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MAJOR ISSUES OF TURKISH POLITICAL PARTIES UNDER THE EFFECT OF STRUCTURAL CHANGES

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The crisis of Turkish democracy has increasingly become a current topic of discussion - both on the domestic and international scene. As a rule, crisis situations in democratic settings are occurring when the economic and social structural changes are not translated into effective, operational political solutions. With other words political crisis becomes unsolvable, when there is an unwillingness to built links between the prevailing political "malaise" and the ongoing socio-economic changes in society. The purpose of this paper is to attempt to outline the major factors related to this very problem in Turkey.

I.

Turkey is one of the fastest changing societies in the world. It is an untypical developing society. Having achieved to pass the peak of many criterias of development, it has so far not been able to complete a smooth transition from a purely agrarian society into an organically organized industrial society. The plurality of its manifolded problems can be summarized as follows: Acute population explosion, continuous internal and external migration, extraordinary high un- and underemployment, unbalanced income distribution, concentration of capital, decline of worker's economic participation, bottleneck in foreign trade, inability of the economy to find new outlets, increase of import versus decrease of export, acute energy shortage, slowing down of existing industries, acceleration of brain drain, increasing deficit within state economic enterprises, growth of inflation rate, inadequacy of financial institutions to encourage savings and to channel these savings in job creating investments,

increase of illegal economic activities, enlargement of "underground" sector (smuggling, bribery, ransom taking), spreading of gecekondu's (bidonvilles), increase of illegal constructions, increase of new forms of external migration (asyl requests), slow death of local administration particularly municipalities of large cities, replacement of street fights and open violence over political options taken through the voting booth. Among these various factors, three merit particular attention:

1. The changing nature of Turkey's rural regions.
2. Consequences of urbanization and internal and external migration.
3. Structural changes within Turkey's economic sectors.

1. - Within the last 30 years, Turkey has been transformed from a typical agrarian into a fast urbanized society. While in 1950 out of 20.9 million people 17 million (81.6%) were living in villages, this ratio has been reduced in 1975 to 23.4 million (58.2%). The prediction for 1987 is as follows: 62% of the population will reside in urban, 38% in rural areas.

Not only has there been a shift from rural to urban areas, but during this period the structure of rural areas has also been changed. Rural settlements with an average of 250 people declined from 11% to 3%, a similar decline has been registered in settlements of 500 people, namely from 24% to 11% and with a population of 1000, from 24% to 17%. Parallel to this change the ratio of villages located in mountainous, forest areas has also declined, namely from 80% in 1945 to 55% in 1960. Significantly there has been a growth in villages with a population of 5.000, namely from 6% to 16%. This means at the same time that rural settlements over a population of 2.000 are entitled to

establish a municipal organisation. So much said, it still has to be noted that Turkey has to take care of 35.724 villages. The difficulty of coping with the provision of adequate public services is self-explanatory.

Furthermore the impact of mechanization in farming has also led to significant changes in the use of land. There has been a 81% increase of creating fields, 124% in establishing vineyards, 137% in setting up or preserving olive groves, 38% in tending orchards against a 36% decline in use of grazing land or meadows. The increase in tractors is similarly dramatic. While there were only 16.585 tractors in 1950, this figure raised to 281.802 in 1976. However, mechanization of agriculture not only served to increase agricultural output, but caused also an important amount of soil erosion and unemployment. Sharecroppers and landless peasants were forced to leave their villages, land dispute increased - 53% between members of the same village versus 9% between the village and government -, forest fires grew significantly, some crops were totally neglected due to a predominantly female population structure in some areas with high external migration. Agriculture's share in the national income distribution also declined, it was 44.3% in 1960, 30.4% in 1970. On the other side speeded up electrification and the appearance of transistors opened the horizons of rural areas, TV made in many regions its appearance.

De-peasantization on one side, modernization of peasants working for cash-cropping on the other side, induced significant change in the mentality of the rural voters, especially in terms of government subsidies and minimum price levels. Even so Turkey still remains among the group of middle range income (around 1.000 dollars per capita) the country with the highest ratio of population engaged in agrarian activity, 62% versus 30-42%.

