NON-ELECTORAL SOURCES OF PARTY SYSTEM CHANGE IN TURKEY

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Introduction

The study of party system change, especially in the advanced democracies of West European countries, has generated a voluminous literature since the 1960s.[1] Scholars have identified a diverse number of factors and relationships to explain the transformative processes affecting party systems. The list of potential sources of change in party systems is long and varied: it includes changes in the economic, social, and political environment of party competition, shifts in mass electoral behavior, the strategic choices made by party leaders, and institutional factors such as the adoption of new electoral laws. One major area of scholarly focus on party system change and continuity in European democracies concerns the analysis of societal cleavages and their role in the structuring of party systems. Much of this analytical concern has been informed by the seminal work of Lipset and Rokkan which delineated how social structural cleavages shaped the formation of party systems in Western European democracies.[2]

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1 See, for example, Hans Daalder and Peter Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change* (London: Sage, 1983), Peter Mair and Gordon Smith (eds.), Steven Wolinetz, "Introduction: Party Systems and How They Change," in *Parties and Party Systems in Liberal Democracies* edited by Steven Wolinetz (London: Routledge, 1988), Michael Laver, "Party Competition and Party System Change," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1:3 (1989), 301-324, Peter Mair, *Understanding Party System Change in Western Europe* (London: Frank Cass, 1990), Peter Mair, *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Paul Pennings and Jan Erik-Lane (eds.) *Comparing Party System Change* (London: Routledge, 1998), David Broughton and Mark Donovan (eds.), *Changing Party Systems in Western Europe* (London: Pinter, 1999); Paul Webb, David M. Farrell, and Ian Holliday (eds.), *Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

2 Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967) "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction" in, *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* edited by S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan (New York: Free Press, 1967), 1-64.

Although Lipset and Rokkan's 'freezing' hypothesis has been challenged in later studies,[3] the analysis of continuities or changes in cleavage systems has retained its prominent place in studies on party system change in Western European democracies.

In his study on Brazilian party politics, Mainwaring has questioned the adequacy of using the social cleavage approach to analyze the party systems in countries of the 'Third Wave of Democratization'.[4] According to Mainwaring, the analysis of the cleavage structures offers an important but only partial explanation about the evolution of party systems in these countries. Mainwaring suggests that in the case of Brazil and several other Latin American countries, changes in the major properties of party systems have resulted largely from the actions and strategies of key state actors and party elites rather than the translation of societal cleavages into party competition. In particular, Mainwaring emphasizes the impact of military interventions in politics and the efforts of the officers to restructure party politics. "Because of multiple state interventions," writes Mainwaring "Brazilian party system formation has been punctuated by discontinuities that cannot be explained by a sociological explanation."[5] In addition to key state actors, such as the military or the judiciary, Mainwaring suggests that politicians play an equally important role structuring party systems. In their quest for power, political elites organize parties and seek electoral support by a variety of means "but rarely through the politicization of structurally determined interests."[6] Moreover, the actions of politicians in the parliamentary arena -party switches, factional splits, and party mergers- result in substantial degree of change in party systems between two successive elections. Mainwaring attributes the ability of the state actors and political elites to shape party systems in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America to the weak institutionalization of party systems and the frequency of the breakdowns of their democratic systems which make them "more prone to disruption by state leaders."[7]

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3 For critical assessments of the Lipset-Rokkan 'freezing' hypothesis, see, for example, Michal Shamir, "Are Western European Party Systems 'Frozen'?" *Comparative Political Studies*, 17:1 (1984), 35-79, and Richard Katz, "Are Cleavages Frozen in the English Speaking Democracies?" in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments Revisited* edited by Lauri Kervonen, Stein Kuhnle, and Seymour Martin Lipset (London: Routledge, 2001), 63-92.

4 Scott Mainwaring, Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave of Democratization: The Case of Brazil (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 1999.

5 Ibid, p. 58.

6 Ibid, p.53.

7 Ibid, p. 55.

Mainwaring's approach to the study of party systems outside the established European democracies offers a useful perspective to analyze party system change in Turkey. Despite the relatively long historical trajectory of political parties in Turkey, the institutionalization of the country's party system has been hampered by several regime breakdowns since the transition from authoritarian one-party rule to multi-party politics in the aftermath of World War II.[8] The major indicators of instability and weak institutionalization of the Turkish party system include high rates of electoral volatility, which are well above those found in West European democracies, the periodic disappearance of what were once considered major parties from the political scene and their replacement by new ones, the large number of party switching among deputies in the parliament, and the frequent changes and rotation in party names and labels. The instability of the party competition in Turkey can also be observed from the frequent changes which have taken place with respect to the three major properties of the party system, namely, its format (or the number of relevant parties), its mechanics (or the extent of the ideological distance between parties), and its formula for government formation (single-party majority rule, coalitions, or minority government) since the beginning of free and honest elections in 1950. From 1950 to 1960, Turkey had a two-party system and single-party majority governments. During the next decade, the party system changed to moderate pluralism with coalition governments (1961-65) and later to majority party rule (1965-71). Between 1973 and 1980, the party system acquired the characteristics of polarized pluralism as a result of increased parliamentary fractionalization, ideological polarization, and the bipolar structuring of coalition governments. The party system changed to moderate pluralism from 1983 to 1991 when the number of relevant parties and ideological polarization declined substantially while a dominant party controlled majority of the seats and governed alone. The decade following the 1991 parliamentary election witnessed, once again, increased fragmentation and polarization along with coalition or minority governments. The polarized pluralism of the party system came to an end in the 2002 parliamentary elections which produced a two-party system and

