Turkey's Social and Political Polarization from 1957 to 1960

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Declaration of Originality

The intellectual content of this thesis, which has been written by me and for which I take full responsibility, is my own, original work, and it has not been previously or concurrently submitted elsewhere for any other examination or degree of higher education. The sources of all paraphrased and quoted materials, concepts, and ideas are fully cited, and the admissible contributions and assistance of others with respect to the conception of the work as well as to linguistic expression are explicitly acknowledged herein.

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Abstract

Turkey's Social and Political Polarization from 1957 to 1960

Doruk Engin, Master's Candidate at the Atatürk Institute
for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, 2022

Prof. M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, Thesis Advisor

In this work, Turkey's 1957-60 period, which is one of the most strained periods during the multi-party democratic regime, will be analyzed. The polarization, arising from social and political tension, is the resarch subject of this thesis. From the foundation of the reoublican regime in Turkey, multi-party system was aimed and the atemmpts for democratization are covered. Followingly, after the World War II, Turkey's multi-party system transition, the foundation of the Democrat Party and its early tough years, 1946 snap elections and its aftermath are covered. Then, the triumph of the Democrat Party in 1950, their first period and back-to-back electoral victory is analyzed. After 1954, emerging economic and social troubles and government's rigid measures are analyzed to give background. After these background parts, together with 1957 snap elections, the events, which never eased the strained political atmosphere, are historically covered. Also, to understand the polarization, the reflection of the tense political atmosphere is covered with speeches, daily newspapers and social life exapmles.

27,648 words

Özet

1957’den 1960’a Türkiye’nin Toplumsal ve Siyasi Kutuplaşması

Doruk Engin, Yüksek Lisans Adayı, 2022
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Prof. Dr. M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, Tez Danışmanı

Bu çalışmada, Türkiye’de çok partili demokratik hayatın geçmişteki en büyük gerilimlerinden biri olan 1957-1960 dönemindeki siyasi ve toplumsal gerilimlerden kaynaklanan kutuplaşmanın bir incelemesi yapılmaktadır. Cumhuriyetin kurulmasıyla beraber hedeflenen demokratik rejimin gerekliliği olan çok partili hayatın, 1946’ya kadar olan denemelerini ve o zamanki toplumsal dinamikleri de içine alan bir arka planını analiz eden bu çalışmada, daha sonra sırasıyla İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası oluşan yeni düzenle beraber, Türkiye’nin çok partili hayata geçmesi, Demokrat Parti’nin kuruluşu ve ilk dönemdeki yaşadığı zorluklar, 1946 erken seçimleri ve sonrasındaki siyasi gerilimlerle beraber 1950’de Demokrat Parti’nin iktidara gelmesini ele almaktadır. Daha sonrasında Demokrat Parti’nin ilk dönemi, CHP’nin 27 yılın ardından muhalefete geçmesi, 1954 seçimlerinde artan oylarıyla kazandığı zaferle başlayan ama daha sonra yaşanan ekonomik ve toplumsal bunalımlarla beraber alınan bir dizi sert önemlerle yaşanan toplumsal gerilimlerle tezin nihai konusu olan dönemine 1957 seçimleriyle giriş yapılacaktır. 1957’deki erken seçim sonrası başlayan yüksek gerilimi ve 1960’a kadar neredeyse hiç azalmayan etkisini, hem tarihi olaylarla, hem de bu gerilimden kaynaklanan kutuplaşmayı ve bunun siyasetteki, günlük gazetelerdeki ve toplumsal hayattaki yansımalarıyla birlikte irdelenecektir.

27,648 kelime

To my late father Maksut Engin

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi
DP	Demokrat Parti
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

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Lastly, I want to thank my mother for her warmth and sharing their wisdom with me in every period of my life. Without her insistence, this thesis wouldn't have emerged. I love you beyond words.

I dedicate my master thesis to my late father Maksut Engin who past away during the early days of my thesis research.

NOTE: The in-house editor of the Atatürk Institute has made detailed recommendations with regard to the format, grammar, spelling, usage, syntax, and style of this thesis.

1

Introduction

Turkey is one of the most polarized countries in the world in the decade of 2010's. Hence, in academia, lots of studies have been made about this phenomenon. On the other hand, the background of this polarization was widely studied. In general, in these studies, exact continuation were emphasized. However, some specific events and aspects of the polarization within modern Turkish history are missed in these studies. Anachronistic perception of the past becomes inevitable due to reach the ultimate target of historical causes to carve out 2010's authoaritarian AKP and its polarization strategy. Even some events in history are related to today's phenomenons, which are unrelated or have their unique conditions in the past. 1950's political atmosphere in Turkey was an important example for this. Hence, this thesis aims to cover and understand the specificity and the legacy of the late 1950's polarization.

Hence, in this thesis, there is a brief analysis of earlier versions of polarization in the republican period after the ultimate achievement of multi-party period in 1946. After the failed attempts of multi-party systems during the period of Kemal Ataturk in 1924 and 1930, the presidency of Ismet Inonu faced opposition within the Republican People's Party (CHP) that emerged after the 1943 elections. Eventually, after the controversial Land Code in 1945, inner-party discussions led to the formation of the opposition party called Democrat Party.[1] Together with democratization movement, people in Turkey quickly adapted and inhabited political rivalry rather than some certain aspects of democracy just as politicians did. Although this transition of democratization was, in general, gradual and with baby steps, it eventually found its route. In 1950, together with the democratic transition of power, the Democrat Party gained the upper hand.

During their ruling period, together with further democratic experience, the rivalry between the CHP and its angry child escalated for ten years. The Democrat Party, together with huge electoral support, launched new reforms which were not welcomed by certain political and bureaucratic groups. On the other hand, ordinary people whether they live in cities or rural areas, supported these two major parties. Just as in the parliament, public sphere also tasted political rivalry. In this thesis, the major period of focus will be the

[1] The name "Democrat Party" is deliberatey chosen instead of "Democratic Party" because the second one was separately founded in 1970 by Ferruh Bozbeyli.

hazardous, uncontrollable level of this tension which was ended with the coup d'état of 1960. This tragic event can be easy to determine the ending year, but it is not easy to determine when it started. Foundation of the Democrat Party, controversial 1946 elections, Democrats' victory in 1950 or their stronger back-to-back electoral success in 1954? Last one may be a good choice to select because conventional wisdom of the peak point is also the beginning of the downfall.

After 1954, certain events, political and economic problems gave way to the Democrat Party's more rigid attitude. However, I chose the start from 1957, because of two reasons. First, the 1957 elections was an important event in which the Democrat Party lost certain amounts of votes for the first time, halting their rising success in 1950 and 1954. Although they kept the power and obtained two third of the seats, within the party, the results were not welcomed by most of the party members. The second and more important reason was the decision of both the DP and the CHP to develop a fervently negative attitude against each other. It is no surprise that in one of the party group meetings after these developments, the Democrat Party leader and Prime Minister Adnan Menderes blamed their party members for being too soft against the CHP. He claimed that the reason behind his party's decreasing votes was the destructive opposition of the CHP.[2] On the other hand, together with the rising vote rates, the CHP started further attack policy towards their

[2] Altan Öymen, *Ve İhtilal,* 458.

rival with their louder voice and more crowded parliamentary group. These intentional choices and certain numeric data made clear for deciding the beginning period.

In this thesis, two introductory chapters will aim to better understand the polarization between 1957 and 1960. The first one will cover the terminology and the aspects of the polarization with today's popularity and examples mostly within Turkey's experience. The second introductory chapter will cover historical background which led to the 1957 elections' strained atmosphere since the democratization process under the single-party administration in Turkey together with changing World politics after World War II. Founding of the new party, controversial 1946 elections, Democrats' power obtaining 1950 elections and early government years were discussed in this chapter.

Then, two main chapters will cover political tension and certain events within this period. Apart from the political history of the first main chapter, the second part will cover social tensions, specific examples, comparison of the party leaders' speeches and official newspapers' comments on the same incidents.

For the thesis multidimensional pool of sources are essential. The first group was the memoirs written by the politicians of the day in a comparative fashion. There is of course a caveat here. Using memoirs contains certain risks and pitfalls but I tried to compare them with other data as much as possible. On the other hand, despite their problems, especially for twentieth-century history, memoirs provide fertile soil. Secondly, as "conventional" primary

sources, the Republic Archives for telegrams of the DP members and at the National Library in Ankara, the archives of the official newspapers of the two parties are the sublime sources to be compared. And finally, interviews with witnesses and certain academics become very important sources for the details. The interview with Altan Öymen became an enormously important oral history source to conceptualize the structure of the polarization of the 1950's. Before analyzing the data that is extracted from these sources, it is imperative to familiarize ourselves with certain concepts of my analysis and their theoretical underpinnings.

In the end of introduction, the some methodological issues are important. First of all, this thesis, in the end, is still a historiographical work more than politics. Although, this thesis aims to cover the term "Polarization" during the late 1950's Turkey, historiographical methods were mostly used. Also, there are certain limitations for numeric datas like electoral results of subprovinces or economic datas. Hence, polarization is analyzed with outcomes of historiographic methods in general. Another important point is that the groups mentioned and analyzed in this thesis are ruling class of the country and urban groups which are ultimately decisive group in Turkey despite the majority of the population is rural. As Çağlar Keyder noted in his book of "State and Class in Turkey," the peasantry and working class enter the picture only indirectly and in subordinate fashion.[3]

[3] Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*, 4.

2

Polarization Phenomenon

I. Definition

After the 2008 Global Economic Crisis, during the decade of 2010's, polarization was one of the most important phenomena to understand and explain the political atmosphere for many countries around the world. Today, this escalation still exists and this polarization within countries expanded on global economy and international relations. Many countries take their positions even in diplomacy according to their ideological values and domestic practical reasons. Whether it is populist, anti-democratic, far-right or pro-democratic, hegemonic movements in the countries reflect on personal figures which are mostly charismatic leaders and these leaders have no hesitation to spread their ideas onto the world stage to indicate themselves as the ideal sample for politics.

Since its proliferation in the 1980's, globalization has been the most important notion to determine economic policies and diplomatic relations in the first decade of the 21st century. Neo-liberal model enabled open economies around the world, increased inter-continental trade and technological exchange. It was assumed to be a magic formula to consolidate international relations, remediate economic problems, and generate prosperity not only for developed countries, but also for developing countries through free trade, global markets, countries and people. However, in the second decade of the 21st century, malcontent voices amplified against globalization because it was assumed as the source of new problems. Also, its controversial incompetence to solve current problems in the world made globalization the scapegoat by malcontent people.[1]

Perspectives on today's globalization mostly determine political agendas for politicians and political parties all around the world. In economics and politics, major countries around the world separated into pro or anti-globalization movements and worldwide political and economic division and tension appeared. Hence, the word "Polarization" became a buzzword to define the strained political atmosphere of the 2010s. For a better recognition of how

[1] On populism and 21st century's globalization problems, see Dani Rodrik's Globalization books like *Straight Talk on Trade* and journal articles on Project Syndicate are my major sources in English for this theory. In Turkish, pls. check: Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "Küresel Popülizm ve Kutuplaşma," on T24, https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/asim-karaomerlioglu/kuresel-populizm-ve-kutuplasma,28222.

much the word became popular, a time-based search on "Google" or "YouTube," provides us numerical data which marginally escalated, and the majority of the results are from the last few years.

Philologically, in Cambridge Dictionary the word "Polarization" is defined as: "The fact of people or opinions being divided into two opposing groups."[2] Scientific definition in physics is not even mentioned in the dictionary. Apart from its meaning in the dictionary, its conceptual function and usage in political science made the word as a phenomenon to entitle social and political division in many countries. Earlier, during the Cold War period, the conflict of blocs also called the "Bipolar World" to underline the tension between two different systems led by the United States and Soviet Union. Also, since a long time ago, the word polarization had only been used to define political and social division within countries. However, its popularity is at another level today.

II. Polarization as Today's Global Phenomenon

Polarization became an important concept due to emergent consequences of different today's major social and political problems and its reasons during the second decade of the 21st century. Serious divergences among

[2] Cambridge Web Dictionary, "Polarization"

people on political agendas and economic systems (Globalization, Migration, Free-Market Trade, Cultural Interaction, Income Inequality) caused divided social groups and polarized societies all around the world. This division of values and ideologies tends to evolve into social camps and confrontation. In their article on pernicious polarization theory, Murat Somer and Jennifer McCoy emphasized this hazard:

> In this relational conceptualization, polarization further has tendency to extend from the partisan world to the realm of everyday social relations in the society, where societies become divided into two camps of Us and Them. In extreme cases, political identity can become all-encompassing as people view those in the "Other" camp with distrust, suspicion, or fear, and cease to interact with them – even segregating themselves in their neighborhoods, social relationships, and news feeds with like-minded people.

Escalatory division among people and its ultimate consequence of polarized societies can emerge as support or opposition to a personal figure like Donald Trump, Nicolas Maduro, Tayyip Erdoğan, or competing values like secularism-conservatism, pro-anti migration etc. Today, worldwide polarization has roots in a dispute between people who are in favor

of established order and their challengers of malcontent political and economic revisionists led by populist leaders.[3]

While seeking the reasons for polarization, multilateral roots can be observed. Essentially, social and political cleavages are the roots which have serious risk to evolve into a polarization. Especially, social cleavages like race, ethnicity, religion, geography are serious threats for division. However, they are not the only facts to cause polarization. According to Somer and McCoy, social cleavages cannot always be the basis of polarization as in unpolarized multi-ethnic less polarized Zimbabwe and polarized homogeneous Poland.[4] Therefore, it is better to perceive how social and political cleavages turn into a pernicious polarization by several political moves. Political cleavages can be additional sources based on economic, cultural and ideological factors.

Long-standing divisions have always been a massive source of polarization since the modernization period of countries during the nation-state process. During this process, privileged groups, outsiders, religious or ethnic minorities bricked to a potential polarization. Racial division in the United States, Apartheid regime in South Africa, recently revised Jewish Nation-

[3] McCoy - Somer, "Toward a Theory of Pernicious Polarization and How It Harms Democracies", 3.

[4] McCoy and Somer, 5.

State Law in Israel, secular center-conservative periphery in Turkey (Şerif Mardin's theory) can be listed as good samples of chronic problems to construct divided groups.[5] Although most of these fusty structures are revised like US race division law, or completely abolished like in South Africa, social division still maintained its continuity. However, to better understand the concept of polarization today, observing new rifts which are emerging under today's problems, may more beneficially help us find them out.

Certain factors take their part by triggering underlying socio-political rifts which stirs up polarization today. Somer and McCoy claim that polarizing actors are looking for exploiting grievances centered on cultural, political (crisis of representation) or economic complaints, to activate latent resentments based on underlying cleavages.[6] Hence, most of today's developed countries have a serious movement of populism and its repercussions of political and social polarization. While the world has been making use of opportunities of globalization like free-trade, foreign investment, multinational corporations, new substantial problems have emerged or escalated its efficiency.

Several distinguishing features of globalization resulted in serious problems. Low-cost factory investments into underdeveloped countries and escalating qualifications for recruitment diminished job opportunities for low-

[5] Şerif Mardin's "Core-Periphery Model" adaptation to Turkey's modernization from Immanuel Wallerstein's theory of "World-systems-theory".

[6] McCoy and Somer, 8.

skilled workers in developed countries. On the other hand, multinational companies like Facebook, Google or Amazon, to avoid tax paying, cause global contemporary problems for many states.[7] The most important case is the escalation of income inequality year by year. The income gap between wealthiest people and the low- and middle-income groups is rising. Together with ethnically and religiously biased immigration issues, malcontent voices are more loudly heard since refugee crises after the Syrian War (2011). By using this situation populist political parties and their leaders have become representative of discontent rising from different parts of the world. Donald Trump in the United States, Marine Le Pen in France, Viktor Orban in Hungary are the most famous populist leaders in this regard. They use similar rhetorical tools by calling themselves as the representor and the voice of their people against the political and bureaucratic elite to save their peoples' identity and jobs by opposing migration.

In a global context, in European countries and the United States, due to political, economic, and cultural grievances, polarization emerged between populist movements and liberal, progressive, and pro-globalization groups.

[7] On multinational companies' tax issue; Joseph Stiglitz, "How Can We Tax Footloose Multinationals?." Project Syndicate, 13 Feb 2019, accessed October 10, 2020, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/corporate-tax-avoidance-end-transfer-pricing-by-joseph-e-stiglitz-2019-02.

On the other hand, rooted cleavages are continuing to cause various polarizations in many countries. It may have different features in democratic countries. Some illustrative examples may demonstrate the risk of pernicious polarization. Scholars like Zaki Laidi and Dani Rodrik warn the risk of polarization that emerge from the economic gap between large cities and vulnerable rural areas.[8]

Further steps of polarization can be felt in daily life of societies. Murat Somer and Jennifer McCoy exemplify the features of pernicious into ten subheads including grouping to two hostile camps, feeling loyalty to those groups, morally characterizing good vs evil and spatial-psychological separation of polarized groups.[9] These differential features of polarization can be shaped by the political atmosphere and actors from both ruling and opposition groups. Ruling groups may either rule a country with their own majority and repression or may share their power with smaller extremes or their opposition parties to hold out a carrot to them. On the other hand, oppositional groups may incline into counter-polarization, undemocratic measures, compromising with ruling power or breaking the walls by working for depolarization.[10]

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[8] Rodrik, "What's Driving Populism"; and Laidi, "Why the EU Election Was a Win for Macron."

[9] Somer and McCoy, 19.

[10] Somer and McCoy, 30.