2. - Turkey has not only to cope with the problem of excessive population growth and interrupted internal migration, but also to find urgent solutions for its fast urbanization rate. The pushpull factors which induced the flight from rural areas date back to the end of World War II; this process found an outlet during 1960-1975 in form of external migration. At present the outward immigration is confined to a limited degree toward some Middle Eastern countries and Australia, however, the attraction of Turkey's three metropolitan areas continues. The rate of Turkey's urbanization shows the following trend:

<u>Years</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Town</u> ⁺	<u>City</u> ⁺⁺
1927-35	2.1	2.9	3.2
1945-50	2.2	2.6	5.0
1960-65	2.5	6.7	8.0
1970-75	2.5	5.0	5.9

⁺ Cities over 10.000

⁺⁺ Cities over 100.000

The fast urbanization rate caused a concentration in metropolitan areas. In 1975, 23% of Turkey's urban population was living in Istanbul, 38% were settled in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Due to inadequate policies of city planning, the process of building shantytowns (gecekondus) has not come to an end, it is as of today the highest in the world: 55% of Istanbul, 60% of Ankara and 65% of Izmir's population is living in gecekondu.

The population structure of these gecekondu is also revealing. While the unionized, organized industrial workers are capable to obtain housebuilding credit through low cost social housing schemes, the various groups belonging to the marginal sector

(street vendors, uninsured part-time workers, newly migrated peasants) are compelled to erect their houses under illicit conditions. Urbanization being not the product of industrialization but rather of speedy depeasantization, the second generation gecekondü people have the tendency to espouse radical extreme political views.

3. - Industrialization causes normally a decline in agricultural activities. In Turkey this process took a different course.

Structural changes in employment

Turkey 1960	Middle range income countries	Turkey 1977	Middle range income countries
Percentage of active population (15 - 64)			
55	55	54	55
From the employed in agriculture			
78	59	62	46
Industry			
10	17	14	22
Services			
12	24	24	32

Middle range countries have a yearly income of 300 - 3000 \$. These figures clearly indicate that the growth in industry remained very slow in comparison to the services, where the fastest increase has been with 9% in governmental services.

Another significant factor is the fact, that there are almost as many industrial workers abroad than in Turkey itself. The

official figures for Federal Germany in regard to Turks with their dependents is about 1.6 million in 1979. The estimate of Turks living in Western Europe is about 2 million, another 100.000 are situated predominately in Libya, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf area. Both Turkish workers abroad and at home are highly unionized. The proportion of trade union affiliation at home represents roughly 3/4 of the industrial workers, an unusual high figure. Another important feature to look at is the growing interaction on political level of workers associations abroad and political parties at home. Extremist activities are openly supported by these associations and financed as well.

II.

Confronted with such a rich arsenal of urgent socio-economic problems two major questions have to be answered. First, what are the dominant features of the present party system? Secondly, are the parties both in terms of leadership and program prepared to face the problems outlined above and supply new solutions to chronic political diseases?

In order to answer these questions, let us briefly ennumerate the dominant features of the present party system.

1. - THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

Turkey's first political parties emerged quite suddenly. They were the products of anti-despotic, conspiratory, illegal, revolutionary, secret associations. Without any parliamentary experience of commitment to democratic values, they emerged from within the bureaucratic elite group of the system. Both during the Young Turk era (1908-1918) and through the authoritarian one party years (1923-46), party politics was monopolized by an "official" party of the ruling elites. In

addition, suffrage restrictions, frequent coercion of the incipient opposition parties and the absence of political participation.

Especially two aspects of this tradition, namely the orientation of party elites toward political conflict and the elitist style of the official parties have also had adverse consequences on the contemporary party system. Extreme antagonism between government and opposition was a dominant feature of political life during the Young Turk era. Politics took the form of strongly personalized individual feud. This approach to politics seems to persist both after the transition to multiparty system in form of the bitter struggle between İnönü and Bayar and at present between Demirel and Ecevit. Thus government-opposition relations rapidly acquired the characteristics of a zero sum game. Furthermore the elitist aspect of the Turkish party tradition especially in times of acute crisis, still includes within the various ways of solving the conflict, one kind of military intervention. In this respect Turkey's political culture still bears some basis features of a closed society.

2. - INTRA-ELITE CONFLICT VERSUS SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION

Turkey's democratization process differs also from another view-point, markedly the Western European experience. In Turkey the intra-elite conflicts played a decisive role in the beginning of democratization. The masses entered politics without a relatively high level of social differentiation and class-based polarization. Thus the major impetus for the growth of opposition party activities in Turkey came from factional conflicts within the incumbent political elites. These intra-elite cleavages in the ruling RPP group were essentially based on personal rivalries and conflicting political ambitions.