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[8] Ergun Özbudun has written extensively on the trials and tribulations of Turkish democracy. See, e.g., his *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner 2000), "State Elites and Democratic Political Culture in Turkey" in *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries* edited by Larry Diamond (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993), 247-268, and "Turkey: Crises, Interruptions, and Reequilibriums," in Politics in Developing Countries," in *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy* edited by Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1990), 175-217.

single-party majority government. The outcome of the 2007 elections increased the number of parties gaining seats without, however, leading to an alternation in power. If, as Mair suggests, 'change' in party systems is to be understood basically as change "from one class or type of party system into another,"[9] then Turkey represents the case of a country whose party system has experienced frequent and fairly extensive changes over more than half a century of electoral politics.

Mainwaring's observations about the shortcomings of the social cleavage approach to the Brazilian and other Latin American party systems are also relevant for the Turkish case since the dominant paradigm in studies on the Turkish party system has been sociological, with special emphasis on the role of the center-periphery cleavage in the formation of party loyalties and identification. Since the publication of Mardin's influential article in 1976 which analyzed the origins, development, and political consequences of the center-periphery cleavage in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, most studies on party and electoral politics have used it as a major point of reference in their analyses.[10] The sociological approach has offered valuable insights about the structuring of party loyalties following the transition from an authoritarian one-party regime to democracy in the aftermath of World War II.[11]

However, the societal cleavages approach does not fully explain a number of important characteristics of party and electoral politics in Turkey. These include the heterogeneity of the social bases of political parties, the weakness of class as an important determinant of voter preferences, the importance of political clientelism and patronage in the transactions between parties and voters, or the high rates of electoral volatility which far exceed those evidenced in party systems that are structured by deep-rooted societal cleavages. Most importantly, the center-periphery approach is inadequate in explaining the frequent changes which have taken place in the basic format, mechanics, and governing formula of the party system. As in the case of

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9 Mair, Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations, pp. 51-52.

10 Şerif Mardin, "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" *Deadalus*, 102:1 (1973), 169-190.

11 See, e.g., Ergun Özbudun, "The Turkish Party System: Institutionalization, Polarization, and Institutionalization," *Middle Eastern Studies* 17 (1981), 228-240, Ali Çarkoğlu, "The Turkish Party System in Transition: Party Performance and Agenda Transformation," *Political Studies* 46:3 ((1998), 544-571, Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "Elections and Party Preferences in Turkey: Changes and Continuities in the 1990s," *Comparative Political* Studies 27:3 (1994), 402-424, and Frank Tachau, An Overview of Electoral Behavior: Toward the Consolidation of Democracy?," in *Politics, Parties, and Elections in Turkey* edited by Sabri Sayarı and Yılmaz Esmer (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 33-54.

Brazil, some of the important characteristics of the Turkish party system concerning its instability, weak institutionalization and frequent transformations have been largely, though not exclusively, the products of the policies pursued by influential state actors and political elites.

The Formation of a Party System

From the very beginning, the Turkish party system reflected the influence of the actions of the state elites and their efforts to shape party politics from above.[12] The emergence of a competitive party system in Turkey differed significantly from the earlier experiences of West European democracies. The extension of political citizenship rights to lower classes in Europe was gradual, although not necessarily peaceful, and it took place at a time when several major societal cleavages had become manifest.[13] To use the analytical model of Lipset and Rokkan, while national revolutions set the stage for the emergence of cultural cleavages (center versus periphery, state versus church), the industrial revolution gave rise to economic conflicts (agriculture versus industry, workers versus employers). The structuring of voter alignments around these societal cleavages during the democratization process provided the bases for the multiplicity of party alternatives and electoral loyalties.

In Turkey, the formation of the party system varied significantly from this model. The beginning of party competition with free and honest elections was abrupt and it was not preceded by an organized movement for democratic rights. The transition to democracy was largely the product of a bold initiative by the leader of the country's authoritarian single-party regime, İsmet İnönü, to initiate political liberalization by fiat. As Rustow aptly put it Turkey "received its first democratic regime as a free gift from the hands of a dictator."[14] İnönü's critical decision to transform the Turkish political system paved the way for the formation of the Democratic Party (DP) by a group of political elites who split from the ranks of the ruling Republican People's Party (RPP). Party formations during this initial stage

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12 See, e.g., Kemal H. Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959) and Dankwart A. Rustow, "The Development of Parties in Turkey," in *Political Parties and Political Development* edited by Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966).