Finally, polarization comes up with heavy consequences for democratic life and the public sphere. Asymmetric consolidation of blocks may occur in strengthening of a group over the other group as it remains fragmented. Socially, the practice of demonizing opponents may result in social distancing as in today's Turkey like geographical polarization of neighborhoods or people preventing their children from families who vote for opposing parties like in the United States.[11] Even worse, as McCoy and Somer called posing as a threat for one's way of life and defines the biggest problem as: "These perceptions of threat open the door to undemocratic behavior by an incumbent and his/her supporters to stay in power, or by opponents to remove the incumbent from power."[12]

III. Turkey's Polarization

In 2015, according to the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) data, Turkey was the most polarized country in the world.[13] The country has always been in a strained political atmosphere and political-ideological conflicts are an ill fate for Turkey's politics and polarization becomes the inevitable result of this tension. However, throughout the decade, the feature

11 Somer and McCoy, 32-33.

12 Somer and McCoy, 34.

13 Murat Somer, "Turkey: The Slippery Slope from Reformist to Revolutionary Polarization and Democratic Breakdown," 5; For the original source, see Emre Erdoğan and Pınar Uyan Semerci, *Fanusta Diyaloglar: Türkiye'de Kutuplaşmanın Boyutları*.

of polarization has been changing. Not only political ideas, but also social and cultural discrepancies are polarized. Contradicting personal values, ideologies, lifestyles have been causing division among people and also, separation of public sphere in social life results in geographical polarization within districts of major cities (Kadıköy-Sultanbeyli) which was never seen before in such a conspicuous manner.

According to the earlier theories on the roots of polarization in Turkey, the major seed were political and economic determinants throughout the modernization process of Turkey since 19th century Ottoman reforms. According to Murat Somer, two major formative rifts are the hub of 'polarization politics' in Turkey. First, outsiders of Turkish modernization process like ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural minorities seem to be suspicious and dangerous by the implementers of Turkish modernization or Turkishness process. Hence, the Turkish speaking Sunni majority has become mobilized to justify these policies against these other groups.[14]

Second and more directly linked to polarization in Turkey is a second type of rift of "center-periphery," "state-society," "secular-religious" division within the Turkish-speaking majority. Today's polarization is linked to this

[14] Somer, 9. For the original source, see Fatma Müge Göçek, *The Transformation of Turkey: Redefining State and Society from the Ottoman Empire to the Modern Era/Angry Nation: Turkey since 1989.*

rift rather than the first one. Şerif Mardin's theory of "center-periphery" as applied to Turkish history describes a division between central, urban, and secular political elite and peripheral, rural and conservative societies.[15] Eventually, by means of migration to urban areas and market-based growth, these two groups also divided within themselves after the 1980s as Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba claimed in their study.[16]

In the republican era, right-wing parties, empowered by periphery, dominated the political system.[17] On the other hand, CHP (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* [Republican People's Party]), which was the major left-wing party in the second half of the twentieth century, only established coalitions with the right-wing parties after 1950. However, bureaucratic elite groups like military officers and senior judges have been a leverage for the regime. Hence, the Kemalists in this scheme invisibly formed a balance system until the AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* [Justice and Development Party]) era. Right-left divisions overlapped major rifts in the 1970s, and right-wing parties represented provincial political ideals. The Left gained considerable success three times in the last three decades of the century.[18] Kurds within left parties had

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[15] Şerif Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi*.

[16] Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, esp. the introduction, 3-14.

[17] Somer, 11

[18] 1974, 1977, 1999 general elections and 1989 local elections.

a chance for political representation in the same period. Finally, AKP established a new core in bureaucratic, political and cultural matters.[19]

Turkey has always experienced socio-political divisions and rifts. Polarization has inevitable consequences for this process. Today, Turkey's polarization is more complex and pernicious. Since the AKP period, several political attempts of the party and backlashes from institutional organs like court and major opposition party CHP exacerbated and personalized the feature of the polarization onto a single person. For AKP or Erdoğan period, Somer divided polarization into four major periods since 2002 to today:

2002–2006: Moderate and micro-textual polarization and reforms

2007: Political confrontation and the beginning of "macro-textual" polarization

2008–2013: "Macro-textual" bimodal polarization and democratic erosion

2014–present: Pernicious polarization and democratic breakdown[20]

In the article, the presidential election crisis in the parliament in 2007 is called a spark for polarization. However, its bimodal feature emerged with Erdoğan's appeal for boycotting Doğan Medya due to news on "Deniz Feneri" corruption allegations in "Hürriyet." After Gezi Park protests, pro and

[19] Somer, 11

[20] Somer, 8

anti-AKP blocs emerged and at the final step, pernicious and personalized polarization emerged after Erdoğan's declaration of de-facto presidential system after his electoral triumph at presidential elections of 2014.[21]

Today, Turkey's polarization has become pernicious for democracy. The word *Kutuplaşma* (Polarization) is one of the buzzwords to define political atmosphere in Turkey. In addition to political division, people from one side recognize the opposite side as a threat to their lifestyle. In research reports on polarization in Turkey, serious results are seen. Emre Erdoğan's report from Bilgi University depicts clearly that people who support a party do not want a neighbor from a rival party, they do not want friendship with their children and they do not want any joint business with anyone from the opposite side.[22] Apart from today's polarization, in this study, earlier examples of polarization in the late 1950s will be covered by pondering similarities and differences from today.

IV: Early Turkish Republic's Experience of Polarization: An Overview

Since the foundation of the republic in 1923, the modernization process of the Kemalist era revealed a civil servant, educated group in central larger cities. This group catalyzes the bureaucratic and military elite which

[21] Somer, 10

[22] Emre Erdoğan, "Türkiye'de Kutuplaşmanın Boyutları Araştırması," 20.

have been the tutelar of the modernization process and revolutions of the republican regime. However, the rural population was quite higher in number than the urban population in Turkey. Kemalists intended to transform rural areas via urban methods to educate and modernize. However, they did not intend to shift from rural to urban society. They believed in a rural revolution. This peripheral group has always adopted a more conservative lifestyle in rural areas. Şerif Mardin had claimed that the Kemalist political elite's target to develop the country by initiating a peasant movement remained weak and insincere.[23]

After the single party period, electoral concerns caused great compromises to please rural people. After the late 1950's, Turkey's development became industry-based and the importance of rural areas were de-escalated. Together with migration and its accommodation solution squatting, urban population accelerated and commenced to take the majority in the 1980's. Transition to multi-party democracy in 1946 did not only become a more successful and permanent shift to a westernized democracy, but also, a beginning of a new process in social, economic and political life. Democratic Party was established by a group of malcontent CHP parliamentarians against the new Land Code of 1945. The group was led by Celal Bayar, Fuad Köprülü, Refik

[23] Şerif Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi*, 277.

Koraltan and Adnan Menderes. Although the first year of multi-party democracy was suffering because of controversial snap elections, reactive DP opposition after the elections and the backlash by the CHP government led by the prime minister Recep Peker, who was notorious for his totalitarian tendencies, caused a deeper crisis for Turkey's newborn democracy. For this reason, President İnönü's attitude towards liberalization shared by the majority of CHP members and the prudent manner of Democrats trying to continue their political activities in the parliament led to the survival of the democratic order. Following democratization in election law and separation of president İnönü's authority with the CHP paved the way for a permanent democratic life through the 1950 elections.

In 1950, changes in social and economic life finally reflected a major change in politics and the Democrat Party obtained a landslide victory in the elections. Participation of people into democratic life and politics was an important step for this process.[24] Şerif Mardin emphasized the fact that Democrats were more successful in understanding the problems of peasants and making them feel that Democrats are ones from us.[25]

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[24] Béatrice Garapon, "Aux origines de la Turquie conservatrice: une sociologie historique du Parti démocrate (1946-1960)," 229; for the original source, see Sinan Yıldırmaz, "The Mass Mobilization in the Elections of the Democrat Party Period," 120.

[25] Mardin, 234.

From 1950 on, for ten years, DP and CHP had many problems and political controversies in the parliament that were reflected in daily life. Hence, polarization commenced to be a part of social and political life in Turkey. Political tension between the two parties with miscellaneous dimensions sometimes healed with a détente period until 1957. However, tensions after the 1957 elections were irremediable and it was felt in every part of political, social, economic and daily life.

Pernicious polarization harmed democracy during this period. Although people were sharing the same public spheres, the contact between these two party's supporters was minimized. Democrat prime-minister Adnan Menderes became an authoritarian figure and he started to use rhetoric of us and them by calling the opposition as Malice Front and establishing a partisan group of Motherland Front. On the other hand, CHP and its leader İsmet İnönü sparked a fire of counter-polarization. Physical attacks on him, parliamentary investigations on CHP's activities, and carte blanche to the investigation committee to punish the opposition caused massive protests and this perniciously polarized period finalized with the coup d'état on 27 May 1960. In next chapters, historical background that led to 1957's political atmosphere, political tension and features of polarization will be examined in a more detailed perspective.

3

Road to 1957

This chapter covers the story of the birth and baby steps of the first decade of multi-party democracy during the republican era. Turkey was in the midst of decision making due to an emerging competition around the world. Rising powers of the post-war period (United States and USSR), which were once allies during WWII, became rivals and this rivalry escalated tensions in the world. What people called the “Cold War" lasted for 45 years. Under these conditions, Turkey made an important decision and sailed through a democratic regime. Earlier, the baby steps of this democratic leap were tangled due to the old-school bureaucratic tradition of the founding party of the republican regime (CHP), and similarly the opposition party was born from the founding party too. Starting from the beginning, both major parties did not hesitate to

overwhelm each other, once they had the power. Despite all this, Turkey experienced an important process of democracy which became a tradition one way or another.

2.1. 1946-1950

The World After 1945

In 1945, World War II concluded with the triumph of allied forces. As a result, fascist regimes in Germany and Italy were demolished. During the last days of the war, allied forces already began to negotiate for the basics of the new world order. On April 25th, the San Francisco Conference resulted with the establishment of the United Nations. However, although countries were looking for a long lasting peace, the most powerful members of the Allied countries, the United States and the Soviet Union began to dissociate not long after. Their antipodal ideologic bases and economic development models evolved into a rivalry for the hegemonic power to lead the world. As in the famous speech of the UK's wartime prime minister Winston Churchill in 1946, "An 'iron curtain' has descended across the continent".[1] This speech means a verbal declaration of the Cold War. Hence, after World War II, parting ways was inevitable for Communist Eastern bloc and Liberal Western bloc.

This parting of the ways and rivalry between the US and the USSR caused a period of tension which lasted for almost four decades. The world

[1] YouTube, "Churchill's Iron Curtain Speech - 1946"

became polarized and split in two as liberal and communist blocs. Several wars occurred around different geographies of the world. Without any hot war between the giants, proxy wars, as in Korean Peninsula and Vietnam, became a field for their power struggle during the heyday of the tension. However, millions of people were in fear of a nuclear war between two giants especially in the first years of the 1960s. Almost all countries were affected by this power struggle and took their positions and joined alliances for their survival. On the other hand, in many countries, together with confidential support of giants, regime changes and military interventions happened in the Middle East, Latin America, and even in Europe during the period.

For the economic side, after the catastrophic demolitions of the war, recovery plans were initiated. Sustainable development was recognized as a necessary factor for the continuation of countries within systems. Both socialist and capitalist development models were expanded around the world after World War II. From 1945 to 1975, the world, both socialist and capitalist bloc, had a wealthier and more prosperous period for almost thirty years and this period is called "The Glorious Thirty" by French historians.[2] By means of infant mortality, average lifetime, availability to food and basic goods, humankind endured a very prosperous period for these glorious thirty years until 1975. The Keynesian model in the capitalist bloc and planned economy in communist world achieved important success for this period. Additionally,

[2] Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, 258.

new technological developments and its common usage made people's life easier and changed daily routines like TV.

Turkey After WWII

During World War II, Turkey had success in keeping its neutrality until the last days of the war. To become a founding member of the United Nations, Turkey symbolically declared war against Germany and Japan on 23 February 1945 but did not send her troops to trenches. However, after the war, Turkey's neutrality policy became unsustainable under Cold War conditions, because of emerging demands of the Soviet Union from Turkey on the straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles) and eastern border.

The Soviet Union, the engine country of the Eastern Bloc, aimed at expanding its borders and control zones throughout Europe and the Middle East. Turkey, as a neighboring country, was one of the aims to expand or escalate its control and power. In this case, Turkish borderline and the status of the straits were the main targets of Soviet expansion over Turkey in 1945. Soviet FM Molotov declared unilateral dismissal of the Turco-Soviet Peace Treaty of 1925. For the renewal of another peace treaty, the Soviet delegation claimed control rights of eastern provinces (Kars, Ardahan, Artvin) of Turkey and joint security control of the straits. The Turkish side persistently refused these demands of the Soviets, but the security of borders and the straits was

under a serious threat once again.[3] Thus, these incidents paved the way for Turkey's rapprochement to the Western Bloc against a more serious Soviet threat. Although Turkey had never tended to a communist regime during the Atatürk period, good relations since this period were sharply reversed and deteriorated after World War II.

Under these diplomatic circumstances, Turkey benefited from rising US-Soviet tension. US policy of assisting developing countries against a communist threat eased Turkey's plan. In April 1946, the arrival of the American battleship "Missouri" for bringing the Turkish ambassador's corpse was welcomed by Turkish people and politicians as a signal flare of American support for Turkey. Then, the declaration of the Truman Doctrine and the approval of the Marshall Plan relieved Turkey. For that time, Turkish diplomat Necmettin Sadak described these developments as: "Turkey is not an isolated country anymore."[4] This aid plan was implemented by American general George Marshall to financially support developing countries for avoiding any socialist revolution or Soviet intervention. The US Congress approved the aid amount of 400 million dollars for Greece and Turkey. While Greece received 300 million dollars because of the ongoing civil war, Turkey received 100 million

[3] Uzman, Sovyet Talepleri ve Türkiye Tepkisi, 122.

[4] Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy 1774-2000*, 113.

dollars of monetary aid and stuff like tractors, harvesters, trucks, cars and staple food products starting from 1948.[5]

Turkey's political inclination towards the liberal world was a very crucial move which still affects her major diplomacy and security policies today, albeit several problems occur with their allies. In the beginning, Turkey's decision to join Western bloc increased its quest to a democratic regime again which was attempted twice before but put aside. Since the foundation of the republican regime, Turkey adopted Western reforms and thus, in a political manner, the democratic regime was a crucial step to fulfill this modernization process.

During the period of Kemal Atatürk, the multi-party democratic regime had been tried twice in 1924 and 1930. However, opposition parties the Progressive Republican Party and the Free Republican Party had been shut down in a short time after their establishment because of being the meeting point of the regime and westernized reform opponents. Hereby, although there had been goodwill and weak attempts, multi-party democracy could not be achieved in Atatürk's lifetime and after the shutdown of the Free Republican Party, it took 16 years for another attempt.

[5] Hale, 117

After Atatürk, his successor İsmet İnönü firmly aimed at transition to multi-party democracy as if completing an abortive mission. In 1939, he implied a transition to a democratic regime by emphasizing the real supervision of people in his speech at Istanbul University.[6] However, the outbreak of World War II halted this quest, and İnönü adopted authoritarian measures during the war. Nevertheless, in 1943, he made early moves for democratic patterns within single-party administration. The first attempt was in the 1943 elections, CHP, as a single party, nominated more people than available seats. Hence, people had a chance to select or eliminate some candidates.[7] After the elections, İnönü demanded an opposition group within the party called the "Independent" (*Müstakil*) group which investigates and sometimes objects to the government and new laws in the parliament. Although World War II conditions aggravated the democratization process, some baby steps were taken during this period and it contributed to the success of the multi-party attempt after the war in 1946.

After World War II, İsmet İnönü continued to insist on democratization process to make his project come true. Albeit there was an independent group within the party who worked as an opposition. He believed in the fact

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[6] Yetim, "*Sosyoekonomik Durumun Çok Partili Hayata Etkisi*," 33.

[7] Until 1943, Elections were held in a two-round system in which the first round elected group (Müntehib-i evvel) elects the parliamentors (Müntehib-i Sani); pls see O. Faruk Loğoğlu, *İsmet İnönü and The Making of Modern Turkey*, 117-118.

that an opposition party is a necessity for Turkey's future democracy. Under these circumstances, İnönü was plotting a multi-party democratic regime on Turkey's political system but there were not any groups to shine out to compose an opposition group yet.

The opportunity for an opposition movement appeared with the resilience of some members in the parliament who lashed out at the new Land Code which enables distribution of free lands to landless peasants. Strict objections against this law sparked the fire of an opposition movement. In the Republican People's Party (CHP), landlords and merchant members heavily criticized the reform. It was criticized by different parts of Turkish society. Linguistic professor Besim Atalay called it the loudest opposed reform ever because this one hits pockets.[8] Landlord parliament and former agriculture minister Cavit Oral criticized the law by implying that: "Not only free lands, but also possessed properties are in danger."[9]

After the approval of the law in the parliament, a malcontent quattro in the parliament proposed a declaration to the party group. They were demanding political liberation, parliamentary supervision, and regulation for the party's activities.[10] The four signee of this declaration (Celal Bayar, Fuad Köprülü, Refik Koraltan, Adnan Menderes) were going to be the founders of the

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[8] Cem Eroğul, *Demokrat Parti Tarihi ve İdeolojisi*, 10

[9] Béatrice Garapon, *Aux origines de la Turquie conservatrice : une sociologie historique du Parti démocrate (1946-1960)*, 115

[10] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, *Demirkırat*, 20

new opposition party. İnönü perceived this declaration as an opportunity for an opposition party against CHP. Hence, İnönü demanded that the signees may resign to establish an opposition party against CHP. He thought that an opposition group under the leadership of Bayar may unproblematically work within the system.

