaucratic authoritarianism, low levels of economic development, international pressures for liberalisation and integration with the global world etc. to serve as a strong set of motivating agents for conservative movements to keep away from fundamentalist projects and search for power within the rules provided by democratic political mechanisms. Turkey and Egypt are similar in their possession of such a socio-political and economic background to cast significant resemblances in the political trajectory of the conservative movements appearing in these countries. The conservatives in both countries, in Turkey since 1990s and in Egypt since 2000s, have come to support for democracy, human rights, rule of law and economic liberalism. And pragmatism, pluralism, gradualism, multilateralism, regional and global activism have been a major part of their political discourse. Support for liberal political institutions is often argued to be associated with the goal to liberate conservative life and introduce reforms towards conservative ideals. Support for economic liberalism is found to be the part of a thinking that economic liberalism offers the best recipe for economic development. The movements are discovered to be realistic in their approach to the major problems facing the countries against which a pragmatist and pluralist style of politics has commonly been adopted with the help of the broadest coalition that could be achieved. The multilateralism and activeness in foreign policy has been associated with the goal to search for powerful allies against authoritarian blocs at home but also because of a thick foreign policy agenda which historically aims to build a powerful and prosperous country, to provide international Muslims with necessary support and to be a leading agent of peace and order in the region.

The conservative movements are not without any difference in Turkey and Egypt, however. On the issue of secularism particularly the Justice and Development Party (JDP) in Turkey and Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) in Egypt fall apart from one another. While the former declares to be a secularist party of a mild type, the latter rejects it totally having the goal to Islamize the political system in Egypt as much as possible with democratic means.

1.1. Demarcating the Limits of JDP's Political Economy

The Justice and Development Party is established in 2001 at a time when Turkey was challenged with serious troubles: The economy was in ruins. Since the year 1980, the average rate of inflation was far over 50 %. The growth rate of the economy was around 3.5 %, quite irregular in composition and often with the addition of foreign debts to the calculation. Public debts were rising and the funds borrowed were not employed in effective ways to make the expected returns (Akdoğan, 2004, pp. 93-96). In the political sphere, the country lagged far behind liberal democratic ideals despite its assertive claim for democracy. The military tutelage remained as a serious handicap against democratic life with the members of the armed forces sustaining their legal and practical privileges to intervene in the democratic process. Problems proliferated in the

text and implementation of the constitution particularly regarding freedom of belief and thought, press freedom, political parties, social and cultural rights (Vacherot, 2008, pp. 32-57). PKK terrorism continued to be the most important problem of the country without any clear and positive expectations about its future. In its relations with other countries, Turkey was not able to enjoy cooperation and support from the west at desired levels for reasons enumerated above but also because of the absence of a common resolution for integration with the west. Related with this, globalisation stood as another challenge before the Turkish people with its pressures and attractions increasing via advanced means of contact and communication to compel the Turkish people to assume a more clear and coherent view towards the global world with its political, economic, legal, social and other norms and institutions (Köni, 2014, pp. 6-8). To the background of these state of affairs, the Justice and Development Party stepped into Turkish political life with a goal similar to Atatürk when he left for Samsun: To give an end to the decades old political, economic and social state of pessimism, to raise the country to its deserved place among developed nations, and to shape out the new vision of Turkey opening to the future.

The JDP was heir to the previous Welfare and Virtue Parties in terms of the earlier career posts of its members, but it substantially differed from them in style and program. The nomination Conservative Democracy used to describe the identity of the JDP by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan tells us a lot about this difference. Though victimized by the secularist state elites with political bans, imprisonments, expropriations, insults and threats, the JDP did not indulge into a war of revenge and in some cases they even found the secularist reactions justified. It was agreed that some Welfare Party members were engaged in anti-secularist activities with their calls for jihad and Islamic statehood particularly and actions were taken against them with their exclusion from the new JDP formation (Köni, 2013, pp. 217-222). But it is wrong to say that the JDP deputies found justified all what is done with their movement. The state elites also shared in the mistakes particularly with the type of secularism they supported. The insistence of the state elites on following a French type of secularism, modelled from the Jacobins of the French Revolution who were infamous for their opposition to the appearance of religion in social life let alone the implementation of religious norms, was not acceptable. Against this, the JDP was offering the type of secularism implemented in dominant Protestant countries like the US, UK, Germany, Netherlands etc. where social, cultural and public representation of religion was dealt with more tolerantly without much prohibitions and limitations. So the JDP declared in its inception that it was a secular party which did not aim to change the regime in Turkey – as part of lessons taken after the 28th February Process and also due to the concerns for integration with the global world – but it was added that the principle of secularism had to serve to freedom of religion, belief and thought rather than inhibiting them (Atasoy, 2011, pp. 93-94).