13 This section is largely drawn from my "Some Notes on the Beginning of Mass Political Participation in Turkey," in *Political Participation in Turkey* edited by Engin Akarlı and Gabriel Ben-Dor (İstanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 1975), 121-133.

14 Dankwart A. Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy," *Comparative Politics* 2:3 (April 1970), p. 362.

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of democratization took place under close supervision of the state elites. Several newly-founded parties were banned by the authorities for their espousal of radical leftist, rightist, or Islamist causes.[15]

The fact that party competition in Turkey got underway before large-scale industrialization precluded the possibility of societal cleavages based on economic interests (agriculture versus industry, employers versus workers) playing a significant role in the structuring of the party system as was the case in Western Europe. However, the center-periphery cleavage which the Turkish Republic inherited from the Ottoman Empire and which was reinforced by the elitist and exclusionary policies of the authoritarian single-party regime, contributed significantly to the organizational and electoral strength of the main opposition party, the DP. Although the DP was the favorite of the periphery, the CHP also managed to receive substantial support in the rural areas, particularly in Eastern and Southeastern Turkey, largely through the politicization of the existing clientelist ties and factional oppositions based on kinship or ethnic and sectarian affiliations.[16] The DP's mobilization strategy among the largely peasant electorate in the formative phase of party competition combined the traditional grievances felt by the periphery against the center with political clientelism -a strategy which proved to be the key to success in the DP's electoral victories in the 1950s.

Several notable features of the emerging party system in Turkey, such as the role of the key state actors and political elites in party formation or the importance of political clientelism in electoral mobilization, differentiate the Turkish case from the historical development of parties and party systems in Western Europe. In the latter, societal forces from below, based on a number of major structural cleavages, rather than the actions of the state elites from above shaped the emerging party systems during the process of democratization. Consequently, social cleavages, especially class, played a major role in the formation of parties and mass electoral behavior.[17] In Turkey, on the other hand, the formation of a party system was largely shaped from above: transition to democracy took place following the decision of the leader of the authoritarian regime, state authorities determined the nature of party alternatives by permitting the formation of

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15 For details, see Karpat, Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System.

16 On the role of clientelism and patronage in shaping voter alignments see Ergun Özbudun, "Turkey: The Politics of Clientelism," in *Political Clientelism, Patronage and Development* edited by S.N. Eisenstadt and Rene Lemarchand (Beverly Hills, Sage, 1981), 249-268, and Sabri Sayarı, "Political Patronage in Turkey" in *Patrons and Clients* edited by Ernest Gellner and John Waterbury (London: Duckworth, 1977), 103-113.

17 See, e.g., Lipset and Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction."

some and excluding others, and politically ambitious elites seized the opportunity to form opposition parties. Although one major social cleavage (center-periphery) in Turkish society was instrumental in electoral mobilization, the politicization of the clientelist networks in rural Turkey played an equally important role in this process. Unlike in Western European democracies, therefore, where class-based voting was important in the earlier phase of electoral politics, social class in Turkey has generally been a poor indicator of electoral choice, and political parties have traditionally had heterogeneous social bases.

Military Interventions and Party System Change

Military interventions in politics constitute the single most important non-electoral source of change in the Turkish party system. Since its initial transition to democracy in the late 1940s, Turkey has experienced three regime breakdowns through military interventions in 1960, 1971, and 1980.[18] Electoral politics and party competition have survived these interventions although they have not remained unscathed by the periodic interruptions of the democratic processes. The military interregnums in Turkish politics have been relatively short: the military stayed in power for seventeen months following the 1960 coup, the return to electoral politics after the 1971 intervention took approximately two years, and the military regime, which came to power following the 1980 coup, lasted nearly three years. Although the officers have returned power to elected civilian leaders after each intervention, they have also sought to retain the prerogatives assumed under military rule through exit guarantees.[19] The withdrawal of the armed forces from direct (1960-61, 1980-83) or indirect (1971-73) rule has meant only conditional military subordination to elected civilian governments. Consequently, Turkey has also experienced periods when, though not formally in power, the officers have nevertheless sought to influence politics in the name of defending the country's territorial integrity and secular constitutional order.

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[18] There is a large literature on military interventions and civil-military relations in Turkey, See, e.g,. Ergun Özbudun, *The Role of the Military in Recent Turkish Politics* (Boston: Harvard University Center for International Affairs, 1966), Walter F. Weiker, *The Turkish Revolution, 1960-61*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1963), Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (eds.), *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s* (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1988), William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London: Routledge, 1994), and Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy," *Comparative Politics* 29:2 (1979), 151-166.