Once government-opposition divisions were structured around the RPP and the DP, politicization spread rapidly from the center sought to establish links with local groups on the periphery to mobilize support, the inhabitants of small provincial towns and villages also began to search for means of forming organizational ties with the political forces of the center. This reciprocal move from the periphery was prompted by the rivalry for status and power between factional alliances and clientele networks led by influential notables. In spite of Turkey's extraordinary fast rate of urbanization and high percentage of external migration, steady growth of trade-unionism, the most important societal cleavage still appears to be the center-periphery or elite-mass cleavage. This cleavage has remained a highly salient issue of inter-party competition and is the major cause for the ongoing impact of machine politics. This observation requires a closer assessment of political patronage in Turkey.

3. - PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP VERSUS PARTY DIRECTED PATRONAGE

The understanding of the Turkish political scenery definitely requires the introduction of historical and anthropological criterias. Due to the narrow inter-elite competition, significant portions of the political process have remained in semi-darkness. They become visible once the problem of political participants is dealt within the framework of developmental level. Interest articulation and mobilization in Turkey, especially in the Eastern regions has been carried out until very recently through patron-client pyramids and kinship; tribal units and religious sects also functions until the present day as patro-client networks.

Among these actors the most dwelt one has been so far the "aga", who represents the institution of landownership. In agrarian class relation, which at present has a diminishing impact in Turkey due to the fast structural change in the country side, the distinguishing characteristics of patron-client ties are as follows: Patrons are supplying clients with basic labour service, supplementary labour and goods and by promoting the patron's interest. Studies of Turkish social history have strongly emphasized the relevance of these dependency ties between agrarian elites and peasants in traditional Ottoman rural society. First local notables (ayan) exercised their economic control function and appeared to protect the peasants against a powerful state. Both during the Young Turk era and the one party period, the influence of notables was amply felt in party activities. After the transitions to competitive politics in 1946, party strategies for peasant mobilization was based largely on the recruitment of notable in party ranks, who were then entrusted with the task of providing "ready vote banks".

In many cases different party affiliations within the same family ensured that whatever party won the election, the family's honour, prestige and economic interests were protected. Hence during the initial phase of electoral competition, clientalism of the notables had important political consequences. The political reflections of this process can be seen in the electoral returns. Until 1969 there has been a steady increase in the percentage of votes received by independents: 0.8% in 1921, 2.2% in 1964, 3.1% in 1965, 5.6% in 1969. Significantly this trend has been reversed in 1973 with 2.8% and in 1977 with 2.5%. What does this reversal mean?

On first hand one may conclude, that the context within which these networks operate, have undergone considerable change. Thus "notable clientalism" has been replaced with "party

directed patronage". As case studies on local-level politics show, the political influence of the notables at present depends more on their role as party functionaries than on their control of traditional patronage resources. Thus former notables were transformed into party-affiliated brokers. Which channels led to this transformation? The gradual penetration of parties into most branches of the bureaucracy, the rising levels of public investments for rural development projects. Ruling parties have often used this power by rewarding rural communities which vote for them with new roads, electricity, waterways and various public works.

Finally the emergence of party patronage is also related to the weakening of the differential political culture of the country-side as a result of socio-economic change. In rural areas there is a growing demand for self-improvement. Such demands can only be obtained by access to governmental patronage through party affiliation. The expansion of party patronage and the increase in the number of party-affiliated brokers have given peasants and shanty-town dwellers new dimensions of bargaining power. The massive inflow of migrants into the cities since the late 1950's has led to the creation of political machines similar to the ones of the United States during the early twentieth century. An extension of this development can be witnessed in the links between business circles, worker's associations outside of Turkey and Turkish political parties.

At present manifestations of clientalistic behaviour - social networks of personal followings, factionalism, favouritism - can be observed at many different levels of Turkish society, including both formal organizations such as the governmental bureaucracy, trade-union federations, chambers of commerce and industry, professional associations and other informal social groups. Establishing proper connections with the right

people, therefore, assumes priority in all types of social interactions. Analysing the change of political patronage during the last three decades, it appears that both the former DP and its successor the JP took maximum advantage of their control over governmental sources to distribute it among the peasants and the urban poor. The RFP continued to rely on traditional notable clientelism until the late 1960's. Following the change in the party leadership and the adoption of a new program, the RFP started to recruit politically skillful brokers to attempt to form party affiliated peasant unions and agricultural cooperatives as well as to establish close links with secondary associations such as trade unions. After 1974 the RFP heavily relied on granting substantial price increases for agricultural products, thus played the game of politics in a peasant clientelist society. In urban areas the RFP interpreted voting behaviour in terms of class affiliation and the relevance of party programs.