But apart from that what the founders of the JDP considered more immanent was the rising tide of polarization and partisanship in the country. Defining the major concern of the party as service to peace, prosperity and order, the JDP's conservative democracy expressed the readiness of the party to utilize all channels of dialogue and cooperation with other groups for the normalization of the political life. The country was in a state of crisis far behind its establishment goal and at this phase the party would not serve to a particular ideology. The absence of an ideological centre was thus cast as a major characteristic of the JDP. Condemning ideological rivalries, the party

would rather give its trust in tolerance, pluralism and cooperation for economic and political development of the country (Akdoğan, 2010, 50-54; Kaddorah, 2010, pp. 114-117). The JDP's political line is thus often identified as pragmatism. This pragmatism was not to be confused with opportunism which meant the exploitation of political gaps for electoral purposes, but rather to be engaged in service to the interests of the country with even a forfeit of those true causes when necessary. The party would not be without any policy goals, but they would be secondary to the solution of observed material problems.

For the JDP, a key factor in achieving its stated goal to normalize the Turkish political life would be its pluralist democratic vision. People from all different groups of the society were invited to join the party including the previous conservatives, liberals, staunch secularists, feminists, nationalists (Turkish, Kurdish and other), the Alewives, the Christians as long as they were open to dialogue and cooperation for the future of the country. To this end, particularly the Kurds were given extensive opportunities for competing in parliamentary elections from which a plenty were elected to the parliament. But apart from that, there were quite a number of state ministers of Kurdish origin like Mehmet Şimşek, Hüseyin Çelik, Mehdi Eker, Zeki Ergezen, Dengir Mir Mehmet Fırat and Efkân Ala. The JDP's pluralist democratic vision did not stop short of this. A comprehensive reform package is taken into implementation under the name of "democratization package" for non-Turkish nationalities and ethnicities in the country. With the reforms, such rights and liberties are introduced as non-Turkish broadcasting (with private and public channels), non-Turkish education (at private schools and universities), naming of children and geographical units in ethnic languages and running electoral campaigns in ethnic languages again (*Turkish Official Gazette*, 13 March 2014).

A distinguishing and must-not-be-omitted characteristic of the JDP has been its full support for contemporary political norms and institutions like democracy, human rights, rule of law, gender rights etc. to which it has largely maintained its loyalty by far. While introducing greater rights and liberties for the movement, these norms and institutions also promised the JDP with a plenty of allies in the country and abroad. Particularly the civil society organizations and what could be called the peripheral members of the society and the US and the EU abroad substantially sympathized with this characteristic of the JDP to provide it with a powerful domestic and diplomatic support base. While enjoying protection from reactions from authoritarian power blocs and also refraining from extremist actions this way, the JDP's pro-globalisation stance would also structurally compel the secularists to behave more democratically to recognize the supremacy of civilian authorities (Dağı, 2006, pp. 95-102). The JDP's turn did not remain at a level of rhetoric but materialized with an extensive list of reforms introduced. Some of those reforms could be summarized as the abolition of the death penalty, the recognition of the right to gathering and demonstration without legal permission, the abolition of prison sentences to press crimes, the introduction of more severe punishments against torture and maltreatment, the limitation of the ban on international travel to a verdict by a court only, the introduction of the right to make personal application to constitutional court, the permission of syndicate membership and collective bargaining to civil servants.

However it could be interpreted – as reprisal or as part of a project of democratic consolidation – the reforms brought significant changes regarding civil-military relations as well closer towards the democratic ideal: The reforms extended the frequency of National Security Council (NSC) Meetings from one to two months. The authority of the army generals to make strong recommendations in the NSC is mitigated. The power to appoint the head of the NSC is transferred to the prime minister. The number of civilian NSC members is increased while that of the generals is decreased. Apart from the NSC, all the appointive and supervisory powers of the Turkish chief of staff on civilian posts are removed. The jurisdiction of military courts is limited to the men under gun only. The state of emergency administration in the east and south-east is abolished. The army is deprived of its mechanisms of legal and constitutional protection for military intervention by allowing the perpetrators of 12th September 1980 military intervention to be brought to the courtyard as well as the others who were implicated in later plans of military intervention. And finally, the budgetary expenditures of the army are taken under civilian oversight.