[19] For a detailed explanation of these exit guarantees, see Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, pp. 105-123.

Turkey had its first encounter with a military coup in its modern history in 1960. The coup took place amidst growing signs of an escalating political crisis which resulted from the intense polarization in government -opposition relations and the efforts of the former to suppress the latter through authoritarian measures. The intensification of the political conflict between the two major parties- the governing DP and the main opposition RPP- accompanied by student protest demonstrations in Ankara and Istanbul against the government, finally led to a bloodless military coup by junior officers on May 27, 1960. The coup abruptly brought to an end Turkey's first experience with democracy which had begun on a promising note a decade earlier.

The 1960 coup was instrumental in changing the Turkish party system in several ways. Undoubtedly, the most important of these was the military regime's decision to dissolve the DP and ban its leaders from political activity. Since the beginning of the democratization process, the DP had been a major player in Turkish party politics, first as the main political opposition from 1946 to 1950, and then as the governing party for ten years after winning three successive parliamentary elections in 1950, 1954, and 1957. In addition to commanding strong popular support, the DP had also been the principal force behind the rapid spread of party organizations throughout Turkey following the liberalization of the political system in the late 1940s. The officers who seized power in 1960 viewed the DP and its leadership with great distrust and appeared determined to eradicate its presence from Turkish political life. A hardliner faction within the ruling junta wanted to prevent other parties, and most notably the CHP, from resuming political activity after the coup. However, their effort to dissolve the party system and prevent a return to electoral politics failed as they were purged from the ruling National Security Council in November 1960 by the more moderate faction of officers in the ruling junta.[20]

The banning of the country's largest party whose electoral support averaged 52 percent of the votes in the three parliamentary elections during the 1950s was a major jolt to the party system. By putting the DP's entire parliamentary group on trial, executing its top leader and former Prime Minister Menderes along with two other cabinet ministers, and banning many of its officials from politics, the military deliberately sought to engineer the transformation of Turkey's party system from above. This strategy had disruptive consequences and the party system experienced considerable instability in the early 1960s. The DP's unnatural death led to a frantic effort by politicians eager to replace it in electoral politics. As a

[20] See Weiker, The Turkish Revolution, 1960-61, pp 131-136.

result, several new parties, all claiming to carry on the legacy and policies of the outlawed DP, were founded. One of these, the Justice Party (JP), eventually emerged as the victor in the competition for the organizational and electoral loyalties of the former DP.

In addition to proscribing one of the two major parties of the party system, the officers who seized power in 1960 also altered the electoral system and the constitutional context of party activities, both of which had important consequences for party competition. Until the 1960 coup, parliamentary elections in Turkey were held according to the plurality system with multiple-member electoral districts.[21] The 1961 constitution, which was drafted by a constituent assembly working under the aegis of the military, changed the electoral law from plurality to proportional representation based on the largest average d'Hondt formula. The change in the electoral rules improved the chances of the minor parties from gaining parliamentary representation. The use of the PR system in the elections also contributed to the rise of fissiparous tendencies in party organizations. Both major parties (RPP and JP) as well as some of the minor ones experienced factional splits from their ranks in the 1960s.[22] Coupled with the attempts by enterprising politicians to replace the outlawed DP, the switch from plurality electoral system to PR played an important role in the increase of parliamentary fragmentation in the 1961 elections when four parties, each with more than 10 percent of the votes, won seats in the legislature. The rising of fragmentation in the party system and the failure of any one party to control a parliamentary majority led to a major change in the formula for government formation. Whereas single-party majority governments had been in power during the 1950-60 period, Turkey had its first experience with coalition governments in 1961.

Another important consequence of the 1960 coup for party system change concerned the widening spectrum of political ideologies among the parliamentary forces. The newly-drafted 1961 constitution significantly expanded civil liberties which enabled the radical Left and the far-Right parties to compete in the elections. In the 1965 election, the extreme left gained parliamentary representation through the newly-formed Marxist Turkish Labor Party (TLP). Four years later, the far-Right Nationalist Action Party (NAP) similarly entered the parliament. The late 1960s also witnessed the founding of the pro-Islamist and Sunni-based National Order Party

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21 William Hale, "The Role of the Electoral System in Turkish Politics," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 11:3 (1980), 401-417.

22 See Sabri Sayarı, "The Turkish Party System in Transition," *Government and Opposition* 13:1 (1978), 39-57.

(NOP) along with the Unity Party (UP) which sought to defend the interests of the Alevis.[23]

The 1960 military intervention did not lead to the dissolution of the party system. The officers also failed to attain their goal of eradicating the DP's electoral support and organizational structure from Turkish political life since the newly-formed JP carried on the DP's political legacy. However, the coup was a serious blow to progress toward the institutionalization of democratic processes and the party system, especially since it set a precedent for future military interventions. The seizure of power by the Turkish armed forces in 1960 also proved to be a major source of party system change. Unlike the period from 1950 to 1960 when Turkey had a two-party system with majority party governments, the 1961 election marked the transition to moderate pluralism as a result of increased fragmentation, the expansion of the ideological space between parties, and the formation of coalition or minority governments.