Yet the emergence of horizontal class or group loyalties in present day Turkey cannot be taken as an indication that vertical political relationships and or party patronage are losing their saliency. On the contrary, two important new trends seem to be still influential: especially in Eastern Anatolia vertical hierarchies maintain their significance and a combination of policy oriented appeals with patronage distribution is likely to remain a characteristic feature of Turkish electoral rural politics. In the metropolitan areas, the struggle for new forms of party directed patronage seems to take the overhand. This aspect of Turkish electoral behaviour is the least transparent one. These considerations bring us to the question: do the elections of recent years represent a "critical realignment"?

4. - "CRITICAL REALIGNMENT" OR "PERIOD OF FLUX AND TRANSITION"

One of the most debated issue of recent years has been the nature of the voter's choice since 1969. Some political analysts (E. Özbudun, F. Tachau) have supported the hypothesis, that the rapid socio-economic change that Turkish society is currently undergoing has marked the beginning of a new trend in Turkey's political participation pattern. These scholars have attributed a major significance to the results of the 1973 general and the 1975 by-elections. They stated these elections have revealed the increasing importance of socio-economic cleavages as a new basis of voter alignments. The concept of "critical realignment" used by these authors has been defined by his author, Walter Dean Burnham as follows:

"Eras of critical realignment are marked by short, sharp reorganization of the mass coalitional bases of the major parties, are often preceded by major revolts which reveal the incapacity to integrate emergent political demand, are closely associated with abnormal stress in the socio-economic system, marked by ideological polarizations and issue-distances between the major parties and have durable consequences."

Actually when one analyses Turkish electoral behaviour in the early 1970's most of the above cited features can be seen: sharp reorganization of the mass coalitional bases of the two major parties occurred in the large cities, among the urban lower classes this amounted to an almost complete reversal of the pattern prevalent in the 1960's. These changes in urban political preferences were paralleled by less substantial, but still significant JP losses in the villages mostly in favor of the new parties, the SP and MSP. However, these changes actually did not produce a class-orientated voting pattern instead of mass mobilization.

Actually the results of the 1977 general elections and the 1979 by-elections indicate that the preferences of the low income urban groups have changed again. What happened has been the termination of JP's dominant position in party competition. There has been a transition from a predominant party system to one of moderate pluralism in which the likelihood of coalition government has significantly increased. Furthermore the trend toward greater fragmentation in the party system, which partially accounted for the JP's loss of dominance in 1973, has been reversed in the 1977 parliamentary election as the two major parties made substantial gains at the expense of the minor parties. (JP 36.9% - RPP 41.4% = 78.3%). The by-elections of 1979 have not changed this trend (JP 54% - RPP 29% = 83%). Thus it seems to be more accurate to characterize the party system as going through period of "flux and transition". Consequently with the transition to moderate pluralism, processes of coalition formation, maintenance and dissolution began to assume central importance in Turkish party politics.

Fragmentation and polarization will continue to be important for the course of party competition in Turkey in coming years. The 1979 by-elections have demonstrated that the RPP's strength in the cities seems to have slight chances of expansion. This very fact forces both the RPP and JP to form coalition governments and generates within both parties ideological orientated factions, which in turn aspire to form right of the center or Left of the center governments. The most adverse effect of this innerparty fragmentation is its paralysing effect on the functioning of the legislative, its indirect impact on auxiliary party organisations and its prevention to form consensual policies. This brings us to one of the major problems of Turkish political parties: fragmentation.

5. FRAGMENTATION IN TURKISH POLITICS

Between 1946-60 both major parties were center-orientated and operated as typical "catch-all" parties. Legal restrictions and the cross class nature of political loyalties were primarily responsible for the strength of the centripetal tendencies in the party system. Starting with the 1961 election this was no longer the case. As the parliamentary arena began to be crowded the two party format was replaced by moderate multipartism. But actually this important change occurred only after the 1973 elections. Until that date the Turkish case fell in the category of what Sartori calls "predominant party system" in which opposition parties are legitimate and compete freely in the election, but fail to come to power because the same party is consistently supported by a majority of voters. The turning point came in 1973 when the JP lost about 16% of its votes and the RPP too recorded some decline in their electoral returns.

The increase of fragmentation in the Turkish party system can be explained by a couple of factors: a) The impact of the 1960 military intervention, b) the switch to proportional representation, c) changes in the legal constitutional framework, d) changes in the social structure.