After the decree, four frontrunners of the opposition became "personae non gratae" of the party and party members turned against them. In a short time, three opposition leaders were excommunicated from the party. Then, remaining opponent Celal Bayar resigned not only from CHP but also from the parliament. In the last months of 1945, the opposition party was shaped by the signee quattro and the Democrat Party was founded. On January 7, 1946, Celal Bayar met with İsmet İnönü to inform the foundation of the party and İnönü approved the activities of the party and Democrat Party involved in Turkish political life for 14 years.[11] According to the journalist and İnönü's son-in-law Metin Toker, İnönü asked Bayar about the attitude towards Kemalist revolutions and the ideological tendency. In reply, Bayar assured him of their loyalty to Kemalist revolutions.[12]

Since the foundation of the party, the first target of the party founders was the survival of the party. Because of failed attempts in 1924 and 1930, Celal Bayar, as an important figure of National Struggle and former prime

[11] Garapon, 138

[12] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, 24.

minister, the survival of the party depends on good relations with CHP and İsmet İnönü. Hence, as a party leader, Celal Bayar followed an equilibrium policy against CHP. On the other hand, İsmet İnönü was also decisive in avoiding any repetition of another failed attempt at multi-party democracy. Also, he felt confidence in Bayar's leadership of the opposition movement to halt anti-regime voices. However, in his party, strict opponents to İnönü could have been a danger for its future. During the period of 1946-1950, for both parties, power struggles between strict and mild groups emerged. These groups did not slam only against their rival but also within themselves.

1946 Elections and Early Democratic Experiences

The Democrat Party's appearance in January 1946 as the opposition group revived political life in Turkey. In a short time, they obtained huge support and amity of people and thus, CHP members are worried about potential risk for their political hegemony. Hence, CHP headquarters decided to hold a snap election while their opponents Democrat Party was preparing their provincial organizations as a newborn party. For protesting CHP's fiddle, Democrats, at first, boycotted local elections and CHP members were blaming Democrats as rebellious. Furthermore, the CHP member and İnönü's favorite youngster Nihat Erim implied postponing democratization process in his article at CHP's official newspaper "Ulus."[13] Under these conditions, Bayar did

[13] Erim, "Demokrasi Gaye midir Vasıta mıdır?."

not utilize the option of boycotting for general elections to avoid a greater crisis. Hereby, Turkey's first monograde multi-party elections were held on 7 July in 1946.

The 1946 Elections have always been an important incident for Turkish political history. Apart from its importance as the first monograde multi-party elections, unpleasant interferences stuck in the mind. Serious pressures of officers at polls and tricky counting like detected DP votes in garbage overshadowed the results. Although the Democrat Party has a tiny chance to win because they could not run in many cities due to incomplete organizations, the 1946 elections is always called an inauspicious day for Turkish democracy. Hereby, after the elections, Democrats became furious against CHP and they frequently recalled that day for a long time. This event sparked the earliest polarization in democratic life between the two political groups in Turkey.

Multi-party democracy was in danger once again after the 1946 elections. Third attempt for a multi-party democratic regime suffered from this serious crisis. A severe group within the Democrat Party proposed to withdraw from the parliament to commence direct dialogue with people (*Sine-i Millet*). In this period, experienced party leaders İnönü and Bayar took control to prevent outbreaks from both sides. Democrats, after their party congress in January 1947, declared the Freedom Act (Hürriyet Misakı) in which further democratic reforms were demanded. In the act, serious legal reforms on the election system stipulated as a prerequisite for democratic atmosphere in the

parliament. Bayar and Menderes firmly supported staying in the parliament over some fierce members' speeches which implied non-democratic methods to struggle against CHP. A notable member of the Democrat Party, Samet Agaoglu emphasized that members reacted as if fervent revolutionaries of 1789. Even revolt was proposed if it became necessary, but Adnan Menderes rigorously warned them for acting in legal patterns unless they establish another political party.[14]

Mild attitudes of party founders in the Democrat Party were not happily adopted by some members in the party. Eventually, malcontent democrats established a group called Müstakil Demokratlar (Independent Democrats) and this eventually evolved into the foundation of the Millet Partisi (Nation's Party) in 1948. This group was demanding a more aggressive attitude towards the ruling party CHP. Also, ideologically, their programme was more nationalistically and religiously designed than Democrats. As a leader, although Hikmet Bayur was elected as chairman, famous war hero Marshall Fevzi Çakmak was the de-facto leader of this party until his death in 1950. After the 1950 elections, the party's representative in the parliament, Osman Bölükbaşı, continued with severe opposition.

On the other side, İnönü had no tolerance for another failed democratic regime attempt. Hence, he put on the way democratic reforms to insti-

[14] Samet Ağaoğlu, *Arkadaşım Menderes*, 49.

tutionalize a multi-party system. As the most important signal of these reforms, he supported reformist moderate groups in his own party. After the elections, at first, İnönü appointed Recep Peker who was a firm politician and hesitant for democratization and political reforms, as the prime minister. In his service, Peker was never tolerant of Democrats and their critics. Once, in the parliament, he replied to Adnan Menderes' accusations as "an outbreak of a psychopathic mind."[15] After this speech, Democrats left the parliament and İnönü had to moderate the groups again.

In the CHP, the conflict between the firms and milds escalated. Members such as prime minister Recep Peker were believing in the idea that it was still a bit early to shift to a multi-party democratic regime. On the other hand, the mild group was looking for further democratic reforms and good relations with the opposition party. Together with the outbreak of furious opposition after the elections, İnönü decided to ease tension and he adopted some measures in favor of detente. Therefore, Recep Peker resigned from the prime ministry and İnönü appointed Hasan Saka, a moderate politician, as the successor. Then, İnönü followed further democratization steps on the new election law. Also, he adjusted liberal and populist reforms in order to please people who suffered during World War II.

During the last years of the 1940s, as Turkey was heading to the 1950 elections, President İsmet İnönü and his party CHP started to adjust populist

[15] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, 37.

measures in order to please the people who suffered during World War II. Strict mobilization, taxation, and food subsistence policies had negatively affected CHP and İnönü's image among people. This war time policies moderated after the war. On the other hand, after multi-party democracy, the existence of an opposition party compelled İnönü to catalyze more populist policies. Tax burden on peasants was eased, worker rights amendment was declared and autonomy was given to universities. Also, in keeping with populist agenda, CHP also passed some laws on religion which were perceived as remise by solid Kemalists within the party like poet Behçet Kemal Çağlar who resigned from parliament after the declaration of the governmental programme of the Prime Minister Şemettin Günaltay who had religious background.[16] Establishment of religious secondary schools and theology faculty under Ankara University were examples of these populist measures on religious life. Liberalization movement continued for other parts of life as well and Turkey was heading to the 1950s in a much more liberal and democratic atmosphere than the previous decade. However, the political atmosphere before the elections was a signal for a greater change.

In April 1950, just a month before the elections, Marshall Fevzi Çakmak's death and reactions on this news were serious indicators for the political atmosphere in Turkey. As a war hero and chief military commander during the period of Atatürk, Fevzi Çakmak was a very important figure for

[16] TBMM, "Tutanak Dergisi"

Turkey. After his retirement from the military which was demanded by İnönü in 1944, he refused to join the CHP. Instead, he joined the Democrat Party after its establishment which was an obvious reaction to the forced retirement. Then, he joined the independent (müstakil) group within the party and ultimately, he became one of the founders of the Nation's Party in 1948. His death naturally found strong echoes across Turkey. However, radio continued to play music after the news of Fevzi Çakmak's death. As a result, the following day, his funeral ceremony in İstanbul evolved into massive protests. Just a month before the elections, for understanding the political atmosphere, these protests were an important sign for a possible result of the upcoming elections.

After overcoming several dangers for democratic regime following the 1946 elections, new democratic reforms eased the tension while Turkey was going to the 1950 elections. Together with the leadership of İsmet İnönü and Celal Bayar, the multi-party democratic regime survived, and the democratization process continued after a shaky period. The two parties dealt with a new election law in which a controversial majority system was kept by Democrats' demise. The objection of the Nation Party was not considered by the big duo. A powerful third party may be dangerous for both two sides. Ultimately, on May 14th, 1950, elections were held under the new legislation law with the majority system. CHP, as the defender of the majority system,

bitterly paid the price of their mistaken strategy in the elections. The Democrat Party obtained a majority by 55% of votes and together with the majority system, in the parliament, they obtained over 80% of the seats.[17]

The change seemed inevitable under these conditions for Turkey. First of all, CHP's party organization was not designed for multi-party electoral conditions. Bureaucratic single-party remnants in the party were still powerful in the party's organizations. On the other hand, the Democrat Party smoothly achieved contact with people especially in provinces. It would be an exaggeration to claim that Democrats are ordinary people as their supporters in the provinces. They were mostly of the elite strata of the society. However, their enthusiasm and the way of communicating with ordinary people was more intimate than the bureaucratized CHP candidates. Şevket Süreyya Aydemir defined this transition with the emergence of new people from the same class as:

> In 1950's Turkey, waters were shaken, and a new group of people emerged and rose to power. However, leavers and newcomers, they are both from the same upper layer of the society. They are the same kind of people

[17] TÜİK, "Milletvekili Genel Seçimleri: 1923-2011."

who have the same habits of the same country. (...) It was the end of the age of heroes."[18]

The new group took control of the country for ten years and the former ruling power was going to a renewal period. Transformation of both parties also became the shift of the roles in regard to the 1946-1950 period.

Democrats Taste the Power 1950-1954

The Democrat Party's landslide victory in the 1950 elections concluded CHP's 27 years of ruling period since the foundation of the republic. Democrats named this shift as "White Revolution" and "The Triumph of the Nation". The patience of the mild group and Celal Bayar's serenity after the 1946 elections brought them to power in 1950. While Democrats enjoyed the majority, CHP was turning over the power after 27 years and this was, obviously, a huge trauma for the party to cope with.

In the early days of their power, Democrats organized their governments ardently began their works after the work distribution. On the other hand, CHP was looking for resilience to take power back by renewing themselves as the opposition party. In 1950, in foreign policy, security issues were

[18] Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *İkinci Adam: Volume III*, 13.

a main priority. Hence, NATO membership was an essential target to permanently involve in the Western Bloc. The outbreak of the Korean War was seen as an opportunity by senior Democrats. In the economy, the DP's preference for agriculture-based development gave the biggest output for the Turkish economy for the first years. On the other hand, among two parties, the relations went kindly but firmly for the first three years. However, when CHP's assets were questioned by DP parliaments as unfair acquisition during the single-party period, relations were heavily damaged, and polarization stepped up to another level by switching hats of 1946.

After the elections, parliament convened to elect the new president.[19] Celal Bayar, as the last prime minister of Atatürk and a versed politician since Unionist Period,[20] nominated by the Democrat Party as the natural candidate for presidency. Hence, the Democrat Party group elected him as the third president of the republic. However, Bayar's choice for prime ministry office became surprising. Party members were mostly expecting senior history professor Fuat Köprülü as prime minister. Even though Adnan Menderes himself proposed the name of Fuad Köprülü, Bayar refused Menderes' proposal and he appointed Menderes as prime minister. This decision critically destined political life in Turkey during the 1950s. Although Fuad Köprülü was likely

[19] Until 1961, after the elections, parliament elected the president from 1924 on according to the Constitution of 1924.

[20] The Committee of Union and Progress (Ittihat ve Terakki) was the most effective group in the 1908 Revolution and a major power group after 1913 to 1918.

an expected candidate for prime ministry seat because of his age and experience, Celal Bayar preferred a younger man who can be more eager to contact with the folk and may be easier to influence by him. He would make the right choice for the first point, but Adnan Menderes became a serious issue for Bayar and he was more influenced by Menderes, instead. On the other hand, Köprülü became the foreign minister and the other founding member Refik Koraltan was elected as the speaker of the parliament. In this way, the founders of the party shared the most important offices. First government of the Democrat Party was called "the cabinet of celebrities." Well-known bureaucrats and military officers took the seats in the cabinet rather than the party's hard-worker members who struggled in the provincials. However, this cabinet did not last too long, and the second group came to offices they deserved.

On the other hand, 14 May 1950 was a drastic day for the CHP. When the election results were learnt, all eyes turned towards İnönü. İnönü's staff were looking for his reaction to whether he would accept the defeat. Furthermore, some army officers informed him of a proposal to intervene in the elections due to a communist cheat. However, İnönü has no intention to object to the results. He was very determined to leave his office and asked his wife how many days it could take moving from the presidential pavilion in Çankaya.[21] CHP's official newspaper "Ulus" officially declared the defeat with the title

[21] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, 47

the day after the elections as: "CHP turns over the government"[22] From this time on, the CHP and its leader İnönü was commencing a new way of political position for themselves. As the ruling party for 27 years, CHP organizations were far away from positioning themselves as the opposition party. This was going to be a serious struggle within the party. Early 1950's was a survival effort for the party.

Under these circumstances, İnönü's leadership was the most important issue for the CHP. For some people within the party and Democrats, İnönü's time was over and CHP should go with another leader. In his book on CHP's opposition period in the 1950's, Hakkı Uyar claims that Democrats were in favor of an opposition party without İnönü to weaken their contender.[23] İnönü's presence in the political area was a natural challenge for the Democrat Party. Although İnönü himself envisioned the establishment of the Democrat Party, he was usually perceived as a threat for their political life. However, neither most of the CHP members nor İnönü himself was seeking someone else for the leadership. Hence, after the elections, İnönü was re-elected for the leadership. On the other hand, apart from the leadership, another competition was for the seat of secretary-general. Nihat Erim was the major candidate for this seat. Also, he had the support of İnönü but some members in the party were blaming Erim for the defeat in the election because of firmly insisting

[22] Ulus, "CHP iktidarı devrediyor."

[23] Hakkı Uyar, *Demokrat Parti Döneminde CHP*, 31.

on a majority system. In the polls, Erim was not elected in the first round. Although he took the first place, Erim took it personally and he withdrew from the later rounds and Kasım Gülek was surprisingly elected as secretary-general.[24] İnönü's leadership was beyond dispute but Gülek achieved to obtain the second man seat as the representative of the reformist group over İnönü's favorite man. Hence, İnönü and Gülek ran and reformed the party until Gülek's resignation in 1959, and as the major opposition party, CHP managed to survive in earlier years of opposition and strengthen itself after 1957 elections.

During the first governmental period of the Democrat Party, the relations between two parties were full of ups and downs for almost three years. Although there were tensions occasionally, mild periods followed them. However, in late 1953, the bill on CHP's properties from the single-party period in the parliament heavily damaged the relations and it caused a strained political atmosphere to terminate mild dialogues. These were early bricks for built polarization. During the second half of the decade, this tension escalated with economic troubles and more aggressive and authoritarian attitudes which resulted in social blasts and further polarization.

After the landslide victory in May 1950, the Democrat Party promised not to investigate the previous governments. Together with peaceful handover, Democrat Party and CHP relations amicably commenced for the earlier

[24] Uyar, 42.

days of the Democrat Party period. Early political disputes began with the first government programme. While it was read in the parliament, a point in the programme was given more attention than others: "The revolutions, which are interiorized by people, will be kept."[25] This article was a signal for some actions of the Democrat Party in the near future to make some changes on some of the revolutionary moves. First serious attempt to retouch the Kemalist revolutions was Arabic prayer. In 1932, Prayers from mosques had been allowed to be proclaimed only in Turkish. Democrats, before the elections, heard many requests for Arabic prayer from people. Hence, Adnan Menderes firmly insisted on this issue. Although president Celal Bayar warned him as "too early," Menderes issued his resignation threat and Bayar withdrew from his request. At the end, Democrats passed a law to make Arabic prayer available again from the mosques. On the other hand, except some strict supporters of the Kemalist revolutions, CHP members did not vote against the law. Debates and objections remained in intellectual rather than political context. However, intelligentsia like journalists, scholars, authors, and military officers reflected their discontents on Arabic prayer.

In the second half of 1952, social and political developments determined the political atmosphere and the relations between the two major parties. In 1952, a major dispute emerged on dangerous ideological and political groups for the country in the parliament. The Democrat Party was insisting

[25] "Millete mal olmuş inkılaplar mahfuz tutulacaktır." Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, 55.

on a tighter struggle against communism and any corpuscle of proliferation should be restrained by the state. On the other hand, CHP additionally reminded bigot groups who are against the Kemalist revolutions. In 1951, some reactionary protests had taken place and Atatürk statues were demolished and thus, the Democrat Party introduced a protection law for Atatürk's legacy. Religious people were an important vote source for Democrats and the DP was more cautious to provoke known religious groups rather than strict attitudes against communist ones. However, later developments in the last months of the year 1952 led Democrats to take further steps.

While DP and CHP members were disputing on the dangerous groups, the tension escalated in October 1952. During his Aegean tour, İsmet İnönü and CHP leaders were not welcomed by Democrat Party members. After the İzmir meeting, in Balıkesir, authorities also allowed Democrat Party members to organize a meeting at the same place at the same time. Hence, the Democrat Party group tried to prevent the entrance of İnönü and senior CHP members. İnönü cancelled the meeting and went to Bursa. Democrats sometimes personally targeted İnönü during their first period. They demanded İnönü's impeachment for his activities during his presidential terms from 1938 to 1950. While Turkey was experiencing its first decade democratic regime, practical consequences became inauspicious for many times. During this nervous period, an incident in Malatya diminished the tension between the two parties and led to a mild period instead in the last month of 1952. Both two parties found a common threat to attack for a while.

On 22 November 1952, during prime minister Adnan Menderes' visit to Malatya, Ahmet Emin Yalman, chief editor of İstanbul based journal Vatan, was shot several times by a young man in his twenties. His name was Hüseyin Üzmez and he was provoked by opinion columns of Ahmet Emin Yalman who was firmly against reactionary religious groups. This assassination attempt resulted in several measurements taken by the Democrat Party government like trial against religious groups and the Nation Party was targeted during this period. İstanbul based revisionist and anti-Kemalist journal "Büyük Doğu" and his famous author Necip Fazıl was convicted as instigator. In the end, the Nation Party became the main target. Party members were on trial during 1953 and the party was shut down by penal court on 27 January 1954. While the Democrat Party slammed the Nation Party, from December 1952 on, Adnan Menderes softened his attitude towards CHP and the Spring Period between two parties took place. Both leaders Menderes and İnönü praised each other and bigot groups were accepted as a dangerous threat for the regime. This detente period did not last for a long time and in November 1953, the Democrat Party's new bill to parliament conversely shifted the relations between the two parties for the next year. According to Hakkı Uyar, mild periods are a strategy as a preparation period for Democrats to hit a new strike against the CHP.[26]

[26] Uyar, 149.