Turkey's second military intervention in politics, or the so-called "coup by memorandum", took place in March 1971. This time the principal cause of the intervention was the growth of a factional conflict within the ranks of the military during a period of growing political activism by the radical leftist groups. In an effort to pre-empt a possible coup by a group of officers who had become increasingly disillusioned with the policies of the government, a rival faction of generals issued an ultimatum to Prime Minister Demirel asking him, in effect, to leave office. Unlike in 1960, the 1971 intervention did not lead to a full-dress military regime and the parliament remained open. A civilian government, made up mostly of technocrats without party affiliations, functioned under the careful scrutiny of the officers. The two major parties, the JP and the RPP, as well as several other minor parties maintained their organizational activities. However, two minor parties, the Marxist TLP and the pro-Islamist NOP, were banned, and the constitutional amendments in 1971 and 1973 reversed some of the progress which had been achieved regarding civil liberties under the 1961 constitution. The impact of the 1971 military intervention on the party system was twofold: First, it led to the ouster of the JP from power despite the fact that it had won decisive victories at the polls in 1965 and 1969, and enjoyed a parliamentary majority. The CHP was the main beneficiary of the JP's unconstitutional exit from office: in the 1973 elections it won a plurality of the votes and came to power through a coalition government. Secondly, the interruption of democratic politics and the ouster of an elected

[23] Ibid., pp. 46-49.

government from office under military pressure, once again, impeded progress toward the institutionalization of the party system.

The third regime breakdown through a coup in 1980 resulted in the imposition of the longest military rule since the beginning of multi-party politics. The 1980 coup came in the wake of a major political and economic crisis. From 1976 to 1980, political violence and terrorism by the extremist groups on the far-Left and radical-Right caused an ever-growing number of fatalities and social turmoil. The political crisis was exacerbated by a serious economic and financial crisis that crippled industrial production and caused severe energy shortages. The military junta which seized power held political parties and their leaders largely responsible for the country's political and economic crisis. Consequently, the officers dissolved the party system by banning all of the existing parties. For the first time since the founding of the Republic, Turkey became a "partyless" state. Moreover, the ruling junta banned the leaders of the two major and several minor parties from politics for up to ten years and imposed restrictions on the activities of a number of their senior associates.

The military's actions against political parties in the aftermath of the 1980 coup also included a project to create a new party system from above. This project envisaged the formation of a two-party system that would be based on two centrist parties, one of which was to be led by a retired general with close ties to the military. To implement this plan, the military regime did not permit several newly-formed parties which had organizational links with the pre-1980 parties to compete in the 1983 parliamentary elections after vetoing scores of their candidates. However, the project to create a new party system was derailed when the military permitted a third party, the Motherland Party (MP), to enter the elections. The MP scored a victory at the polls and came to power with a clear parliamentary majority. The two other parties which were supposed to play key roles in this new party system failed to command popular appeal and withered away between 1983 and 1987. Moreover, the leaders of the pre-1980 parties won back their political rights through a national referendum in 1987 and resumed their political careers.

Despite the failure of the military to fundamentally restructure the party system, its policies nevertheless had important consequences. The dissolution of the party system interrupted its natural evolution and paved the way for the emergence of new patterns in party competition. As it had been the case following the 1960 coup, politically ambitious elites seized the opportunity created by the ban on the pre-1980 parties to form new parties. The most successful among these was the MP which became the dominant political force in the party system from 1983 until 1991. Had it not been for

the 1980 coup, it is highly doubtful that the MP could have attained the kind of success which it did in the 1980s. The change which took place in the party system from polarized to moderate pluralism and from coalitions and minority rule to single–party majority government was largely the outcome of the measures adopted by the military regime following the 1980 coup. Moreover, the policies of the military regime toward political parties led to the rise of a major rift within the center-Right and the center-Light blocs in the party system. The center-Right, which was controlled by the JP until 1980, ended up with two rival parties, MP and the True Path Party (TPP). The center-Left which had been the domain of the CHP before the 1980 coup, was similarly fragmented into two rival parties, the Social Democratic Populist Party (SODEP) and the Democratic Left Party (DLP). The divisions within these two blocs had very little to do with social structural cleavages and their translation into the party system. Rather, they were the products of the military's attempt to tinker with party politics from above and the strategies pursued by party elites in their pursuit of political power.