As the major ground of its pragmatism, the rescue of the economy was declared as a main goal of the JDP. The economic instability and inertia of the country was deemed as the most urgent issue waiting for attention whose recovery was expected to serve as a solution to many of the problems mentioned above. The path selected by the JDP for this purpose was similar to that of the liberal conservatives of the late twentieth century in the west, i.e., Ronald Reagan and Margret Thatcher, which foresaw the pursuit of free market economic system, privatisation of public economic enterprises, downsizing of the state, cooperation with international actors of economic liberalism like the IMF, the World Bank, the US and the EU. The JDP's economic agenda has also included a very thick social policy dimension which involved the allocation of huge public funds for health, education, housing, employment and social security (Köni & Özdemir, 2014, pp. 10-13). The end result of the JDP's economic liberalism was very successful. During twelve years of JDP presence in government, the economic growth rate averaged 5.4 %. The GDP increased from 3500 USDs to 11000 USDs. The inflation rate is taken under control around 10 % which was averaging 50 % for the last twenty years. Though rising nominally, the rate of national debts declined considerably compared to the GDP with total foreign debts/GDP falling from 38 % to 23 % and public foreign debts/GDP falling from 25 % to 0.6 % (Karagöl, 2013, pp. 25-38).

1.2. Comparing Political Economy of the Muslim Brothers with the JDP

The political, economic and social structure of Egypt in its recent history displays considerable similarities with that of Turkey to lead to the emergence of striking similarities in the characteristics of conservative movements. What cast itself as military tutelage in Turkey appeared in a more rigid shape in Egypt as military dictatorship with decades of rule by ex-generals inherited through Jamal Abdul Nasser, Anvar Sadat and Husni Mubarak. The Egyptian military, as the liberators of the country from the aliens and founders of the modern Egyptian state, adopted a socialist nationalist identity to impose it on the national educational, legal and political systems. The army has traditionally been the major political actor producing the presidents,

provincial governors and leading bureaucrats and it held a sizable part of the economy in its hand (15-40 %) to be the major provider of Egyptian goods and services (Saed, 2012, pp. 402-404). Egyptian army seemed to transition from dictatorial to tutelary status only after the Revolution in 2011 to assign itself a guardianship role in the new Egyptian political system. Similar to its political structure, the Egyptian economy was in a tough situation for decades with its GDP per capita being around 3500 USDs as of 2012, like that of Turkey before JDP, waiting urgently for development programs. The rate of unemployment is pessimistically high and the purchasing power of the people has long been weak. Apart from these, globalization remained as another influential factor on Egyptian people compelling them to make a choice for integration with the global world. Economic development, political participation, rights, freedoms and opportunities promised by globalisation has driven the Egyptian people to reconsider the virtues of contemporary political norms and institutions.

All of these has been influential the particular ideational trajectory of the Muslim Brothers from the past to the present. The Muslim Brothers is established in 1928 by a civilian activist Hasan al-Banna. Until the capture of the government by Nasser in 1953, the Muslim Brothers acted together with the nationalist Free Officers for independence against British colonialism and Jewish occupation of Palestine and Jerusalem. But after the establishment of the modern Egyptian state under the leadership of Nasser and his support for socialist nationalism, the Muslim Brothers started to set its way apart with the Nasserist state. While Nasser trying to turn the country into a kind of secularist military authoritarianism with previous Free Officers occupying the administrative and bureaucratic cadres, the Muslim Brothers were to take their way towards the opposite direction with their activities turning from civilian to political. The organization was in the beginning more like an Islamic missionary and charity body aiming to revitalize the practice and knowledge of religion in the society believed to be sadly neglected by the Egyptian society. The major activities of the organization included invitations to prayers, morality, charity, communitarianism to get broadened by time with managing mosques, Qur'an courses, hospitals, charity organizations, Islamic business companies, trade unions, schools etc. to appear as a highly sophisticated civil society organization (Munson, 2001, pp. 501-502). As the devotion of the Muslim Brothers deepened and as it started to present some political demands, it came to clash with the secularist army. The army reacted to the political demands of the organization with arrests and prison sentences while the Muslim Brothers turned to armed resistance assassinating Prime Minister Fahmi al-Noqrashi at an extreme point. In return, the army arrested and executed Hasan al-Banna and more persecutions followed after this with the organization being totally banned. But the Muslim Brothers survived with growth underground and the size of the organization started to scare the statesmen by the 1990s to lead them to search for dialogue and negotiation with their alleged concerns for the future of the country. With also the democracies spreading in waves, the pressures for liberal reforms increasing from the west, the Muslim Brothers starting to socialize into contemporary political institutions, a gate has opened for Muslim Brothers to enter legitimate political life.