In 1953, the Democrat Party proposed a new bill to the parliament on CHP's properties which were registered during the single-party period. The Democrat Party was claiming that these are unfair acquisition of property due to the state-party period. These properties did not belong to the CHP but to the state. Earlier, in 1951, community centers (*Halk Evleri*) which had organized cultural activities for people during the single-party period, were attached to the central Government instead of the CHP. However, this law demanded almost all properties of the party. Altan Öymen notes that these properties were mostly acquired by grants. For example, if someone who is a member or supporter of the party donates his property to the CHP. According to him, these types of properties should have remained.[27] In the parliament, the bill angered CHP members and İsmet İnönü gave unlikely speeches until that time and called Democrats as: "You are in a hurry just as criminals are."[28] Menderes answered with the same tone and they responded to each other in the parliament twelve times. The law passed by Democrats' votes and CHP left its properties like provincial centers and official newspaper buildings. So, the party had to start from the beginning. Democrat Party member and minister Rıfkı Salim Burçak implied that although the decision was fair, it was a

[27] Personal Interview with Altan Öymen on February 27, 2020.

[28] Ulus, "Suçluların telaşı içindesiniz"

mistake of timing: "Timing was wrong. It would have been fair if it was implemented in 1950."[29] Thus, for the first period of the Democrat Party, prior to the 1954 elections, this law was a huge rubble for polarization. From this time on, relations were seriously damaged which was rarely made up, and it evolved to an unmanageable level from 1957 to 1960.

Apart from domestic tensions, foreign policy was an exceptional case for joint policies between the two parties. The Democrat Party endured pro-Western Bloc foreign policy as they inherited from the last CHP government. Democrats even take bolder steps in this issue to be accepted as a NATO member. Although Turkey attempted to join NATO, founding member states were against enlargement policies over a transatlantic alliance. However, the United States, as the tutelar for all these countries, adopted a policy of the enlargement of frontiers to diffuse the front against the Soviet Union. Hence, first, Southern Europe, then Turkey and Greece became the important pieces of this policy. Under these conditions, opportunity for Turkey's membership appeared with the outbreak of the Korean War. The Democrat Party government, maybe even just the Bayar-Menderes duo, took the initiative to send a Turkish brigade to the Korean Peninsula without any parliamentary approval. Although this fait accompli disrupted DP-CHP relations for a while and İnönü gave very harsh speeches in the parliament, the objections were not on the

[29] İbid

subject but the method. Together with Turkey's enormous efforts in the Peninsula, Turkey was rewarded with NATO membership in September 1951 and after parliamentary approval, Turkey joined NATO on February 18th, 1952. In Lizbon, foreign minister Fuad Köprülü took the paper of NATO acceptance. Although CHP was furious during the parliamentary surpass of Korea decision, they supported main policies towards NATO inclusion. Bayar once asked İnönü "Why didn't we join NATO?" and İnönü replied as "Did they agree, but did we not join, my dear?"[30] Hence, it is safe to say that Democrats followed CHP's foreign policy and expanded it.

During the first governmental period of the Democrat Party, economic development and sources were focused on the agricultural economy rather than a planned industrial economy of the single-party period. Before the 1950 elections, Democrats managed to establish good contacts with people all around Turkey. In the early 1950's, Turkey's population was 24 million and 85 percent of the population was rural. Only 15 percent of the people were living urban life. Early economic moves of the Democrat Party were made by taking rural people into account. Together with American aid, Democrats introduced tractors instead of plows and along with various other mechanical farming devices. Together with good weather conditions, Turkey obtained

[30] "Aldılar da girmedik mi?" Dündar, "Tanıdık Bir Öykü."

28% growth for GDP per capita from 1950 and 1953 for three years.[31] Domestic prices increased and during the Korean War, thanks to American stockpiling policy, Turkey's external trade improved by more than forty percent.[32] However, from 1954 onwards, with deteriorating weather conditions and diminishing American credits, the economic slope started to decline and the Democrat Party's social and economic policies followed this shift.

Under these conditions, general elections were held on 2 May 1954. DP propagated a developed Turkey under the leadership of their government. Its agriculture-based economy gave precious growing numbers for three years. On the other hand, CHP, as a former ruling and founding party, the DP experience was a mistake for the people and the people were aware of their mistake after four years. In the polls, people reflected their pleasure on the Democrat Party's policies for the first term. Hence, Democrats increased their votes to over 56% and CHP votes fell to around 35%. Together with the majority system, the Democrat Party won more than 90% of the seats.

1954-1957 Angry Years

[31] Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*, 132.

[32] Şevket Pamuk, *Uneven Centuries*, 224.

The second ruling period of the Democrat party had serious troubles and furious political and social reactions in different ways. As Altan Öymen called his book for this period, those were the angry years of Turkey.[33]

1954 elections can be called the heyday of the Democrat Party in order to vote rates in the polls and seats in the parliament. On the other hand, this heyday was the beginning of the downfall in economic and political circumstances. Earlier appearance of this deterioration emerged in economic troubles. These economic troubles are followed by strict measurements not only by means of economics but also political and social consolidation. Quantitatively diminished opposition in the parliament was replaced by a rising inner opposition group within the Democrat Party group. On the other hand, CHP and İnönü were seeking to adapt themselves into the political system as the main opposition party. As Şevket Süreyya Aydemir called, İnönü was like a commander who fulfilled his army's needs.[34] In foreign policy, the Cyprus issue emerged for the first time. Followed this first diplomatic negotiations in London on the question of Cyprus. This issue fired up nationalism in Turkey and together with a social blast within the country Turkey had experienced one of the most tragic events on 6-7 September 1955. Under these conditions, DP and CHP relations were like in the previous term. In general, strained re-

[33] Altan Öymen, Öfkeli Yıllar, Doğan Kitap, 2009.

[34] Aydemir, 161.

lations continued and mild periods softened this tension for certain time periods. However, sometimes, for Democrats, the media, Republican Nationalist Party leader, one man opposition Osman Bölükbaşı and some members within the Democrat Party became more problematic for Menderes and Bayar in this period, rather than CHP members. Prior to the 1957 elections, CHP-DP relations naturally deteriorated again but this time, it never became mild again.

After the drought period in summer of 1953, a huge scarcity emerged in Turkey. Also, after the Korean War, the demand for Turkey's main export products like wheat decreased. In 1954, Turkey's agricultural output and export decreased by 15%.[35] Together with a need for monetary liquidity, the Turkish economy was marching through a crisis. Similar to the World War II period, some basic products rationed, and long lines were visible for products like coffee, milk, tea etc. To solve this problem, after a short time from Celal Bayar's visit, after the 1954 elections, prime minister Adnan Menderes visited the United States to request for 300 million dollars of credit. However, Americans were reluctant to supply such an amount of money for unrestrained investments of the Turkish government rather than a planful expenditure. Instead, the US officials granted 30 million dollars for Turkey's earlier debts and expanded into an easier and longer payment plan.[36] From 1954 on, the Democrat party adopted more statist economic measures like export controls

[35] Keyder, 133.

[36] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, 74.

and import limits. The share of industry in Turkey's economic growth began to increase year by year. After 1954, Turkey grew 4% per year until 1960.[37] However, they did not leave populist economic programs for agriculture to not lose their biggest voters.

After his return from the United States, Adnan Menderes and the Democrat Party issued rigid actions against opposition parties and the media. First, he converted Republican Nation Party (CMP) leader Osman Bölükbaşı's hometown Kırşehir from a province (*il*) to a district (*ilçe*) and divided İnönü's hometown Malatya's southern part as another province called Adıyaman because they did not vote for Democrat Party. Additionally, after his return, Prime Minister Menderes's speeches in the parliament became more rigid to blame opposition parties and their leaders for an obstacle for the country's growth.

Apart from the opposition parties, the media as well, became the target for the Democrat Party to subdue. New media law was issued during the second ruling period, and it restricted journalists from presenting evidence for their news. Hence, after the 1954 elections, some journalists like Cüneyt Arcayürek, Metin Toker, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın (80 years old) were jailed. Metin Toker's arrest is an important story to brighten the Democrat Party and the media relations. Toker's sensational article on Akis journal on 14 May 1955

[37] Feroz Ahmad, *Demokrasi Sürecinde Türkiye*, 1945-1980, 140

claimed that Democrat Party group was hot spot while Menderes was abroad, and he titled as "a story of cat and rat"[38] This analogy and this was furiously responded by prime minister Menderes as: "We will not let our party group be called a rat. Whoever says this, even if he is the son-in-law of a very important person, he will be locked into a rathole."[39] Metin Toker had married İsmet İnönü's daughter in 1955. After this speech, Akis's editor Cüneyt Arcayürek then, Metin Toker was jailed. Both Metin Toker and Cüneyt Arcayürek were mild journalists for the early years of the Democrat Party. However, together with authoritarian attitudes of the DP government, journalists like them had a hard period. On the other hand, in 1955, for the claims of corruption, although Adnan Menderes was strictly against the evidence-law which enables journalists to prove their claims, there was a supporting group within the party. This group was called "İspatçılar"(*Provers*). This group in the long run departed from the party. Also, corruption claims will lead to an inner opposition group within the Democrat Party which overthrows the cabinet after the 6-7 September pogrom.

The Democrat Party's heavy majority in the parliament which results in lack of opposition and larger factions within the party, together with economic troubles, evolved into a serious opposition within the party. The first outbreak was serious corruption allegations on Deputy Prime Minister

[38] Toker, "Bir Kedi ve Fare Hikayesi."

[39] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, 83.

Mükerrem Sarol. These claims were published in newspapers and new media law could sentence newspapers and journalists for these claims. Hence, journalists and opposition parties demanded a proof right law which enables journalists to prove their claims. However, Adnan Menderes was strictly against this law because this law will make unavoidable true or false hundreds of claims. Hence, Menderes persuaded most of his party group. However, the unconvinced group insisted on supporting proof law. This group led by Fethi Çelikbaş and other 10 members signed a petition. Then, Fevzi Lütfi Karaosmanoğlu and other 8 members supported them. Democrat Party discipline committee dismissed late signers from the party and took executive status of Fethi Çelikbaş. Together with the resignation of early signers, 19 proofers of Democrat Party established the Liberty Party (Hürriyet Partisi) in December 1955.

During the last months of 1955, the eruption also happened within the Democrat Party group. Economic troubles and the shocking trauma of the 6-7 September pogrom, Democrat Party group was so furious in the party group meeting on 29 November 1955 and their targets were the ministers. Party members started to chant "Resign, resign!" and the first victim was trade minister Sıtkı Yırcalı. In the previous meeting declared his resignation from the stage and the party group continued to chant the same thing. Then, finance minister Hasan Polatkan came to the stage and declared his resignation. Foreign affairs minister Fatin Rüştü Zorlu followed them. Menderes' cabinet was falling apart. Finally, Mükerrem Sarol's idea became the savior of Menderes'

political life for that day. During the dialogues with members, Sarol was heard that members do not have any complaint with Menderes but ministers. Sarol reported this information to Menderes and he came to the stage for his vote of confidence. The party group effusively supported him and thus, Menderes saved his seat but lost his cabinet in this party group meeting. Menderes appreciated his group and praised their power in a very interesting way as: "If you want it, you can even bring the caliphate back."[40] While Menderes was struggling in his party group and economic troubles, diplomatic issues like Cyprus and social blast at 6-7 September events caused big troubles for him. This period's unrest affected Menderes' psychology. In his memorial book, DP's symbol figure Samet Ağaoğlu claimed that Menderes' personality changed after this year.[41]

In foreign policy, from 1955 on, the Cyprus issue appeared together with the declaration of England's withdrawal. Turkey and Greece were going to start a debate which is still a problem for the relations of these two countries. On the other hand, against the Soviet threat, new alliances in the Balkans and the Middle East were established. The Baghdad Pact was established in February 1955 by Turkey, the United Kingdom, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan. This pact's aim was a cooperative struggle against communism in the Middle East and pro-Soviet Arab states like Egypt and Syria. Leaders of this pact were

[40] Altan Öymen, *Ve İhtilal*, 208.

[41] Garapon, 405.

meeting several times to organize a joint policy in the Middle East until 1958 the coup d'état in Iraq. However, the Balkan Pact could never become an active organization. This pact was also established for the same reasons in the Middle East by Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia. However, after Stalin's death, Yugoslavia, as a socialist country, commenced to mild their relations with the USSR. On the other hand, Turkey and Greece have a Cyprus question. The Turkish side was claiming distribution and the Greek side was claiming total control according to the population majority. Hence the pact was stillborn and remained dysfunctional. In the Cyprus issue, while Turkey was looking for postponing of the negotiations, inside the country, nationalist foundations held meetings which evolved into a social blast together with economic troubles.

As the reflections of Cyprus Issue in domestic, together with economic troubles, the September 6-7 pogrom took place around major districts in İstanbul, which are dwelling towns of non-Muslim population. The eruption of the event sparked with the title of a journal. İstanbul based newspaper "İstanbul Express" published breaking news about a bomb attack at Atatürk's house in Thessaloniki. Although this news was not true, people aroused to protest this incident and this protest evolved into attacking Greek minorities' houses, shops, and properties in Beyoğlu and other districts. The following day, finally, military forces took control of streets and a state of emergency was declared for İstanbul.

While this attack took place, Adnan Menderes was on his way to Ankara from İstanbul. He learnt the news on his route and he came back to İstanbul from halfway. On a phone call, when he was briefed by interior minister Namık Gedik, he was surprised with his minister's words. Namık Gedik called the attacks a fair delirium of the Turkish nation.[42] Apart from bipartisan political tension, this event became an important outbreak of social unrest and polarization. Although this attack on minority groups does mean that people did not divide into two larger adverse groups as a big scale polarization, this incident was the biggest indicator of upcoming polarized politics and society for the near future.

Before the 6-7 September events, DP-CHP relations were in one of the mild periods and after the incidents, İsmet İnönü reacted in a reasonable mood and interestingly preferred to stay silent after the incidents. Therefore, Adnan Menderes enjoyed İnönü's calmer attitude. İnönü supported the state of emergency decree of the government only for İstanbul. During the end of 1955, CHP-DP relations remained in a mild mood while the Democrat Party's inner troubles and political traumas continued. Hence, 1955, in general, can be called the last spring period for CHP-DP relations. In 1956, heavier pressure on journalists with another media law and total ban for meetings and marching commenced to increase tensions. According to this ban, CHP's stubborn secretary general Kasım Gülek was jailed for six months because of

[42] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, 85.

an unauthorized meeting in Sinop. Also, CMP leader Osman Bölükbaşı was jailed because of a speech in the parliament and was found guilty for insult against parliament. During this rigid period, one of the founders of the Democrat Party Fuad Köprülü resigned from the party. Before his resignation, he lost his office to Fatin Rüştü Zorlu and his personal animosity against Menderes, started with his fight with Mükerrem Sarol. Finally, in 1957 he resigned from the party and took against prime minister Menderes. Köprülü exclaimed to establish a common struggle against Adnan Menderes. Furthermore, he blamed Menderes as "womanizer."[43]

According to strained policy of Democrat Party, opposition parties commenced to negotiate for upcoming elections. İnönü, Bölükbaşı and Liberty Party leader Fevzi Lütfü Karaosmanoğlu met several times to deal with a joint list for the elections. To evade this preparations and other conditions in the country, Adnan Menderes and Democrat Party took several measures. First, before the new economic programme which compelled a devaluation for Turkish lira and inflation burden, Democrat Party brought general elections six months ahead, to October 1957. Also, together with a change in the election law, the way of a joint list for opposition parties was closed. On the other hand, negotiations were in a hesitant mood for opposition party leaders

[43] "Sen bütün tarih boyunca kendisini kadınlara teslim eden bir devlet adamı biliyor musun ki başı belaya girmemiş olsun?", Cihad Baban, *Politika Galerisi*, 351.

and they were not intended to unify under a single party. Thus and so, in October 1957, Turkey went to snap general elections. Democrat Party's decreasing vote rates and increasing CHP votes did not change the DP majority. From 1957 elections onward, clashes in the streets, political duels. CHP gained self-confidence and increased the dose of defiance against the Democrat Party. To reply to this, the Democrat Party's measures were in the same level and until May 27th, 1960, the polarization reached its peak. For the next two chapters, together with political events, the discourse of the polarization will be analyzed in detail.

4

1957-1960: Polarization at Its Top Level

This chapter aims to cover the political atmosphere of the period between 1957 and 1960 which is the final period of the Democrat Party. From the first days with the 1957 elections, the tension almost never ceased, and polarization reached its peak between the two parties the DP and CHP. Street incidents, parliamentary discussions, military's intention to intervene and unification of opposition groups and DP's resilience over these groups will be covered before the specific examples of the polarization and its discourse which will be covered in the next and last chapter.

1957 Elections

On 27 October 1957, snap elections were held in Turkey and the Democrat Party achieved three-peat and kept their majority in the parliament, despite a significant decrease in their vote rates. In comparison to 1954 elections, the Democrat Party's previous 58.4% vote rate decreased by 9.8% to 48.6%. On the other side, the CHP increased their votes by 6.3 percent and

they got 41.4%. Furthermore, other opposition parties' votes remained very low. Osman Bölükbaşı's the Republican National Party won 6.5 and the Liberty Party won 3.5 per cent. According to the majority system, while the Democrat Party obtained 424 seats, CHP won 147 seats.[1] Other two parties only won the cities of Kırşehir (RNP) and Burdur (LP) with four seats. As a result, despite the fact that there was a notable decrease in their vote rates, the Democrat Party kept its majority and was authorized for four more years. However, this result was interpreted as a serious warning by opponents and some mild Democrats. Voter turnout decreased from 90% in 1950 and 88% in 1954 to 77% which led to the DP's vote rate being less than the opposition combined.[2] Also, very limited vote rates of other opposition parties indicated that Turkey's electoral and political structure was shaped in a bipartisan model in the 1950s. In his journal "Akis", Metin Toker titled his analysis for the election results "The Convicted System." In the analysis, the results were a warning for the DP and a route to a two- party system.[3]

Apart from previous electoral triumphs of the Democrat Party, in which case, the Democrat Party had adopted a calmer attitude after strained election periods, serious incidents during the election day and controversial results in some cities did not allow to ease the tension and further security

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1 "1950 - 1977 Yılları Arası Seçim Milletvekili Genel Seçimleri" YSK, https://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/1950-1977-yillari-arasi-milletvekili-genel-secimleri/3007

2 Kemal Karpat, The Turkish Elections of 1957, 452.

3 Toker, "Mahkum Edilen Sistem."

measures were set instead. Therefore, early sparks of political tension evolved into the highest level of social and political polarization during the last Democrat Party period (1957-1960). Democrats' decreasing votes caused more rigorous policies against the opposition. Likewise, the reassured and more stubborn CHP, after their escalating votes, caused a hypertension period for three years.