The instability that was injected into the party politics through the military intervention of 1980 contributed to the weakening of party identification among the Turkish voters. The volatility of the parties themselves -their disappearance and re-emergence under new names- eated problems for the continuity of party identification and increased the volatility of the electorate. Equally important was the disruptive impact of the military regime's attempt to ban all existing parties on the institutionalization of the Turkish party system. The ban on party activities also undermined the organizational strength of the country's major parties.[24]

The 1980 military coup ushered in a new constitution and led to changes in the electoral system. The new electoral law which was adopted by the ruling National Security Council retained the proportional representation system with multimember districts under d'Hondt formula. However, the new law introduced a 10 percent national threshold which parties had to pass to qualify for seats in the parliament. The excessively high threshold was designed to prevent parliamentary fragmentation which the military viewed as one of the main sources of Turkey's political crisis in the late 1970s. It also sought to prevent the entry of smaller parties, especially those which were perceived as representing threats to the unity of Turkey and its secular constitutional order. Although the level of fragmentation remained limited during the 1980s, the high electoral threshold could not prevent its sharp

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[24] See Sabri Sayarı, "The Changing Turkish Party System," in *Politics, Parties, and Elections in Turkey* edited by Sabri Sayarı and Yılmaz Esmer (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 9-32.

increase during the next decade when five to six parties, of relatively equal strength, managed to enter the parliament in the 1991, 1995, and 1999 elections.

In addition to the periods of military rule, the officers have sought to influence party competition and government formation following the redemocratization process and the reestablishment of civilian rule. For example, it was upon the army's insistence that the two major parties of the center-left (RPP) and center-right (JP) formed a grand coalition in 1961. Three decades later, a potential coalition government between the pro-Islamist Welfare Party (WP) and the MP following the 1965 election failed to materialize at the last minute when the military pressured MP's leadership not to form a coalition partnership with the WP. More importantly, the military played a leading role in the dismantling of the coalition government between the WP and the TPP in 1998 following its crisis-ridden fifteen months in office. Although this event, identified in newspaper shorthand as *28 Şubat Süreci*, or the "February 28 Process", did not involve the actual seizure of power by the officers, the military did bring considerable pressure on the WP-TPP coalition both through thinly-veiled threats and by mobilizing a number of civil society organizations against the government. Eventually, the military attained its objective when Prime Minister Erbakan resigned and a new coalition government replaced the WP-TPP in office.

Impact of Party Closures on the Party System

The banning of political parties by the state elites represents the second major non-electoral source of party system change in Turkey. As noted earlier, the authorities banned a number of newly-formed parties which espoused leftist or religious views at the formative phase of the party system in the late 1940s. Consequently, the ideological spectrum of party competition remained limited until the 1960s. In addition to the bans that were imposed on parties following the 1960, 1971, and 1980 military interventions, the state elites have used legal and constitutional provisions to ban parties when political power was controlled by the elected civilian governments as well. The Political Parties Law of 1965 and the 1982 Constitution both included rules and regulations concerning what political parties can and cannot do. In essence, these legal and constitutional stipulations prohibited political parties from engaging in activities which could undermine the territorial unity of the Turkish state and the secular foundations of the Turkish Republic. Parties which were suspected by the state authorities of violating these two cardinal principles have been banned from politics.

Turkey's Constitutional Court is the principal institution through which the activities of the political parties are supervised by the state. Since its establishment in 1962, the Court has closed 24 political parties. While 6 of these took place between 1962 and 1980, the Court has banned 18 parties during the period from 1983 to 2003. The Constitutional Court pursued a highly-activist role in the 1990s when, acting upon the public prosecutor's request, it ordered the closure of 15 political parties, three of which held seats in the parliament at the time of their closure. From 1990 to 2000, the Court rejected the prosecutor's request regarding party closure in only two cases.[25] The frequency of party closures during the 1990s was not coincidental: this was a period of heightened political activism by the pro-Kurdish and pro-Islamic forces. The pro-Kurdish and pro-Islamist parties displayed traits which raised doubts about their willingness to recognize the legitimacy of Turkey's existing political regime and their commitment (in the case of the pro-Kurdish parties) to the preservation of the territorial integrity of Turkey and (in the case of the pro-Islamist parties) to the Republic's secular political foundations and educational system.[26] Although the Court has not used the term 'anti-system' with reference to these parties, it has clearly viewed them as being[27] basically disloyal to the system. In the case of the pro-Kurdish parties, this perception was bolstered by the existence of close ties between the pro-Kurdish parties and the ethnic Kurdish terrorist group, the PKK.

The Turkish constitutional and legal system is not unique with reference to proscriptions against extremist or anti-system parties.[28] A number of established democracies such as Germany, Austria, Israel or Ireland as well as transitional democracies such as Chile, Estonia, or Romania have constitutional provisions that prohibit the formation of anti-system parties. In the past, Germany banned communist and Nazi parties, and more recently the Spanish government banned the radical Basque nationalist Batasuna

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25 Hootan Shambayati, "The Guardian of the Regime: The Turkish Constitutional Court in Comparative Perspective," in *Constitutional Politics in the Middle East* edited by Said. A Arjomand (forthcoming).