Thus with incentives and inclinations on both sides, in 2007 the Muslim Brothers General Guide Muhammad Mahdi Akef made a press statement about the intentions of the Muslim Brothers to establish a political party. Accordingly, the party would be secular but would have a strong Islamic reference, and that it would function

separately from the civilian branch of the organization, and that it would be open to all Egyptians let them be Sunni, Shia, Christian, liberal, woman as long as they agreed with conservative ideals (International Crisis Group, 2006, p. 16). An extensive literature had developed through the twentieth century about the compatibility of Islam with contemporary political norms and institutions and the Muslim Brothers had slowly come to agree with them. Democracy, for instance, was a more ideal political regime than monarchy or aristocracy because the original Islamic sources advised the election of the *khalifa* from among the virtuous members of the Muslims and hereditary succession was clearly prohibited. Similarly, Islam was a religion of rights and rules to be smoothly observed and applied by the people and the authorities. What needed was to adopt the right laws and then observe their application.

The JDP experience in Turkey remained as a good example in point for the Muslim Brothers. According to a high ranking member of the organization, Essam al-Arian, Turkey exemplified how a conservative political movement could come to the government and how it was possible to introduce rights and liberties for the Muslims. The Muslim Brothers were similarly supposed to take the democratic way, enter the electoral competition and address to the practical needs of the people. The JDP's success was seen in its successful performance in the economy particularly and the Muslim Brothers had to take note of it to come to the government. The Muslim Brothers would work with the IMF, switch to free market economic system, privatize unwieldy public economic enterprises, and introduce investment incentives among a long list of things to be done (Sallam, 2013). And similar to JDP, the Muslim Brothers would pay particular attention to social policy issues like health, education, employment, poverty to increase government funding in these areas as an extension of their religious civil society activism for the last eighty years (Freedom and Justice Party, 2011, pp. 17-21).

With a momentum added by the Arab Revolutions spreading from Tunis, the Muslim Brothers founded the Freedom and Justice Party in February 2011 under the leadership of Saad el-Katatny. The party had highly liberal features in its rhetoric. It was a major slogan of the party to compete for "participation rather than domination." Against their fears from the army and other rival groups as well as because of their pluralistic vision, the party competed for less than 50% of the seats in the parliament only in September 2011 elections and it won 46% of the seats. It was declared that the first job of the FJP was to introduce a democratic constitution with principles of separation of power, fundamental rights and liberties, parliamentary supremacy clearly stated in it (Brown, 2012, pp. 5-12). With the new Egyptian Constitution prepared by the FJP, the power and privileges of the president are substantially minimized in favour of the parliament. The presidency is limited with four years with a second chance for re-election. The constitution also revised the provisions on arbitrary detention, torture and mistreatment, discrimination, privacy of communication, and freedom of assembly and protest for conformity with contemporary standards. The modernist outlook of the FJP to liberalize the legal and political system in Egypt bore significant parallels with the reforms adopted by the JDP.

The FJP shared a similar view with that of JDP regarding the ideal type of civil-military relationship according to which the military had to be under the authority of the elected representatives of the people. The most critical success achieved in this respect was the termination of the decades old military dictatorship with the president

and the assembly to be elected by the peoples vote in a democratic way. Apart from this achievement, however, the military maintained its autonomy with legal rights to intervene in politics when it deems necessary with its separate budget and its industrial complexes untouched. The constitution also gave the military the right to judge the civilians in certain cases. The reason for the extensive rights given to the military in the Constitution must be sought in the gradualism and pragmatism like that of JDP again, however.