DP's decreased votes likely resulted from economic troubles. Their populist price policies for agricultural areas remained by narrowing for large landowners rather than peasants. In urban areas, inflation began to be a burden for civil servants. Compared to the 1954 elections, the biggest defeat for the Democrat Party, within the scope of cities, were Ankara and Adana. On the other hand, they succeeded in keeping İstanbul and İzmir. These results are important to understand social, political, and economic differences among the major cities. The Democrat Party, in the previous elections of 1950 and 1954, had won all of these four cities. However, the results in the 1957 elections reflected the Democrat Party's social and economic policies. For the case of Ankara, as the capital and the hub of civil servants, populist-agricultural economic policies and inflation burden aggravated life conditions of civil servants. Also, as the capital of the republic, the Kemalist bureaucracy was still powerful and CHP leader İsmet İnönü was still a hero for these people. Hence, the defamation policy against İnönü has reactionary effects on this group. On the other side, İstanbul, as a trade center and less bureaucratic merchant city, was kept by the Democrat Party. However, the decrease was 11% for DP and

CHP rose from 27 percent to 40,5 percent.[4] For Adana, as Beatrice Garapon mentioned, Democrat Party's agricultural policy in favor of large landowner (Ağa), was not welcomed by small harvester peasants but İzmir and Aegean region remained as an exception because of high-price policy on tobacco by Democrat Party government and thus, DP kept most of its votes in this region.[5]

Political Tension after the 1957 Elections

Political tension, hostility and polarization between the Democrat Party and the CHP during the Democrat Party's third period commenced as soon as election results were declared and continued from that time on. On the election day, CHP supporters objected to election results and voter lists for many cities and thus, these controversies evolved into hostility between DP and CHP supporters in some cities. In Particular, incidents in Gaziantep evolved into street fighting. Rock stones, sticks were used by party supporters and the government issued a state of emergency for Gaziantep. The Democrat Party won the city only by 86 votes according to official results.[6] Notable

[4] "1950 - 1977 Yılları Arası Seçim Çevresine Göre Milletvekili Genel Seçimi Sonuçları," YSK, accessed October 2020, http://www.ysk.gov.tr/doc/dosyalar/docs/Milletvekili/1950-1977/istanbul.pdf

[5] Garapon, "*Partie Democrate*", 546.

[6] Seçim Çevresi: Gaziantep, " YSK, accessed October 2020, http://www.ysk.gov.tr/doc/dosyalar/docs/Milletvekili/1950-1977/Gaziantep.pdf

CHP member and former Gaziantep MP Cemil Sait Barlas heavily criticized incidents that happened in the city. As a result, Cemil Barlas was arrested by police for his provocation in Gaziantep events. After the incidents, for preventing a protest and conflict, on the opening and presidential election day, the parliament was encircled with police forces around 5.000 troops in Ankara.[7] These serious incidents, fired up both parties which led polarization into the highest level and hostility between two parties for two and a half years.

After the elections, the Democrat Party's narrow victory worried Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and he was looking for some measures to fire his party up and cease vote loss. On election night, he said: "May god do not let this night happen again."[8] Menderes' close friend Mükerrem Sarol notes that he never found Menderes in such a miserable mood before.[9] After forming his cabinet which took quite a long time, Menderes was discussing with party members about the decrease in the polls and he proposed more rigidity. He claimed that decrease in Democrat Party vote rates stemmed from not being firm as much as the Republican People's Party.[10] Therefore, for the next term, Menderes' advice gives clues on DP's domestic political agenda after 1957. Apart from CHP's stubbornness which made Democrats furious,

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[7] "Turkish Deputies Re-Elect Bayar", The New York Times, November 2, 1957.

[8] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, 95.

[9] Mükerrem Sarol, *Bilinmeyen Menderes Volume: II*, 779.

[10] Rıfkı Salim Burçak, *On Yılın Anıları 1950-1960*, 617.

domestic incidents within the country and exterior incidents which happened in southeastern neighbor of Turkey made Democrat Party members and Menderes more confused and nervous.

Early Military Crisis

Since the second half of the 1950s, military barracks had been a hot spot against the Democrat Party government. Little-big juntas were organized in different military zones. In the 1957 elections, military officers planned to intervene on Republic Day; if the Democrat Party did not accept the results in a scenario of a defeat, military officers would capture them.[11] However, DP's victory nullified this plan. In his memorial book, Metin Toker reminds us of the story of Atatürk and İnönü on the military's involvement in politics. Atatürk, as the president, was asking questions about young military officers to İsmet İnönü and he observed some unhappy officers and briefed as: "It is very normal, when we were young soldiers, we were also unhappy about the government, wasn't it?" Atatürk had confirmed this. Also, Metin Toker claims that until 1960, the army was in this mood but never planned for a military intervention.[12] In the new term, the new Democrat Party government adopted economic reforms which devalued Turkish lira and the dollar became equal to almost 9 liras in 1958. High prices and stable salaries diminished living

[11] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, 96.

[12] Metin Toker, *İsmet Paşayla On Yıl*, Volume: III, 38.

standards of civil servants. For military juntas, this became an important fact for raising their voices in the barracks. In the Demirkırat Documentary, Suphi Karaman claims that soldiers were driving during the nights as taxi drivers for their livelihood.[13] Under these circumstances, a possible disclosure of a junta in İstanbul drew all the attention to the military.

In 1958, a military junta led by Faruk Güventürk which was also planning a coup d'état was leaked by a military officer called Samet Kuşçu. He was claiming that nine military officers were planning military intervention against the government. Since the news was taken, the junta was dissolved. It is arguable that this junta was on a mission to overthrow the government. However, more interestingly, de facto leader of the junta lieutenant colonel Faruk Güventürk offered the leadership to National Defence Minister Şemi Ergin and demanded his support.[14] Şemi Ergin did not accept but never leaked this offer to Menderes or Bayar. He did not talk about a possible military intervention either. After the report of Samet Kuşçu, nine military officers including Faruk Güventürk were arrested. Soldiers were questioned at military court and they never admitted any plan for their long investigation process. Also, within the military, malcontent voices arose during the trial.

The Democrat Party's leading duo were divided again on this issue. While President Bayar was taking this issue seriously, Adnan Menderes was

[13] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, 82

[14] İbid

preferring to ignore any possible confrontation with the army due to long and strong appeal. Mükerrem Sarol notes that in his talks with Menderes, the Prime Minister did not want to remind soldiers about military intervention by getting deeper with a longer investigation period.[15] Ultimately, Menderes' attitude became decisive for the investigation. On the other hand, as a former spy, Bayar suspected a bigger organization. According to Faruk Güventürk's later statement, while he was under investigation, president Bayar who was a secret society officer (Komitacı) claimed that Güventürk was the head of the junta. However, it was never proven by words and Menderes decided to not to poke more at this problem. Instead, he fired his defence minister Şemi Ergin and appointed his beloved childhood friend Ethem Menderes. Arrested soldiers were released and they took important roles in the 1960 coup d'état. Only reporter Samet Kuşçu was fined for a wrong report and internal disturbance within the army. Menderes' cooling attempt did not soften the army's attitude. This nine-officers issue was still debatable for many people. Senior CHP based journalists like Metin Toker claimed that these officers were not organized for a military intervention, but they could have on their mind and after 27 May, 1960, overrated comments were issued by these soldiers to claim themselves as early heroes of their revolution.[16] After this domestic

[15] İbid

[16] Toker, *İsmet Paşayla On Yıl*, Volume: III, 38.

claims on military intervention, in six months, a military intervention just next to Turkey really deranged the DP government's mind.

This important incident, which happened in Baghdad, enormously affected Menderes and senior Democrats' psychology just in a short time after the coup d'état rumors in Turkey. On 14 July 1958, at İstanbul Yeşilköy Airport, foreign minister Fatin Rüştü Zorlu and senior bureaucrats and diplomats were waiting for their guests from Iraq for a welcome. Turkey was hosting the annual meeting of Baghdad Pact. However, in Iraq, military intervention overthrew the government. King Faisal II and his prime minister Nuri al-Said were arrested and killed. When the news reached Turkey, it was a shocking moment for Democrats because of two reasons. First of all, together with the fall of the Iraqi government, the Baghdad Pact was dissolved and Turkey's role against the Soviet-supported Nasir Movement in the Middle East was suffered. Hence, the Democrat Party government proposed the United States a military operation to Iraq to dissolve the military regime. However, the United States were reluctant to take further risk for another pro-Soviet state in the Middle East and also, their ongoing operation in Lebanon was still under way. Hence, they recognized the new government after the coup d'état.[17] This reaction was another shock for Adnan Menderes and DP members.

More prominent reason was that together with the fall of an allied government in Iraq, the Democrat Party worried about a similar destiny by

[17] Toker, *İsmet Paşayla On Yıl*, Volume: III, 13.

losing their government by a military intervention like their close allies had. Both King Faisal II and his prime minister Nuri al-Said were not only allies but also companions. On the other hand, opposition parties and adverse intellectuals were mentioning and referring to this coup d'état in journals and articles. After the first shock, Adnan Menderes decided to activate the party's resilience. Thus, he initiated a new organization in which the Democrat Party's mobilization movement was shaped by a massive membership movement.

Motherland Front and the Democrat Party's Resilience

In September 1958, the prime minister Adnan Menderes declared his party's mobilization movement in Balıkesir. He was asking about the opposition media's long articles about the coup d'état in Iraq and asking why this inauspicious event was in the tongue of opposition. What do they imply, indeed? To halt this discord front we should organize a patriotic front. So, he was proposing a mobilization movement against these organizations led by the senior opposition CHP. In Aydın, at his meeting in late 1958, Adnan Menderes declared the foundation of the Motherland Front (*Vatan Cephesi*).[18] While he implied CHP activities as against the country and called the CHP as "Malice Front" (*Nifak Cephesi*) and for preventing this group, the Motherland

[18] Öymen, *Ve İhtilal,* 461.

Front was established. In a short time, all around the country, thousands of Motherland Front offices were opened, and people commenced to register.

According to Yasemin Doğaner, the Motherland Front to take over CHP's hegemony over bureaucracy stemmed from the single-party period and take bureaucrats to their side and weaken CHP's power.[19] Registration to the front was simply a membership for the Democrat Party. This campaign was promoted by official newspaper Zafer's new members list and its announcement by the radio. On the radio, for hours, thousands of new member names were announced. There was an exaggeration on the numbers, but the campaign was so massive and fast. Even people who refused to listen to radio founded an organization during this period.[20] This organization was the best example or even incarnational version of the social and political polarization.

Media also took its share from this resilience period. A new press law issued in June 1958 put governmental pressure to another level. During this term, the journal named "Kim" was closed. An İstanbul based newspaper Vatan was penalized for a month and its mild-mannered journalist Ahmet Emin Yalman was sent to prison. Also, İnönü's son-in-law Metin Toker was jailed once again. This oppressing attitude over the media softened sometimes

[19] Doğaner, "Vatan Cephesi," 190.

[20] Uyar, 284.

according to the political atmosphere. However, in 1960, during the investigation period for CHP's activities, the media experienced the biggest censorship and pressure by the government.

Another plan of Menderes for the revival movement was a constitutional change in the executive system. As France held a referendum in 1958, French people voted for a system change from parliamentary system to a semi-presidential system called fifth republic. Due to the struggling French political system, General De Gaulle could not achieve a long-lasting government or even could not establish a government for a long-time. Together with this executive change, the president of the republic became the head of the government too and he appoints ministers outside of the parliament. This system allows De Gaulle to set a supra-parliamentary role. In this case, Turkey's prime minister Adnan Menderes demanded such a system. There are several reasons behind this desire. First of all, Menderes can hold sole power by holding both the presidential and governmental leadership. Also, his disputes with Bayar can be an obstacle for him. Notwithstanding, Menderes' personal admiration to Charles De Gaulle may be another important reason. According to Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, General De Gaulle was an idol for Menderes and he wanted to become Turkey's De Gaulle. However, according to Aydemir, implementing a presidential system was not necessary as in France because Turkey's parliament works unlike France's choked parliament with no single party-majority. Menderes can easily establish government and he did not hesitate to dissolve and form new cabinets during his four-year governmental

periods. Also, the way De Gaulle's arrival to the head of the state was so different from Menderes.[21] Hence, it is safe to say that De Gaulle, as a war hero, passed the way like Atatürk. While Menderes was looking for different measures within the country, parliament and the party; the main opposition party, the CHP, geared up its firm opposition from 1959 on which led to further tension by the firm responses of the government.

More Aggressive Opposition

From 1959, on the opposition front, CHP adopted a more aggressive and hostile opposition against the Democrat Party as a serious rival to take over the majority in the next elections, according to increasing votes in the 1957 elections. Low vote rates of other opposition parties and ultimately, the Liberty Party's dissolution and involvement with the CHP in 1958 made the party unified and a bigger opposition front. Both party members and İnönü gradually increased their criticisms of the Democrat Party. Therefore, ultimately, in the first days of 1959, the party decided to switch on an offensive attitude towards the Democrat Party, and new strategies on democratization process and economic reforms were promised to people which meant the basics of the post-Democrat Party order in Turkey.

[21] Aydemir, *Menderes'in Dramı,* 355-356.

In January 1959, the fourteenth party congress of CHP was held. In this congress, CHP, maybe for the first time after 1950, was preparing themselves like they would take over the government. Hereby, like a ruling party, they declared a declaration called "Initial Objectives Declaration" (İlk Hedefler Beyannamesi) which was a manifesto for what is going to happen after CHP takes power. Electoral security, autonomy to universities, meeting and protest rights, civil servant rights and constitutional court to prevent unconstitutional changes were promised in this declaration.[22] However, instead of the CHP, after the coup d'état, the military regime adopted most of these articles for the new constitution in 1961. In this congress, İsmet İnönü was re-elected as the party leader and Kasım Gülek kept his secretary-general office. However, İnönü and party members changed party structures and the caucus of the party obtained the right to change the secretary-general. This was the major move of İnönü to weaken Kasım Gülek. Finally, an outbreak within the party terminated Gülek's service.

On a NATO reception night, İsmet İnönü appointed Nüvit Yetkin to represent the party instead of Kasım Gülek. This decision made Gülek very unhappy and nervous and thus, he wrote a letter to the NATO colonel to imply that Nüvit Yetkin's credentials were not adequate for representation. He implies that Yetkin is insufficient to speak any foreign languages and he is not

[22] Uyar, 163.

capable of representing such a reception.[23] This letter was leaked and Nüvit Yetkin publicly read the letter in the party meeting and claimed that Gülek insulted him. Although Gülek refused the claims, the letter was offensive and party members were already intent to weaken him. Hence, in October 1959, Kasım Gülek resigned from secretary-general and the party group elected İsmail Rüştü Aksal and thus, nine years of Kasım Gülek's second man duty in the party was finalized.

On the other hand, the party's firm attitude against the Democrat Party during 1959 embodied and peaked with İnönü's famous Spring Attack (Bahar Taaruzu) in May by contrast with former mild spring periods. Although tension was escalating in the beginning of 1959, some incidents postponed or paused this nervous year. In February an accident in London made people forget every problem and İnönü's mother's death in December halted the tension for a while and these were the last chances for a mild period.

Missing Chances and Fights at Full Gallop

On 17 February 1959, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, some of his ministers and major diplomats were on the way to London for negotiating the Cyprus issue. Their aircraft crashed outside of London. Unfortunately 13 people were killed in this accident and Prime Minister Adnan Menderes was wounded. This news shocked all people in Turkey and they unanimously

[23] Uyar, 172.

prayed for the health of the Prime Minister and other wounds after the accident. Menderes' return after his treatment from London became a huge welcome in İstanbul. From airport to city, people were greeting Menderes and sacrifices were seen through the way. As an exaggeration, some fanatic supporters of Menders claimed that he was a holy person for surviving from the accident. Menderes visited Prophet Mohamad's companion Eyüp Sultan's Tomb and he enjoyed the holy person's degree given by some people. Finally, Menderes returned to Ankara by train. There was a big crowd to welcome the prime minister at the station. Even his biggest political rival İsmet İnönü came to the station to greet him. After Menderes' arrival at Ankara station, İnönü and Menderes greeted each other but then, Democrats went to the VIP lounge, where President Celal Bayar was waiting for him, and they directly left for the Çankaya Mansion (Presidential Residence). Menderes and İnönü could not establish any dialogue that day and this was the missing of the biggest chance for a detente like mild periods. After this missing opportunity, everything went on as usual. Apart from May 1959, tension escalated much more with CHP's Spring Attack.

On 4 May 1959, CHP leader İsmet İnönü commenced his meeting series called Spring Attack from Uşak City. İnönü planned meetings in Aegean Region cities. Uşak, as the first stop of these meetings, was meaningful because İnönü, as the general, achieved the most important triumph during the

Great Attack[24] and he captured Greek Chief Commander Nikolaos Trikoupis there. This historical location choice was a message of İnönü's attitude during the new campaign that looks more like a military commander rather than a political party leader against Menderes and the Democrat Party. However, on the other side, Democrats planned to hamper these meetings.