26 Dicle Koğacıoğlu, "Progress, Unity, and Democracy: Dissolving Political Parties in Turkey," *Law and Society Review* 38:3 (2004), 433-461.

27 See John Finn, "Electoral Regimes and the Proscription of Anti-Democratic Parties," in *The Democratic Experience and Political Violence* edited by David C. Rapoport and Leonard Weinberg (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 51-77.

28 For a discussion of how and when democracies can ban parties, see Walter F. Murphy, "May Constitutional Democracies 'Outlaw' a Political Party?, in *Politicians and Party Politics* edited by John G. Geer (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 309-334.

Party for its ties to ETA. However, banning political parties is rarely practiced in most democracies. What makes the Turkish case unusual is the frequency with which parties have been banned from politics. In addition, unlike in most Western democracies where the parliament plays an important role in the selection of the judges who serve on the Constitutional Court, in Turkey, members to the Court are chosen by the President of the Republic without any input from the parliament.

Since the electoral support of the pro-Kurdish parties have remained limited and they managed to enter the parliament only after the 2007 elections, their closure has not had a major impact on the format or mechanics of the party system. However, banning pro-Islamist parties did have important consequences since the Welfare Party (WP) became the largest party after the 1995 election and served as the senior partner of a coalition government during 1997-98. The Constitutional Court's decision to ban the WP in 1998 had two major consequences for party competition. First, although the pro-Islamists quickly reassembled under the banner of the Virtue Party (VP), their vote fell from 21.4 percent in 1995 to 15.4 percent in 1999. The erosion in the pro-Islamist vote was influenced partly by the unwillingness of a substantial number of voters to support a party which could, once again, face the prospect of a ban due to the basic continuity of its leadership. The "wasted vote" syndrome, which undermined the party's electoral support was thus closely related to the decision of the Court. Secondly, when the VP was also banned in 2001, the pro-Islamists split into two rival parties: while Felicity Party (FP) followed in the footsteps of its predecessors regarding its ideology and policies, the newly-formed Justice and Development Party (JDP) adopted a more moderate orientation and sought to differentiate itself from the previous pro-Islamist parties. The banning of the WP and the VP undoubtedly played a major role in the JDP's adoption of a more moderate stand and its desire to project the image of a 'conservative democratic' instead of a 'pro-Islamist' party.

Party System Change through Party Switching

Party switching in the parliament by politicians has been the third important non-electoral source of change in the Turkish party system. The tendency of the parliamentarians to transfer to a party from the one which they were originally elected has varied considerably over more than five decades of electoral politics. During the nine legislative sessions from 1946 to 1980, the average rate of party switching was 10 percent. The volatility of politicians serving in the parliament was especially high in the 1960s: 22 percent and 21 percent of the deputies who were elected to the parliament in the 1961 and 1965 elections, respectively, abandoned their parties either to

join others or become independent deputies. However, the highest rate of party switching took place following the 1969 elections when 23 percent (or 92 out of 400) legislators changed their party affiliation.[29]

In comparison with the 1946-80 period, there was a noticeable rise in party switching by the political elites in Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s despite the introduction of institutional constraints in the 1982 constitution to prevent its practice. In the five legislative sessions between 1983 and 2002, the average rate of party switching was 32 percent. With the exception of 1987-1991, when only 8 percent of the parliamentarians changed their party affiliations, politicians in Turkey frequently migrated to another party, and in some cases, to several parties between elections. The frequency of party switching reached its highest level between 1995 and 1999 when 47 percent (or 260 out of 550) of the legislators changed their party affiliations or became independent deputies.[30]

Party switching is not unique to Turkey—it has been practiced elsewhere in the world in various countries, including Brazil, Japan, the Philippines, Ecuador, Spain, and Italy.[31] In the Italian parliament, for example, one-fifth of the deputies changed their parties at least once between 1996 and 2001. In Brazil, more than one-third of the parliamentarians switched their party affiliations between 1986 and 1990. Comparative research on party switching among parliamentary deputies has identified a number of factors which contribute to the decision of a politician to change his/her party affiliation. They include political ambition (the belief that choosing a new party would enhance one's political career), the incentives offered by another party, better access to patronage, conflicts within the parliamentarian's local party organization, and ideological or policy-oriented concerns. There is also some empirical evidence to suggest that the frequency of party switching increases under conditions of heightened political uncertainty.[32] In his research on Turkey, Turan has found that the deputies who change parties tend to come either from the smallest or the largest electoral districts, and that changing parties appears to have improved the political careers of politicians. Turan has also distinguished between

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29 See İlter Turan, "Changing Horses in Midstream: Party Changes in the Turkish National Assembly," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 10:1 (1985), 21-34.