The FJP had a clear difference from the JDP regarding its rejection of secularism and defence for Islamic sharia. The party considered sharia superior to all types of political systems, but it was not intended to introduce sharia in an undemocratic way. It would be the people to decide it with their votes and the negotiations maintained with other political actors in the country. Therefore, while being fascinated with the performance of the JDP in Turkey, the FJP rejected the secularism of the JDP as it was expressed by el-Arian in reaction to Erdoğan's advice of secularism during his visit to Egypt in 2011. Erdoğan's advice was considered as unacceptable attempt to intervene in domestic affairs of Egypt (Sallam, 2013). On the subject, the Constitution prepared by the FJP stated that Islam constitutes the main reference of the Egyptian legal system. The Constitution also introduced an advisory council of *ulama* to check the compatibility of the laws with religion.

2. JDP's Foreign Policy and Muslim Brothers

To have a proper understanding of the foreign policy line of the JDP, one must take into account four major parameters. These parameters are (i) the political structure of domestic environment the JDP was born, (ii) the capabilities, motivations and preferences of regional or global actors including the Middle East states, the US and the EU, (iii) the JDP's vision of New Turkey (iv) the character and ambitions of the foreign policy makers in the JDP. The JDP's foreign policy line shapes as a result of a dynamic interplay of these factors. We will offer a process oriented and contextual analysis here for the purpose.

As it is very often stated by the leading JDP politicians, the purpose of the party has been to found a "new Turkey." The concern to bring about a new Turkey was associated with the goal to change the status quo in the country much as the desire to build a great Turkey. The JDP has been the hope of the conservatives, Islamists, Kurds and liberals for freedoms and rights who have been marginalized by the imposition of things like militant secularism, ethnic nationalism and similar illiberal policies. In its early years in government, the JDP found a very hospitable social ground whereas the state elites of the establishment seemed highly hostile. For the state elites, parties like JDP defending social, political or cultural elements of religion was a challenge and a threat that had to be handled out carefully. This is what the JDP has been critical of most often and that has been a major tenant of its political campaign for votes which seems to gain the appreciation of the generality of people looking at the rate of votes it gets. It was this mentality alienating Turkey from its history and geography for decades and the great deal of security concerns presented by the state elites for the purpose was without any ground.

The political rivalry taking a very solid shape between the Welfare Party and the state elites went on in an asymmetrical way during the JDP period also. Taking its lessons from the past, the JDP was not likely to follow a confrontational strategy against the state elites but would follow safe and legal ways to clean them out. The foreign policy was found to provide effective tools for the JDP providing it with allies, international pressure groups, and reform agendas imported from abroad. One of the first things done by the JDP in the context was the search for the support of regional and global powers to overcome its security problems and furthermore to replace the primacy of security issues with those softer issues like democratization and liberalisation. In contrast to Atatürk's famous foreign policy principle of "Peace at home, peace at world," the state elites were producing enemies in and abroad. With a discourse of security, the state elites were maintaining illiberal norms and practices in the system. The JDP has been highly successful in its objective by minimizing the political activism and autonomy of the state elites with invitations for reform from abroad by also resolving major diplomatic and security concerns of the country as well surprisingly.

The JDP has broken the single-line foreign policy orientation of Turkey based on NATO membership with disconnections from the neighbouring countries, Islamic world, Asia and Africa. The country turned its face to all political, economic, military and social sources of power and started to act in a proactive way to turn the developments to its advantage in the first place. The JDP believes that Turkey has the potential of being a regional power and a respectable international state with its history, culture, economy, population, dynamic labour force and civil society. With the JDP, the new Turkey made peace with its culture, history and geography. The seeds of JDP's foreign policy were planted by the leading party member Ahmet Davutoğlu who established the intellectual foundations of this dream in his doctoral thesis titled "Alternative Paradigms." Davutoğlu's vision has been appreciated and modeled by many states in the region and the world.

The JDP as a party united for Turkey's membership to the EU. The earlier goals of unity among Muslim nations were not found very practical. It was not true that the west was united against Islam and that the Islamic countries had a rich potential for development if they cooperated with the west. The west was the gate for rights, liberties, participation, wealth and many other things that the conservatives were longing. To this end, the JDP adopted successive reform packages in a wide array of domains as a result of which they curbed the authoritarian practices of the state elites too as a byproduct. The JDP's campaign for EU membership provided the countries with many benefits and also earned the appreciation of the generality of the citizens.