Together with the arrival of İnönü, protests and reactions of DP members emerged against the CHP committee and İnönü. After the meeting in the city, he was not allowed to visit his military headquarters where he directed The Great Attack after capturing the city. He was allowed to stay in the city for that night, next day, on his way through Manisa and İzmir by train, a rock-stone thrown by a protester hit İnönü's head and he fell down while the CHP committee was leaving the city. İnönü continued his meetings in Manisa and İzmir and protests against him continued there. After these meetings, he went to İstanbul to go to Ankara for Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis' visit. In İstanbul, İnönü's car was attacked by several protesters near Topkapı. İnönü was stuck in the car and finally, a gendarmerie regiment coincidently came there to halt this attack. This was the peak level of polarized groups and societies. Menderes' dialogue with his friend and DP member Mükerrem Sarol indicates an important detail for this event. Mükerrem Sarol was calling this attack unnecessary even though İnönü was provoking DP supporters. When

[24] Turkish military attack from 26 August to 9 September 1922 against Greek army. Turkish Army marched from Afyon to İzmir.

he was asking to Menderes the reason for supporting the incidents, Menderes replied as: "To halt İnönü's civil war desire, we had to take control, isn't it?" Sarol claims that this event benefited by İnönü to become an oppressed one.[25] Apart from these famous Uşak and Topkapı events, many protests and fights occurred at CHP's meetings in different cities of the country during the last term of the Democrat Party.

Before the Uşak and İstanbul events, in late 1958, in Zile, CHP supporters who came for İnönü's meeting were beaten by police sticks. In İstanbul, for several times, CHP party organizations in provinces like Kadıköy were dismissed by the İstanbul's chief police officer Kemal Aygün. After Uşak and İstanbul incidents, another important protests emerged in Çanakkale Geyikli and CHP's second man (Secretary-General) Kasım Gülek and his friends were protested by Democrat Party members and followingly, in Çanakkale harbor, Gülek and his friends were attacked by the protesters.[26] In the last days of 1959, İnönü's mother's death and Menderes' special permission for İnönü's once again jailed son-in-law Metin Toker to visit his wife who was giving birth very shortly gave some pause.[27] However, earlier incidents already escalated the tension to another level and this long lasting cat and mouse game reached its limits and incidents in April 1960 led to pulling

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[25] Sarol, *Bilinmeyen Menderes: Volume II,* 788.

[26] Ulus, "Çanakkale'de DP'liler her and bir hadise çıkarmak istiyor," September 23rd, 1959. 1.

[27] Toker, 186.

the trigger by the Democrat Party, CHP and also the barracks. In 1960, a strained atmosphere continued until İnönü's controversial Kayseri-Yeşilhisar incidents which sparked up the Democrats' attempt to unplug the CHP from the political scene and finalized with the 27 May coup d'état.

1960

The spark of the final outbreaks fired in Yeşilhisar town of Kayseri. In February 1960, CHP's head of Yeşilhisar Provincial Organization Mustafa Ünal shot DP's deputy president of Yeşilhisar after a verbal discussion and Ünal was wounded. After the incident, a CHP supporter who was arrested and released claimed that he was allegedly tortured in the jail. This claim was protested by CHP supporters and they threw rocks at official buildings. After these incidents, events in Kayseri were also discussed in Ankara. CHP's leader İsmet İnönü planned to visit the town. However, officials did not give permission to visit and they did not warrant his security but İnönü ignored these warnings and he went to Kayseri on 8 April 1960.

His train was stopped by gendarmerie at the city border and İnönü was informed to not go further. İnönü briefed the commander that he would go in any case and said: "If you want to stop me, you need to shoot at me." Then, the commander replied İnönü as: "I would like to shoot my head instead of hurting you."[28] Commander Selahattin Çetiner resigned from his duty after

[28] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, *Demirkırat*, 110

the incident. This attitude of the commander was a clear signal of the political tendency of the military. İnönü returned to train and went to Kayseri but could not go to Yeşilhisar. In Kayseri, İnönü was welcomed by his supporters as a hero and this event furied Democrats. This ignorance of İnönü, escalating tensions and the attitude of some army members led the Democrat Party's make their ultimate move which is to investigate CHP's activities.

The intention to question CHP activities and existence commenced at the Democrat Party group. Bolu parliamentary Reşat Akşemsettin proposed the idea of investigating the activities of CHP by a committee within the parliament on 7 April 1960. On the proposal, CHP's destructive activities boil over Turkish Nation like in Uşak and Kayseri and ask whether these activities violate community law or not.[29] This idea was supported by Menderes and major Democrats. Adnan Menderes and most of the Democrats supported the proposal. Eventually, this proposal demanded party closure, constitutional change for a new maintenance order and a special court which was like the Independence Court (İstiklal Mahkemesi) as in 1925.[30]

The Democrat Party did not have a unanimous majority for the committee to investigate CHP's activities. Sıktı Yırcalı and Zeki Erataman are

[29] Öymen, *Ve İhtilal,* 493.

[30] Special court-martial during the early years of the republican period.

major opponents as two former ministers in previous governments.[31] Furthermore, Şevki Erker also demanded an investigation for his own party and Menderes furied against him in the party group.[32] Apart from very few opponents within the party, finally, the party group approved the proposal which demands a commission composed by 15 people from the parliament to investigate possible crimes of overthrowing government, provoking the army, secret organization and listening to a communist radio called "Bizim Radyo" (Our Radio).

In this way, on 18 April 1960, the law proposal came to parliament. The law will investigate harmful activities of CHP by a commission, in which all twelve members selected from the Democrat Party parliamentors, for three months. During the negotiations, İsmet İnönü's speeches were crucial to understand that this investigation was leading to very harmful consequences. Just before the acceptance of the law, he explicitly implied an intervention as: "A regime of terror is going to be established, this is an illegal strike."[33] As a reply, group leader of DP Samet Ağaoğlu responded as: "This law will permanently terminate a rebellious mentality."[34] After this reply, İnönü phrased his famous quote of: "When the regime of oppression is founded, revolution

[31] Öymen, 505

[32] Öymen, 513.

[33] Öymen, 532.

[34] Öymen, 534.

becomes necessary."[35] It means İnönü's unofficial permission to the military to intervene. As journalist and İnönü's son-in-law Metin Toker said: "İnönü turned up the yellow light."[36] İnönü's futile speeches did not change the result and the law was passed by Democrats' votes.

First order of the commission was to ban all political activities in the country. However, Menderes, as the prime minister, visited many cities and continued political activities as a supra-political person. Following day, CHP's official newspaper Ulus was shut down by the order of the commission. Furthermore, together with the request of the commission, just a week after the commission's foundation, an authority law came to the parliament. This law was not surprisingly supported by Menderes and Bayar. Although some other members joined the opponent group of the law within the Democrat Party, their efforts to halt its arrival to the parliament did not give a result in the party group.

On 26 April 1960, further authority rights to the Committee of Inquest came to the parliament. This law also gives the authority of jurisdiction to convict the main opposition party CHP. It also has the right to abandon parliamentary immunity and close down newspapers and journals if they publish something about the commission to violate the commission's privacy. During the negotiations, the tension was much higher than the previous law's one.

[35] Öymen, 538.

[36] Demirkırat, 114

This time, İnönü decided to utilize the latest political developments in South Korea. He recalled the resignation of Korean leader Rhee after massive protests. In the newspapers, because of the strict publishing rules set by the commission, Rhee's resignation and news in Korea moved to the front page to imply Turkey's situation. Under these conditions, İnönü made comparisons between Korean protestors and Turkish people and said: "Turkish nation is not less dignified than Korean nation."[37] This sentence drove the Democrat Party group crazy and they marched through İnönü. Other CHP members guarded him, and furious ones fought with DP parliamentors. After this quarrel, parliamentors demanded to expel İsmet İnönü from the parliament for 12 sessions and it was approved by Democrats' votes. All CHP members in the parliament followed İnönü and left the parliament with police forces. In the end, the law was passed by DP votes. However, this approval led parliamentary tension to a street riot in Istanbul and Ankara. Following day, university students' protests illuminated another dimension of this polarization.

For the following two days, the first day in İstanbul then in Ankara, massive university student protests emerged. In İstanbul, police heavily interfered with incidents. Outside of Istanbul University, 20 years old student Turan Emeksiz was killed by police shot. Inside the school, students were beaten, and the rector Sıddık Sami Onar was taken to the Governor building by force and beaten. Following day, in Ankara, university students protested

[37] "Türk milleti Kore milletinden daha az haysiyetli değildir. "Öymen, 615.

incidents in İstanbul the previous day. Police also used force and entered university and arrested many of them. Massive arrests and gunfire shots were claimed and exaggerated rumors of massive killings spread among people. Hence, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes spoke on the radio to inform people about the details of the student protests.

On the other hand, some arrested students in military guard posts and had good dialogues with military officers and some of them even played football with soldiers in İstanbul. Some students greeted soldiers whose duty was to interfere with protests as: "Long live Turkish Army."[38] This was the unified confrontation against the government. Different opposition groups were declaring their de-facto support for each other during the protest.

At the end of student protests, the Istanbul University Senate declared a 15 days holiday. Also, during the protests, the government declared a state of emergency for the second time after 6-7 September pogrom. Apart from the main opposition party CHP, university and military mobilized against the DP government. Prime Minister Adnan Menderes was devastated with university protests and he was looking for solutions after these protests. Law professors Sıddık Sami Onar and prominent adverse Nail Kubalı heavily criticized the law of authority. President Celal Bayar, during this term also took initiative. In the midst of troubling days, Celal Bayar and Adnan Menderes

[38] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, *Demirkırat*, 117

met with pro-DP law professor Ali Fuat Başgil for his advice to ease the tension and possible military intervention.

This famous meeting of three Democrat Party founders (Bayar, Menderes, Koraltan) and Ali Fuat Başgil took place on April 30th, 1960. During the negotiations of the committee of investigation, when journalists asked the legality of the committee, Professor Ali Fuad Başgil noted that the foundation of the committee was legal and the constitution of 1924 technically enables this committee to be founded.[39] However, when Celal Bayar called him to his office, authority law was passed and in his memorial book, Başgil tells that some articles in the authority law are against the constitution to Bayar and Menderes. From the book:

- Menderes: Which points are unconstitutional?
- Başgil: Violation of the separation of powers and the secrecy of parliament sessions which has to be open.
- Menderes: I do not agree with you. This law prevents some dishonest journalists' alteration. If someone wants to find a record, it can be found in the official journal.
- Başgil: If this is the case, this is the field of penal or press law. I can't even find the official journal. How can ordinary people reach that?

[39] Başgil, *27 Mayıs İhtilali ve Sebepleri,* 121.

- Menderes: This is what separates a committee from a constitution. The committee approves or refuses, then it passes by a parliamentary vote. Courts are not authorized, hence, it cannot reverse the judgement.
- Başgil: You had objected when the previous government (CHP) issued unconstitutional laws. People like Sıddık Sami Onar comprehend the separation of power but you can only get legal authority from the constitution
- Bayar: Anyway, the law has passed. What do you recommend after this?
- Başgil: Send the authority law back to the parliament and do not react harshly to youngsters.
- Bayar: I don't agree. It is not the time for criticism, but it is the time for punishment.
- Başgil: I don't agree with you. Soldiers and students are together, it's a huge problem.
- Menderes: What do you recommend?
- Başgil: You neglected professors, students and soldiers. The solution is the resignation of Menderes cabinet and establishing a national consensus government and you better give some ministries to the opposition.

- Menderes: If I am the problem myself, I'll do it with pleasure. But, tell me, professor, which government had withdrawn before only for two street protests?
- Başgil: You can be the first one. Let the world see what real democracy is.
- Bayar: Tell me a country name, country!
- Başgil: In 1925, at the law faculty of Paris, Le Fur and Sel were the two candidates in the race for lectern. Le Fur was in first place but Sel, who had sympathy with the radical government of that period, was appointed. Students did not let Sel give a course and then, the government resigned, and Le Fur was appointed.
- Zorlu: Here it is Turkey, not France. Fifteen days ago, in Eskişehir, Menderes and I were welcomed by 200.000 people.
- Başgil: You got furious by university protests.[40]

After Bayar's resistance and advice, Adnan Menderes ignored resignation demands and he decided to initiate a meeting tour in the Aegean region. This decision was called the last missing chance for the survival of the Democrat Party and democracy after the military intervention. Some people blamed Bayar for his stubborn attitude which affected his prime minister.

[40] Başgil,130-140.

However, although Adnan Menderes may be more restless than ever during this stressful period, it is still controversial how much Bayar can affect Menderes. During ten years, Menderes had frequently been resistant to Bayar's recommendations. Journalist and former DP and Liberty Party member Cihad Baban was calling Bayar's shadow was an exaggeration.[41] While Turkey is in the midst of a political crisis, another important incident in Ankara became the important signal of social blast.

In Ankara, university students and DP opponents organized a protest organization called 555K. It means the fifth day of the fifth month at five o'clock at Kızılay Square. This meeting became huge protests which demanded liberty. More interesting fact is that when prime minister Adnan Menderes passed by near Kızılay he drove into the crowd with his car. When Menderes confronted protesters he asked them: "What do you want from me, what is your problem?" and the crowd replied "We want liberty." and Menderes replied: "Don't you have liberty, you have liberty even talking to me like this."[42] Then, Menderes went to a building with his guards and friends to keep themselves from protestors.

After the protests, the Democrat Party group met in their building and they were talking about counter measurements. Some Democrats proposed counter meetings and attacking protestors. However, Menderes rejected this

[41] Baban, *Politika Galerisi, 52.*

[42] Demirkırat, 121

offer and called it a possible cause of civil war.[43] After all the protests, Menderes marched his Aegean tour and in İzmir meeting thousands welcomed him. This welcome was enjoyed by Menderes and he ignored his friends' warnings for upcoming coup d'état. On the other hand, Menderes in the İzmir meeting promised to end the Committee of Investigation. However, this was not heard by the crowd. Later days, just a few days before the military intervention, in Ankara, while Menderes welcomed his Indian counterpart Nehru, the march of Military Academy (Harbiye) students was also a strong alarm for Menderes' government which was also neglected. Finally, on 27 May 1960 morning, military intervention finalized the 10 year-of Democrat Party period and suspended the democratic regime for a year.

After the intervention, half of the society was celebrating military intervention in the streets and others were worrying about what would happen. Yassıada trials, aggressive attitude against arrested DP members and finally three executions of prime minister Menderes, foreign minister Fatin Rüştü Zorlu and Finance Minister Hasan Polatkan were the saddest result of this polarized atmosphere in Turkey. A revanchist attitude was adjusted by some parts of the military and university. Revanchism and counter-polarization became the keywords of the military regime even until 1964 which will be covered in the next chapter with the context and discourse of the polarization during this term.

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[43] Öymen, *Umutlar ve İdamlar, 52.*

5

The Discourse and Dimension of Turkey's Polarization (1957-1960)

This chapter will cover the vehemence and the language of polarization in the last period of the Democrat Party rule. As in the previous chapter, after 1957 elections, both sides hardened their shields to hit the ultimate beat. CHP's increasing votes gave hope to their supporters to take back power after the next elections. According to Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, both sides had an expectation for the elections to be held in 1960 to relieve the strained political atmosphere and Menderes once confirmed these demands and claims.[1] This self-confidence caused the adoption of a more aggressive attitude against the DP to claim themselves as stubborn competitors. On the other hand, just the day after the 1957 elections, Adnan Menderes blamed his party members for being quiet and not as tough as CHP members. So, the keyword of the next term was toughness for the DP side as well. Also, president Bayar took liberty

[1] Aydemir, *İkinci Adam Volume III,* 347.

to increase his wield of influence to another level within what he called as: Farewell to the thin line democracy in 1955.[2]

To conceptualize this period's political tension and socio-political polarization, I will engage in a discourse analysis in the first part of the chapter. The speeches of İnönü and Menderes and other major DP and CHP members will shed light on the issue. Also, official newspapers of the both parties the *Zafer* (DP) and the *Ulus* (CHP) will be important sources to understand the context of this stratification. There will be comparisons of these two newspapers on the same events like the Uşak-İstanbul-Kayseri Protests and The Committee of Inquest process. In the second part of the chapter, social and political dimensions of polarization will be discussed. Finally, in the given period, social and political roots of the post-coup counter-polarization and revanchism will be analyzed.

I. The Discourse of the Polarization

Speeches

Speeches of party leaders and senior members of both the DP and CHP are important additives for social and political tension. Especially İnönü and Menderes who are both competent in their rhetoric, would trigger thousands of people with their words. For two and a half years, parliamentary and meeting speeches exacerbated the tension as an important reason for polarization

[2] "İnce Demokrasiye Paydos." Toker, "'İnce Demokrasiye Paydos' deyince."

and confrontation. It is safe to say that party elites are more prominent factors for the political tension rather than ordinary people or local politicians in the 1950s. On the other hand, senior party members kept the tension with their speeches as hostile as their leaders. When we start from 1957, speeches for elections are early indicators of upcoming polarization after the elections. In the Trabzon meeting, prime minister Adnan Menderes slammed his rival İnönü and called him sick: "İsmet İnönü has a sickness and the name of this sickness is puissance illness."[3] On the other side, İnönü heavily criticized Democrats and warned them: "I hope that the Democrat Party will withdraw from the government in my lifetime. Because, I will be the only one who will defend them."[4]

This tense atmosphere would have and should have left a calmer atmosphere after the elections in general. However, during the election day, serious claims were asserted by CHP on the elections of close gap cities like Gaziantep, Mersin and İstanbul. Therefore, after the elections, the atmosphere was strained rather than eased. So, speeches also get strained as the tension rose. After 27 October 1957 election day when the results were declared, the CHP leader İnönü spoke to its official newspaper *Ulus* and he blamed radio as the criminals of the election night after higher court's warning to radio.[5]

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[3] "Demokrat Parti' nin şansı varsa benim sağlığımda çekilme lütfuna uğrar, çünkü ilerde onları benden başka savunacak olmayacaktır." [3] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, 97.