30 İlter Turan, Şeref İba, and Ayşe Zarakol, "Inter-Party Mobility in the Turkish Grand National Assembly: Curse or Blessing?," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* http://www.ejtsorg.revues.org/document400.html

31 William B. Heller and Carol Mershon, "Party Switching in the Italian Chamber of Deputies, 1996-2001," *The Journal of Politics* 67:2 (2005), 536-559.

32 Ibid., pp. 536-40.

individual deputies who change their parties and groups of politicians who switch their party affiliations through a factional split.[33]

Legislative defections and inter-party mobility often play an important role in shaping party systems between elections.[34] This has also been the case in Turkey where endemically high rates of party switching have had several consequences for the party system. The first, and arguably the most important, concerns the increase in the number of parties in the parliament. For example, the number of parties holding seats in the parliament increased from 7 to 11 between 1991 and 1995, from 5 to 10 between 1995 and 1999, and from 5 to 11 between 1999 and 2002. In the majority of the cases, the new parties which were formed as a result of individual parliamentarians defecting from their parties or through the factional split of a group of politicians, proved to be short-lived and failed to maintain organizational viability and significant degree of electoral support. However, there were also several instances when parties which came into existence in the parliament between the elections succeeded in becoming pivotal actors in the coalition formation process. In addition to facilitating the rise of new parties, party switching by the politicians significantly affected the parliamentary strengths of the major political parties. During the 1991-2002 period, most of the major political parties in Turkey had fewer members in the parliament at the end of the legislative sessions than when they had at the beginning. Although some of major parties increased their strength through defections, these proved to be only temporary gains and none of the major parties ended a legislative session as the dominant pole of attraction for the defectors. On the contrary, the key players in the party system which served in the coalition governments in the 1990s, suffered dramatic losses among their deputies in the parliament: SDP/RPP's seats were halved between 1991 and 1995 (from 84 down to 41), the DYP lost one-third of its parliamentary strength between 1995 and 1999 (from 135 down to 89), and the DLP's parliamentary representation was reduced by more than 50 percent between 1999 and 2002 (from 136 down to 58).[35]

As Turan, İba, and Zarakol suggest, inter-party mobility of the parliamentarians in Turkey helped the reconstruction and consolidation of

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33 Turan, "Changing Horses in Midstream: Party Changes in the Turkish National Assembly,"

34 See Michael Laver and Kenneth Benoit, "The Evolution of Party Systems Between Elections," *American Political Science Review* 47:2 (2003), 215-223.

35 Calculated by the author from the data prepared by the Division of Laws and Records of the Turkish parliament.

the party system following the disruptions caused by the military coups.[36] Party switching in the early 1960s and 1980s, following the transition from military to civilian rule, played an important role in the return of some degree of political normalcy to party competition. However, the unwillingness of sizeable numbers of Turkish politicians to remain with the parties in which they won their seats has contributed to political instability as well. This was clearly the case during the latter part of the 1990s when the shifting party allegiances of the politicians serving in the parliament contributed to the fragmented structure of the party system and complicated the processes of coalition formation and political representation. The shifting parliamentary arithmetic as a result of party switching among the deputies hindered the stabilization of the party system.

Conclusions

A neglected topic in the analysis of the literature on party system change in Turkey concerns the shaping of the party system from above by the state authorities and political elites. Most of the literature on the subject has focused almost exclusively on analyzing trends in aggregate voting behavior where party system change is largely identified with electoral changes. In other words, changes in various key properties of the party system are viewed almost exclusively as the products of the changes in voter preferences. However, as the preceding discussion suggests, non-electoral forces have also played an important role in shaping Turkey's party system during more than five decades of electoral politics. In particular, regime breakdowns through military interventions and the efforts of the officers to tinker with party competition and electoral politics have brought about significant changes concerning the format and mechanics of the party system. These interventions have also influenced the electoral fortunes of parties and patterns of government formation. The principal strategies used by the military to shape party system from above have included imposing bans on parties and restrictions on the political activities of their leaders, adopting new electoral laws or modifying the existing ones, and changing the constitutional context of party activities. It should be noted, however, that these strategies have not always succeeded due to the durability of some aspects of party politics in Turkey. For example, the military's attempt to fundamentally alter the party system by dissolving all parties in the aftermath of the 1980 coup proved to be a failure due to the durability of prominent political leaders who managed to reestablish most of the pre-1980

[36] Turan, İba, and Zarakol, "Inter-Party Mobility in the Turkish National Assembly: Curse or Blessing?"

parties under new names. Similarly, the military regime which came to power in 1980 wanted to end the fragmentation in the party system by including a 10 percent national threshold in the electoral system. While fragmentation remained relatively limited in the 1983 and 1987 elections, it rose sharply, once again, during the 1990s.