Among these factors two merit particular attention: a) The lifting of some legal restrictions in the 1961 constitution which facilitated the translation of ideological and religious/sectarian cleavages in the party system. This opening has not been legally prevented and lead to the growth of organized anti-system groups; b) Structural changes exercise important influence on political preferences such as the impact of the organized business and industrial labour sector. However, the uneven growth of interest articulation have left large sections of society outside of organized interest

groups such as peasants, civil servants. In addition fragmentation has also been affected by the increasing degree of provincialism among the rank and file of parliament members. It reinforces parochialism in terms of law proposals, political demands and inner-party fraction building.

Consequently with the transition to moderate pluralism, processes of coalition formation, maintenance and dissolution began to assume central importance in Turkish party politics. Although voters are not supporting parties at the extreme left pole, there is a growing tendency of strengthening both the religious and radical nationalist right. This unbalanced growth together with an almost unbuilt factor of political instability, produces the major obstacles for a consensus on government formation, while steadily increasing ideological polarization.

Modifications within the electoral system and the process of selecting party candidates might slightly reduce the inner-party conflicts. As long as newly emerging formal or informal interest groups are not able to articulate their demands in democratic forms within the legal framework, the anti-system groups will further gain strength thus contributing to the spread of violence and terrorism. Furthermore the process of fragmentation has not only increased the number of political parties but by increasing the number of inner-party fractions, contributed to the extreme ideological polarisation of Turkey's political life.

6. - IDEOLOGICAL POLARIZATION

One important feature of Turkey's political life, moderate pluralism, did not produce as elsewhere "moderate politics". From the start moderate pluralism, which actually means the presence of 2-5 parties able to participate in govern-

ment, brought an increase in ideological distance between the left and the right. This ideological cleavage is related to a multiplicity of issues in interparty competition: economic (socialism versus liberalism), religious (secularism versus pro-Islamic orientation) and cultural (moderate versus aggressive nationalism). One of the major factors strengthening this tendency is the fact that legal provisions have so far maintained the ban on the formation of certain parties. Thus the difference between social democracy, socialism, and communism have been totally blurred in the course of public debates.

The existence of a special law regulating the activities of political parties and giving the judiciary important functions in case the legitimacy of the prevailing constitutional system are threatened by some political parties has not produced the effect expected of it. In spite of the prohibition to propagate anti-republican ideas, religious parties have engaged themselves in undermining this fundamental concept of Turkey's political life. In addition repressive measures against anti-system have not been equally administered. Coalition governments on the right front as well as minority governments favouring rightist ideas have solely reinforced anti-communist fervour. The consequence of the deepening intra-elite cleavage was that party elites belonging to rival ideological camps have mutually engaged themselves in a process of de-legitimation. In this respect there is a strong resemblance to the strategy used by political parties in Italy. Despite the fact that all parties proclaimed full commitment to democratic processes, their opponents attempt to prove their de facto links and solidarity with extremist groups. These accusations have been recently reinforced by leaks into the daily press. Yet, astonishingly, in spite of the relative very high electoral participation rate in November 1979, which was 74.6%, there

seems to reism a growing depolitization. Public opinion appears as having reached a point of saturation and total disinterestment towards the inner dynamics of political life.

However, the steady flow of negative messages by rival party elites, more importantly the rhetoric concerning anti-communism and anti-fascism have encouraged intra-communal factional cleavages. Thus the ideological controversy between the two major parties tends to aggravate these societal cleavages, giving rise to a new, destabilizing configuration along a pro-Left/pro-laicist/pro-Alevi versus anti-Communist/pro-Islam/pro-Sunni division. Furthermore splits within the Right are encouraging pro-Islam/anti-republican/anti-Western elements. These developments are blocking both the functioning of parliament and are eliminating issue-related debates from the political dialogue.

CONCLUSION

Fragmentation and ideological polarization will continue to determine the character of Turkey's party system. Attempts to modify the existing electoral system and particularly the selection of candidates might slightly have an attenuating effect on inner-party fragmentation. But as long as a bi-party platform dealing with action orientated policies concerning Turkey's most urgent problems related to entrenching structural changes, is not worked out and implemented, the administrative and the judiciary apparatus not cleaned from partisan rules, the ongoing violence nurtured by extremist groups infiltrated until the lower levels of secondary schools as well as terrorist activities will not come to an end. These trends no doubt continue to have an

important effect on the destabilization of the system. The only comforting note is the strong attachment of the average citizen to democratic rules and the detached, cool attitude of the armed forces.