[4] İbid

[5] Ulus, "İnönü: Radyo Seçim Suçlusudur."

This tense atmosphere and serious events in Gaziantep and Mersin increased the tension to another level. Senior CHP member Cemil Sait Barlas was arrested after his speeches on the Gaziantep events. On the other hand, Democrat Party's snippy parliamentary Emin Kalafat slammed on the radio on İsmet İnönü and Şemsettin Günaltay, who was the last prime minister of İnönü period, and he called İnönü and Günaltay as on the brink of the grave. According to him, they would not see the next elections. This speech was heavily criticized by CHP members. Metin Toker notes in his book that in 1963, while he was in prison, Kalafat demanded his release for his eye illness and İsmet İnönü approved his letter of mercy as the prime minister.[6] So, after the 1957 elections, tension did not halt but inversely escalated more like in the 1946 elections and the roles of the two parties conversely changed. In 1958, together with several outbreaks of the Nine Officers Event, the Coup d'état in Iraq and the Motherland Front, tension was going to escalate again, speeches became fierce, and this time, the leaders began to mention execution and death penalty.

The year of 1958 shockingly started with "the Nine Officer Event" for the Democrat Party. Serious claims on a possible coup attempt were leaked against the Democrat Party government.[7] However, the prime minister Menderes did not want to poke this issue further because disturbing higher military

[6] Toker, 22.

[7] See previous chapter for the details

officers' peace may cost higher for him and upper officers already declared their support to Menderes. Hence, the only informant officer Samet Kuşçu was convicted and National Defence Minister Şemi Ergin was replaced with Menderes' right hand Ethem Menderes. While Democrat Party seniors were ignoring lower ranked military activities, on 14 July 1958, the coup d'état in Iraq deeply affected Menderes and the senior Democrat Party's mood. In the opponent media, the Iraqi coup d'état was depicted with details for a long time and this development considerably disturbed Democrats. Also, on 2 August 1958, the government made a devaluation move to get credit and a dollar's value soared from 2 liras to 9 liras. Under these conditions, Menderes mentioned CHP members' happy expressions of Iraqi leaders' peril because of their good relations with Menderes. Therefore, Menderes started to slam opposition harshly in his speeches in 1958 summer:

> Together with publishing the corps of deaths in a neighboring country and insistently implying the coup d'état in Iraq, they were demanding to provoke a bouncer to react… So to speak, they were telling people that there isn't anyone to kill them?[8]

[8] Öymen, *Ve İhtilal*, 459.

In Balıkesir, in his provincial party congress, Adnan Menderes slammed the opposition for mentioning Iraq news and they gave the example of 31 March incidents which was a pro-Abdülhamid II uprising after the Young Turks' revolution in 1908. He continued with the Atatürk example in 1926 and noted that: "They tried to overthrow and kill even Atatürk but as we all know, what happened to them after that. They were hanged." He was implying for a possible execution and death penalty in future. On the other hand İnönü replied with this implication with the same tone: "...But it's not certain yet against whom the guillotines were set up."[9] After this angry Balıkesir speech, in Manisa, Menderes heralded his supporters for the foundation of the Motherland Front and its necessity as: "Against this malice front, we are establishing a motherland front which includes all patriots in the country against this gang."[10] In this way, in October 1958, the Motherland Front was established with Menderes' declaration. So, the tension and the strictness of speeches were escalating year by year. In 1959, although Menderes' aircraft accident halted the tension for a while, after CHP's spring attack and together with DP supporters' protests against İnönü restarted the tension where it left. Hence, after the Uşak incidents, during the events in Istanbul, both sides slammed each other in their speeches.

[9] Toker, 163.

[10] Öymen, *Ve İhtilal* 461.

In February 1959, Menderes' aircraft crash in London not only shocked Democrats but also their rivals. All the tension and political unrest were taken aside for a while. Tourism minister and some bureaucrats died in this crash, but Menderes fortunately was alive. After a short treatment, Menderes returned to İstanbul and everyone welcomed him. After his Istanbul visit Menderes' return to Ankara was a chance for a new spring period. İsmet İnönü came to the train station to welcome him. However, the chance was missed. After a warm greeting in front of the train, Menderes headed to the VIP lounge to meet with Bayar and they went directly to the presidential house. A chance of dialogue was missed and in a very short time, everything continued as usual.

İnönü continued to slam the government and their planned Spring Attack (*Bahar Taaruzu*) commenced in the beginning of May. İnönü's Spring Attack was not welcomed by DP supporters and huge protests emerged after the meeting in Uşak and İnönü was wounded. Then, two days later, in İstanbul his car was attacked by DP supporters. After these protests and attacks, both sides started to blame each other for incidents in Uşak, Manisa, and İstanbul. Democrat Party members and Menderes were claiming that İnönü demanded a fratricidal quarrel to achieve his goal and he was provoking the nation with this kind of stubbornness. However, his efforts never achieved his aim and together with mild DP supporters and official authorities' control, the danger

was gone.[11] On the other hand, CHP members were calling this a lynch attempt and it was allowed by Menderes and interior affairs minister Namık Gedik via police and governors. These attacks were the policy of intimidation issued by Democrats. This tension continued with Kasım Gülek's visit to Çanakkale which also evolved into a massive protest and attack on the CHP convoy. During this period of CHP visit, tension reached its top level with İnönü's Kayseri visit in 1960. So, 1960 became the peak level of the tensions and the dose of speeches.

The year 1960 started with İnönü's Bursa speech. İnönü demanded an election for those days and he was afraid of the Democrat Party's ignorance. In his speech, he indicated the legitimacy date of the democrat party as: "After 27 October 1961, Democrat Party government will be illegal."[12] İnönü was implying a possibility of an illegal regime but this speech is more likely a pressure onto the Democrats for an early election. This tension led to Kayseri events which were also important for the attitude of the military officers to support İnönü. Although the governor rejected his entrance, İnönü went to Kayseri but could not visit Yeşilhisar town which was known with DP-CHP tension in January 1960. İnönü's pretentious ignorance about the support of officials and some military officers became the last straw for Democrat Party members.

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[11] Zafer, "Uşak'ta Halk Partililer Kanunu, asayişi bozdu."

[12] İnönü, "Seçimi şimdi tehir etmiş olsalar bile."

In his speech, Adnan Menderes called İnönü an anarchist and he was planning illegal methods to take over the power.[13] On the other hand President Bayar reminded the national will behind their legitimacy. Eventually, after Kayseri events, in the Democrat Party congress, Reşat Akşemsettin proposed the investigation committee law to investigate İnönü's and the CHP's destructive movements. This was supported by most Democrats and Menderes. In the party congress, Hamdi Olgun raised the bet with his speech: "It is not enough to close the CHP. Let's ban their members from politics for ten years."[14] After its approval in the party congress, in parliament, negotiations evolved into word exchange. İsmet İnönü declared that this proposal is an illegal coup attempt and senior Democrat Party member Samet Ağaoğlu replied to him as: "This law will ultimately break a rebellious mentality." Then İnönü phased his famous quote as:

> If human rights are not conducted, the rights of the citizens are under pressure, the regime of oppression is established, and revolution is a legitimate right for countries… We had said a democratic regime and we founded it. Derailing from this route

[13] Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, *Demirkırat*, 137.

[14] Altan Öymen, *Ve İhtilal*, 515.

is a dangerous thing. If you follow this way, even I cannot save you.[15]

After the law's acceptance, tension continued to escalate, and the law of authorization became the last nail to the democracy's tomb. In the parliament İnönü compared Turkey to Korea and withdrew leader Rhee as: "Turkish nation is not less honorable than the Korean nation."[16] This speech furied Democrats and they voted for İnönü's expulsion from the parliament for 12 sessions. While CHP members were struggling to stay in the parliament, police forces came to the parliament hall and all CHP members left the parliament with police force. On the other hand, not only CHP members but also professors declared their feeling of discomfort against the law of authority. Law professors Hüseyin Nail Kubalı and Tarık Zafer Tunaya called this bill unconstitutional. Together with university protests and Sıddık Sami Onar's attitude, Adnan Menderes slammed against university professors as black cloaks.[17]

As a final point, Prime Minister Menderes' debates with his party members in party group meetings and parliamentary sessions deserves our

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15 "Baskı rejimi kurulduğunda, ihtilal meşru bir hak olur... Bu yolda giderseniz, sizi ben bile kurtaramam." Öymen, *Ve İhtilal*, 538.

16 "Türk Milleti Kore Milletinden daha az haysiyetli değildir." Altan Öymen, *Ve İhtilal*, 617.

17 Birand, Dündar, Çaplı, *Demirkırat*, 127.

attention. As an opponent of the Committee of Inquest and the Law of Authority, Rıfkı Salim Burçak's objections within the party group meetings were teased by Menderes. According to Burçak's memoirs, he had a serious quarrel with Menderes and in the latest group meeting, after Burçak's speech, he left the party group meeting.[18] More interestingly, during the Authority Law negotiation, he emphasized his impatience as: "If this work does not end today, I will commit a suicide."[19] Although Prime Minister Menderes prefers to use stronger sentences to affect his party group just as his famous Caliphate speech, in April 1960's super tense political atmosphere, his mood was changeable and angry in general.

Official Newspapers (Zafer vs. Ulus)

In 1950's Turkey, technological advances and economic conditions allowed a limited radio reach and newspapers can be called as the major source of media. For radio, agency news may be listened to by people in public spheres like coffee houses. Hence, in major cities of Turkey, newspapers are the biggest media device for reaching people. Most of the newspapers are based in İstanbul like Cumhuriyet, Hürriyet, Milliyet, Akşam, Vatan. On the other hand, in large cities, local newspapers are the most important sources for news because the newspapers of other cities can be reached the day after.

[18] Burçak, 743

[19] Burçak, 688

In Ankara, beyond some local and semi-national newspapers, official newspapers of these two parties are the most important media source of the capital city. The *Ulus*, the CHP's official newspaper, was founded in 1934 as the official spokesperson journal of the party. On the other hand, in 1950, the Democrat Party followed its rival and after the electoral win they established the *Zafer* (the Triumph) as their official newspaper. Since the establishment of the *Zafer*, these two newspapers had responded to each other's' claims like a war of words and defended their party's arguments. In 1953, together with the CHP's assets law, the *Ulus* newspaper was closed for a short period, but they continued. The *Zafer* was elected as an official advertisement newspaper and they enjoyed this money. So, as in the single-party period, the majority party's newspaper enjoyed the facilities of the power.[20]

From 1957 to 1960, these two newspapers continued a war of words by mostly replying to each other's claims or simply blaming each other. Headlines are well chosen to fire up party supporters over their rival. On the other hand, editor-in-chiefs of both newspapers wrote interesting articles during this term. For the *Zafer*, Burhan Belge and number two Bahadır Dülger heavily criticized İnönü and the CHP. On the other hand, at Ulus, until his death just a week before the 1957 elections, a stager journalist and politician Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın became the chief editor for the *Ulus*. After his death, another important author and journalist Falih Rıfkı Atay took charge of the

[20] Personal Interview with Altan Öymen on February 27, 2020.

leadership of the newspaper. In the following parts, from 1957 on, the reactions of these two newspapers on the same events will be covered.

Before the 1957 elections, the *Ulus* published news about economic troubles in the country. Also, the DP's claim on alliance of opposition before the election was rejected by the *Ulus*. In fact, there was a clear search for an alliance. Chief editor Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın was claiming that the Democrat Party was acting like it was in war conditions. He called the atmosphere like in a foreign invasion which was stimulated by the Democrat Party and he added, this was the worst thing for the country.[21] After the election day, counting claims were added and İnönü's speech on elections was published. İnönü called official radio as the culprit of the 1957 elections.[22] However, Zafer was refusing these claims and it was CHP's method to obtain power just as in 1946. So, the tense atmosphere of the 1957 elections reflected in official newspapers in this way and this strained atmosphere almost never became cooled again and reached its peak level during the Spring Attack, Kayseri Events and the process of the Investigation committee.

The CHP's Spring Attack in May 1959 was the first spark of the highest level and pernicious polarization since the early 1950's and continued until 1961. In fact, this period was the war of words between these two newspapers. In Uşak, CHP's meeting was protested by DP supporters and İsmet İnönü was

[21] Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "En Büyük Fenalıkları."

[22] Ulus, "Radyo seçim suçlusudur"

hit by a rock stone while he was leaving the town. In these two newspapers, headlines and comments were different just like black and white. The *Ulus* went out with the headline of offense and attack. On the other hand, DP's *Zafer* called İnönü's Spring attack was defeated by people in Uşak. Also, the CHP board was blamed for disturbing the peace in the town and on May 5th, 1959, Namık Gedik's warning text was published as the headliner of the *Zafer*.[23]

After Uşak incidents, debates were long-lated. CHP's secretary-general Kasım Gülek, in a speech, used historical reference to describe the incidents. He calls people threw rock İnönü as: "They must be the descendants of Trikopis." This name was the commander of Greek Army in Uşak who was captured by İnönü during the Great Attack. The Zafer publishes the reaction of the Democrat Party supporters and their protest telegram to the CHP.[24]

Provincial meetings of the CHP were the address of the clashes between opposition supporters and police from 1957 to 1960. The Ulus journal published these clashes from their front pages. In Adana, CHP's provincial congress was allegedly proscribed s and when CHP supporters objects it, police forces attacked them. Apart from CHP meetings, The Ulus also published

[23] Zafer, "Namık Gedik: Hükümetin CHP'ye Kat'i İhtarı."

[24] Ulus, "Uşak Hadisesi Hakkında Yeni Açıklamalar"

news about other opposition parties' intervened meetings by security forces. In 1957, Republican Nation Party congress was dissolved by police in Ankara and the Ulus published this news as the main title.[25]

After the CHP's spring attack, Kayseri events were another important reason for an outbreak of fighting between the two parties. Hence, the newspapers commenced their hard effort to promote it according to their view. İnönü's surpassing Kayseri was called "Surpassed of the Blockage" by the *Ulus*. However, this move and together with some military officers' in favor of İnönü, DP, this time, really thought that this was the final for İnönü. On April 4, 1960, Zafer's headline was: "İnönü was following guerrilla methods of the Balkan resistance movement members."[26] It was a reference to militias of the Balkan countries for an uprising against the Ottoman Empire for independence. So, İnönü was using rebellious methods which are illegal according to the *Zafer*. So, this period was followed by the establishment of the committee of investigation. This was taken seriously by the CHP. The *Ulus* issued İnönü's speech against the committee that this was an illegal coup. After the foundation of the committee, new bans were issued against the *Ulus*. Hence, they mostly used news about Korea on the frontpage. However, for authority

[25] Ulus, "Seçim Mitingi Hadiseli Geçti"

[26] Zafer, "CHP Liderleri Balkan Komitacılığı Yapıyor."

law, İnönü's comments were published as: It was a sovereignty struggle between a little group and the Turkish nation. After the authority law, strictness escalated on the *Ulus* and after 27-28 April University Events in İstanbul and Ankara, the *Ulus* was shut down by the decree of the committee. In the *Zafer*, these events and the 555K were called as a rebellion of a little group. Menderes' speech was published as political assassination and taking over the government without an election.

After this political tension and polarized newspapers, and after 27 May 1960, the *Zafer* was shut down by the military and the *Ulus* was reopened. After the coup, the *Ulus* followed strict revanchism policies. Altan and Örsan Öymen published an article series on the latest events that occurred before the coup and the military's activities was praised with heavy criticism to the Democrat Party. Also, the university events were depicted as heroic events. Death numbers were exaggerated by the newspaper and the news of burying the corpses of young students to Anıtkabir, where the mausoleum of Kemal Atatürk, were depicted as the ultimate union of the youth with their "Ata" (Father). Here we can see exact points of counter-polarization and revanchist attitudes.

Telegrams, letters, telephone calls

Documents like telegrams, letters and telephone calls is very interesting and important archive materials to focus on to cover Turkey's Polarization in the 1950's. First, documentation of this sources was very common in that

period. The Democrat Party's group meeting decrees, PM Menderes' telegrams, state-affair documents and private letters are the components of these sources. Since CHP lost its archive in 1980, archives does not have these types of sources. In these textes, the discourse of the polarization can be unveiled.

In the 1957 elections, the phone call between Adnan Menderes and İsmet İnönü was discussing the incidents around the country amid vote count. İnönü claims that CHP officers in the voting zones were beaten by the Police in several cities. But, Menderes requests his rival to stay calm by asserting everything is under control. Also, he emphazises: "The Democrat Party will not accept a single illegal vote."[27] On the other hand, interior minister replies İnönü's questions with stabbing of a Democrat Party supporters by CHP members in Mersin and the governor of Ankara claims that CHP supporters threaten people in Ankara.[28]

In 1958, the governor of Istanbul Ethem Yetkiner sends telegram to the CHP's Istanbul headquarters to warn the organization's preparation for İnönü's arrival after the Aegean meetings. Yetkiner, in the telegram, starts with İnönü's stubborn ignorance on the goverentemnts warning for visit in the Aegean towns. Then, before İnönü's visit to Istanbul, the governor mentions CHP supporters' organization for welcoming İnönü and calls them against the

[27] CB Arşivi: 030_01_00_00_52_312_3_2
[28] CB Arşivi: 030_01_00_00_52_312_3_4

law of demonstration and march. Finally, her warns that in the case of its violation, some inauspicious outcomes become inevitable.[29] These letters and telegrams between the two sides indicates that the volume or density of incidents and the distant language can easily be assumed as the effect of the polarization.