With JDP in power, Turkish-American relations went on in its most intensive and friendly form. For the US, the JDP's Turkey was a model for the Middle East with its ability to reconcile Islam and democracy. Turkey has been invited by the US to be an agent of modernization, liberalisation, peace and prosperity in the Middle East by the US to which JDP has given its full support for the JDP also shares the same concerns. For this purpose, the JDP supported the democratic forces during the Arab revolts and it still keeps supporting the Free Syrian Army in Syria. The US itself was a major debtor, military and diplomatic ally against enemies, a country of highly developed political system and the JDP would certainly prefer to be close to the US.

However, the relations have not been so perfect as it is thought between Turkey and the US. As part of its proactive, multidimensional and multilateral stance, the JDP denied certain US calls like isolation of Iran, opening a northern front in the Iraqi War, and following the west in general in relations with Russia. The JDP similarly tended to follow a different foreign policy line from the US regarding Israeli-Palestinian conflicts with a closer position to the Palestinians often. Davos event and the killing of Turkish citizens by Israeli soldiers on Mavi Marmara has blocked the way for a dialogue until 2013 when Israel apologized and accepted to pay a compensation. However, the normalization process that began after this apology has been suspended again with the military operation over Gaza on 8 July 2014.

There are several points one can compare the foreign policy visions of the Turkey and Egypt. The first point one could make is that both parties broke up the monopoly of military elites over foreign policy as they tried to exclude them from policy making processes. This was a crucial part of their overall strategy against the traditional elites: FJP also tried to find new ways to reach the major countries of the region. Mohammad Morsi was the first Egyptian president visiting Iran after the revolution and the FJP tried to establish firm relations with Saudi Arabia. Morsi was following the footsteps of the JDP and was voiced as Egypt's Erdoğan by the Egyptian people. The rhetoric and style of his speech in Non-Aligned Movement's meeting in Iran was resembling the language Erdoğan: A harsh criticism of Israel, affinity with Hamas and support for the Free Syrian Army in Syrian conflict.

Turkey and Egypt share in their relations with the west with Egyptian economy being highly dependent on the US and the EU. The country conducts half of its foreign trade with the US and the EU and it is provided with military aids from the US each year worth 1.3 billion USDs. And both countries are favourite touristic locations for western countries. All these serve as historical, economic and military ties that has to be maintained for the national interests. The JDP and FJP share in their pragmatism in this sense.

3. Conclusion

This article offers a comparison of the JDP with the political experience of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt. It is argued in this article that for sharing substantial similarities in their socio-political and economic background, the JDP and Muslim Brothers have run through very similar programs and styles of politics. The members of these two movements were highly fundamentalist in the past with their common goals to introduce an Islamic state and society. But under the constriction of a number of factors including pressures from a nationalist secularist group of state elites, increasing impulse and attraction of globalisation, dire economic and foreign policy circumstances of the country, both movements experienced a significant change in their character and identity. They have learnt to be pragmatic to survive. By adapting to the contemporary political environment with its institutions of democracy, human rights, political and economic integration with the liberal world, they have realized that they could save from the pressures of the authoritarian blocs at home and also make service to their country by developing it in political and economic terms. In both countries, the parties have acted with a pluralist, conciliatory, democratic and open vision as a way to

introduce the best solution the countries face in their domestic and international environment. Particularly in foreign policy, the parties displayed a significant activeness to cooperate with regional and global actors with an interest in introducing peace and prosperity in the region by also turning it into a region of stability and peace. In active foreign policy, the parties have observed that they can achieve some favourable outcomes if they are able to bring the Islamic world together around the same cause and if they use international peace-building mechanisms.

The Muslim Brothers cast their difference from the JDP regarding the issue of secularism, however. The Muslim Brothers never abandoned its goal to Islamize the regime in Egypt but changed its methods with democratic and conciliatory ones by recognizing the existence of different groups in the country. Influential in the presence of such a difference could be the centrality of religion in Egyptian life and history with its linguistic, demographic, cultural and geographical closeness to the Islamic heartland. Islam being a central part of Turkish social and political as well, but it has always gone together with concerns for the continuity of the state, independence and integrity of the country.

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