Apart from these texts, Democrat Party meeting records are another important data of written texts. In 1958, during the period of the Motherland Front, Prime Minister Menderes sends an appreciation text to his party members for their effort to enforce their party by bringing new members. On the other hand, he calls CHP's opposition as destructive. However, people from CHP recognizes this agenda and resigns from the party. Also, other opposition parties' (Republican Nation Party and Liberty Party) members decides to return to their former party.[30]

In 1960, following Yeşilhisar-Kayseri incidents, the Democrat Party's group meetings were somehow decisive to put sanctions on the CHP. In the decree paper, the CHP was a piece of the parliament within constitutional borders and they are needed to set these lines again. Their opposition was called destructive, rebellious and dangerous for the people and the peace in the country.[31] These meetings concluded with the emergence of the committe of the inquest.

[29] CB Arşivi: 010_09_144_447_1_5

[30] CB Arşivi: 030_01_00_00_45_269_1_2

[31] Zafer "CHP Balkan Komitacılığı Yapıyor"

As in these documents, from 1957 to 1960, the language between the people of the ruling and opposition parties, the hazardous events as fierce as stabbing, and the allegations on their rivals clearly indicate that this period went beyond the borders of routine political rival.

II. The Dimensions of The Polarization

Social Groups and the Evolution of Polarization from the Early Republican Period

It is still a common belief that the CHP and DP supporters are heavily divided in the public sphere for a long time since the 1946 elections. This division can be traced back to the foundation of the Free Republican Party in 1930. The Progressive Republican Party, the first attempt in 1924, was a more inner parliamentary opposition movement and a tour de force of war hero generals[32] against Kemal Atatürk. This period was harshly finalized after an assassination attempt against Kemal Atatürk in İzmir. The Progressive Republican Party was shut down and its founders sent to the Court of Independence for trials.

However, after the establishment of the Free Party, which took place by the demand of Atatürk, massive groups of people joined the party. Atatürk

[32] Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuat Cebesoy, Refet Bele were the founders of this party.

requested his close friend Fethi Okyar to establish an opposition party to revive political plurality in the country. However, the Great Depression's effects and anti-Kemalist revolutions' opponents composed an important threat for the CHP. In İzmir, FP leader Fethi Okyar's arrival was welcomed by thousands of people in İzmir. After this scene, together with Atatürk's request again, the Free Party finalized its existence. These earlier signatures of the opposition movement may be reborn with the Democrat Party after the new democratization process of the post-WWII period.

During the heavy wartime conditions of World War II, food supply, tax burden and black trade caused huge unrest among the masses. On the other hand, new unemployed graduates who had no chance to find a job within the single-party bureaucracy returned to rural areas began to compose the main bricks of the opposition.[33] So, after the Democrat Party's foundation erupted by a land reform which also made landowners unhappy, these opponent groups started to join the Democrats.

Celal Bayar, during the heydays of the party, kept the balances toward not bothering İnönü and senior CHP members for the survival of the party. After 1946 snap elections, because of serious corruption during the election day, Democrat Party members heavily criticized the CHP's attitude for election day and they were thinking of withdrawing from the parliament. In party congress, Menderes and Bayar halted the angry Democrats' outbreak and they

[33] Ahmet Kuyaş, *Tarihi Düşünmek,* 24.

kept playing the democracy game within its rules. Menderes maintained that "we will not tap into the trap of İnönü." Menderes advised being patient and waiting for the right time to rise up.[34] While Democrats were thinking of the future of the party and its political agenda, İsmet İnönü implicitly warned the opposition to stand by the rules by implying being against the revolutions and the republic.[35] Under this tense atmosphere of political elites, its effect on people reflected with social division.

This tense period sparked early division among people for early division. In the public sphere, party supporters gradually divided public spheres. Coffee houses were the main place of the division. In Turkish culture, coffee houses were important meeting zones for political meetings and activities, especially for the rural areas. However, for villages or little towns, people continued to share the same coffee houses to follow political development by listening to radio and reading newspapers. And, for election times, party representatives visit these houses for their propaganda. In rural areas, for the 1950 elections, Democrat Party members' huge efforts were very important for their victory. They are more prone to contact with people, rather than CHP's archaic bureaucratic remote politicians. However, this does not mean that CHP cannot get votes from these towns. According to Beatrice Garapon,

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[34] Samet Ağaoğlu, *Arkadaşım Menderes*, 49.

[35] Loğoğlu, *İnönü and the Making of Modern Turkey*, 113.

rooted families and groups in towns were more CHP sided while new entrepreneurs, newly moved groups were more DP supporters.[36]

Sociologically, Turkey's shift towards democracy and economic relief thanks to Marshall Aid heated up daily life and economic expectancies in Turkey. For social and economic class roots, polarization can be sought for within two theories for Turkey. First theory was Şerif Mardin's famous application of the Center-Periphery paradigm for Turkey's modernization since the late Ottoman period. Basically, the bureaucratic elite center controls the power against periphery rural masses. So, the Democrat Party, for some people, called it the first break for this bureaucratic elite organization with people's almighty will with their votes. Although it may be valid for rural groups' which comprised 80% of the population in 1950, it cannot solely describe the dynamics for 1950's Turkey. Likewise, CHP's winning territories were also rural for the 1950 and 1954 elections. Rural-Urban stratification may be more clear after the 1957 elections. Hence, it would be better to focus on the new economic and social dynamics of the World and Turkey after World War II.

After World War II, post-war economic structure also affected Turkey. As Çağlar Keyder argued, Turkish people were looking for a transition from

[36] Béatrice Garapon, *Aux origines de la Turquie conservatrice : une sociologie historique du Parti démocrate (1946-1960*), 277-280.

capitalism under bureaucratic tutelage to a capitalism based on market mechanisms.[37] Hence, together with rural people which composes 80% of the population, merchant groups, and more market capitalism supporters joined the Democrat Party. Also, left groups welcomed the Democrat Party's early opposition period and supported them. Tan Newspaper owners Zekeriya and Sabiha Sertel declared their support for the Democrat Party and 1960's Turkey's Worker Party leader Mehmet Ali Aybar became an independent candidate from Democrat Party in 1946 elections. Long-term single party period wore out the CHP and İnönü as a personal figure caused many people, who are adversaries of İnönü, to join the Democrat Party. Under these conditions, DP's fresh excitement was more attractive than CHP's remote elites for many people. This de facto alliance brought the Democrat Party the election victory and shortly after conflict began between different components of the alliance. Şevket Süreyya Aydemir mentioned this difference as: .... After the 1950 elections first ideological differences lacked some groups from democratic alliance, then economic preferences of the party were determining remaining groups of the party.[38] However, the Democrat Party was expecting these break ups and they were already keen to sacrifice some radical groups within the party.

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[37] Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey: A Study in Capitalist Development,* 124.

[38] Aydemir, *Menderes'in Dramı*, 241.

After 1950, neglected groups left the de-facto alliance of single-party period dissidents. The first groups were the socialists and some firm secular Kemalists. Earlier Communist arrests (*Komünist Tevkifatı*) in 1951 and 1953, socialists were excluded from this alliance by the Democrat Party's own preference. The Democrat Party's strategy was to exaggerate communist threat in the country to obtain more American aid. After World War II, because of the civil war in Greece, Turkey received one third of aid as Greece had from Marshall Plan. As Adnan Menderes once noted: "I wish there were much more communists in the country."[39]

On the other hand, in 1950, bringing back Arabic Prayer to mosques which was recited in Turkish since 1932, was not welcomed by more secular groups like politically moderate bureaucrats and military officers. It was the first alienation between the Democrat Party and Orthodox Kemalists. In the last year of the first ruling period, a strict attitude against İnönü also made some groups unhappy but İnönü enmity is an important reason for the existence of the party and this was a worthy thing to take this risk. Escalating populism, bumpy relations with religious groups and economic preferences during the second period was going to determine the real fronts for 1957-1960 tension and polarization.

1954-1957, the second ruling period of the Democrat Party was important for social and economic decisions which affected the whole country.

[39] Altan Öymen, *Değişim Yılları*, 574.

While Democrats lost some supporters with its rising authoritarianism and 6-7 September pogrom, they sought compensation with further populism and milder policies for religious people.

As we discussed in earlier chapters, the Democrat Party's first three years were successful for economic numbers. Together with American credits and device aid, more mechanized agriculture took place and together with good weather conditions surplus increased by 60%, and GNP increased by 28%.[40] However, after 1953, heavy drought affected agricultural production and the economy started to shrink and the Democrat Party's populist policies toward large rural groups shaped new fronts within the country. On the other hand, 6-7 September events caused a huge decrease for minority people's almost unanimous support. However, CHP's wartime wealth tax on minorities hesitated some people to shift their vote preferences.[41]

The Democrat Party's economic preferences in favor of rural groups, giving high prices for products and inflation attempts caused economic division between rural and urban groups. Also, the Democrat Party preferred a milder attitude against religious groups which were heavily affected during the period of trial on Ahmet Emin Yalman's assassination attempt. Prior to the 1957 elections, Said Nursi and his community declared their support for the Democrat Party. Also, supporting large landowners and cash crop products

[40] Çağlar Keyder, *State and Class in Turkey*, 132.

[41] Zaver Biberyan, *Yalnızlar*, 174.

like in the Aegean region, resulted in small landowner peasants' uneasiness which affected CHP's rise in 1957 elections. As a brief summary, Kemal Karpat's analysis on the major components of CHP electors was briefed as:

> There emerged in Turkey in 1950-59, from the lower urban groups and semi-rural towns, a small group of capital owners along with a larger group of aggressive entrepreneurs with a rather superficial liberal view of economics. Many of these became associated with the ruling Democratic Party, often as chairmen or members of its local executive boards. This was, in fact, the new middle class of Turkey which together with their families formed about 10-15 percent of the total population in 1960, and about 25 per cent in 1970. Political power gradually passed into their hands. Meanwhile the upper economic and landed families, which had joined the Republican Party during its one-party and benefited from its statist policies, began to accuse the rising groups of corruption, political opportunism and, naturally, religious reaction. The younger members of this group and the sons of the bureaucrats eventually formed the intellectual nucleus which produced the organized opposition to the Democrats after 1954.[42]

[42] Karpat, "Political Developments in Turkey, 1950-70," 355.

While Democrats were gambling on high-vote potential rural groups, urban people like bureaucrats, military officers, civil servants were under difficult conditions after 1956. Together with rising authoritarianism, intelligentsia which earlier supported the Democrat Party, turned against them. Devaluations heavily hit these groups for survival. Subsistence in urban areas became difficult for people. Hence this economic atmosphere also affected certain groups' confrontation against the Democrat Party. Even merchants, heaviest early-DP supporters, turned against them. All of these groups became a part of outbreaks against the Democrat Party. University events, student protests, university professors' attitudes and finally the military's intervention concluded the Democrat Party period. Although the Democrat Party invested in rural areas to consolidate its power, urban areas, bureaucracy and intelligentsia became more determinant in 1960 which led to a coup d'état and Yassıada Trials.

However, as in 1950, both parties have supporters from each side. There is huge geographical polarization for these groups but maybe some outweigh. In the next part, interesting and important examples of polarization will be discussed during 1957-1960. People of the same social and economic groups can be divided instead of widely separated social and economic backgrounds.

Polarization Samples and Counter Polarization

Since the 1946 elections, polarization had been a continuing phenomenon between the two parties. The most known story was the division of the coffee houses as an oral history myth of this period. So, it is difficult to tell if this fact became a phenomenon all around the country. However, for different towns and time periods, it is correct that division of public spheres. On the other hand, in many places, CHP and DP supporters continued to share the same public spheres. It is more likely splitting in half in public places rather than gathering on the same poles.

As an example, in the Moda neighborhood of İstanbul which is a wealthy neighborhood in Turkey standards, divided into two groups in social facilities. Moda Deniz Kulübü (Moda Sea Club) was becoming the social club for Democrats during the 1950's. Therefore, in 1951, the Lozan Club was opened up against the Sea Club by CHP supporters who were unhappy with the Moda Sea Club's political tendency. In 1958 it was opened as Yeni Lozan Kulübü.[43] Both clubs are still active. On the other hand, Büyük Kulüp (*Cercle d'Orient*) still has members from both parties, even Mükerrem Sarol became the head of this club for a while.

As Altan Öymen told me in an interview, in Büyükada and Ankara, Anadolu Kulübü (Anatolia Club) was full of MPs from both parties during the 1950's. They greeted and talked to each other. However, in tense periods,

[43] Gökçe Uygun, "Moda'nın En Prestijli Kulübüydü."

these greetings diminished, and conversations evolved into serious political debates. However, he also noted that major separation of the public spheres and discourse began with the arrival of the National Vision Movement.[44] In the 1970's, when they came to parliament, their greeting words and language they used were different from both CHP and the contemporary central-right party.

During the Uşak Incidents, the tension reached one of its peak levels. After, İnönü's eventful departure from the city, Democrat Party supporters organized celebration meeting and a banner carried by them mentions the potential civil war: "İsmet Pacha's Aegean Offensive which has bloody purposes was smashed in Uşak and thrown to Pacha's face."[45]

Another important example of polarization was the conflict between the Democrat Party and businessmen. Earlier, while the Democrat Party was marching through the power, merchants were important supporters of them. Merchant's and businessman's denial to DP was getting clear after 1957, in Şevket Süreyya Aydemir's book Hacı Sabancı was calling the DP party of peasants and he added his dislike to them.[46] More important incident during the last period of the Democrat Party was DP's huge pressure on Vehbi Koç to resign from CHP. The Koç Family was one of the earliest notable business

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[44] Personal Interview with Altan Öymen on February 27, 2020.

[45] Uşaklılar, Egelileri Hürmetle Selamlar, Presidential Archives, Doc no: 010_09_147_456_1_2.

[46] Aydemir, *Menderes'in Dramı*, 330.

families of the Kemalist period in Ankara. The founder of the holding, Vehbi Koç, was a merchant near Ankara Castle and he worked as a recorder in the parliament during the National Struggle period as the youngest member with Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu. Since the foundation of the CHP, Vehbi Koç was a member of the party.

In the rising polarized atmosphere of 1957-1960 period, the Minister of Industry Medeni Berk warned Vehbi Koç on his companies' credits and incentives depended on his CHP membership. Berk invited Koç to resign from the party and to join Democrats. Although he refused several times resignation and transfer offers, together with increasing pressure, in March 1960, he declared his resignation from the party.[47] Later, in his memories, Vehbi Koç called this decision as one of the biggest regrets of his life and his family sided against him.[48]

Another important familial incident in the polarized society was seen in the Democrat Party's group. During the preparation and negotiation process of the Authority Law, the Democrat Party group's deputy chairman Mazlum Kayalar caused eyebrows to raise because of his wife and mother-in-law's close link with the CHP and İnönü. Their loyalty telegram to CHP's

[47] Öymen, *Ve İhtilal*, 468.

[48] Youtube, "Vehbi Koç Belgeseli-1992."

leader irritated the DP group and reacted against Kayalar's familial dilemma.[49]

As soon as the coup d'état took place on May 27th, 1960, roles were reversed, and a huge smear campaign began against Democrats. Most of them were arrested and the witch-hunt atmosphere shaped. İsmet İnönü, as the natural de facto hero of the military, was visited by many military officers and bureaucrats after the coup. In the earlier days, the whole opposition units welcomed the military intervention and the future of the arrested Democrats was uncertain. However, as time went by, the volume of revanchism and counter polarization abnormally increased.

The most important indicator of revanchism could be seen in newspapers after the coup. University incidents were exaggeratedly depicted, and the number of deaths were overrated. On the other hand, corps of the students were buried in Anıtkabir where Atatürk's mausoleum was located. In the *Ulus* newspaper, it was titled: "The youngsters have come together with their 'Ata'."[50] After the first month, together with the advice of law professors, who were appointed to textualize a new constitution by the coup leader Cemal Madanoğlu, Democrats' trial process began. The Democrat Party's parliamentary bureaucrats and servants were sent to Yassıada Prison for their remand and trial process there.

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[49] R. Salim Burçak, On Yılın Anıları, 687.

[50] Ulus, "Ataları'na kavuştular ne mutlu."

In Yassıada trials, Democrat Party members were heavily accused of different claims. From Celal Bayar's gift acceptance of a dog to Adnan Menderes' adultery, even private lives were examined in the trials. On the other hand, to halt serious rumors on the health conditions of Democrat prisoners, National Unity Community which holds the power as the military group, decided to shoot a movie of the prisoners which is called "The Fallens in Yassıada" (*Düşükler Yassıada'da*) to depict daily lives of the prisoners with footages of daily meals, barber and newspaper reading. This was a clear mise en scene and the Democrat prisoners became involuntary stars of this movie.

Finally, together with the judgement of governmental activities, the court decreed to death penalty for many Democrats from violating the constitution. However, the National Unity Community approved four of the convicted Democrats. Also, together with Celal Bayar's age condition (Over 65), three executions were finally approved. Prime minister Adnan Menderes, foreign minister Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, and Finance Minister Hasan Polatkan were executed. Hence, this polarized period was finalized with vengeance and blood in September 1961.

The Legacy of 1957-60 Period on Today's Polarization, Politics and Culture

In Turkey, the three-year period of 1957-1960 and its actors, still constitute one of the most controversial topics in the country politically. Also, it is a significant topic of cultural and artistic production. After dozens of years,

in the twenty-first century, tv series and books were published about this period. In 1993, the TV documentary entitled *Demirkırat* was a precious oral history work of the Democrat Party era.; Furthermore, in the 2000's, this issue politicized more.

As I noted in polarization samples, the late 1950's polarization has its own structure and shape in contrast with today's social and political polarization. Basically, in electoral results, vote rate differences in Turkey's major cities were not astronomic during the 1950s. Although we cannot reach the vote rates of sub-provinces, the 1957 elections' results indicate that the difference of vote rates between two parties was below ten percent for most of the cities.

On the other hand, the interpretation of historical figures and events are somehow different. As the most prominent example, Abdülhamid II who became a very popular historical figure with AKP's neo-Ottoman and conservatism, was a persona non grata for both the DP and CHP during the 1950's. After 1957, to defend a more rigid attitude against the opposition, Prime Minister exemplified 31 March Rebellion of 1909. According to him, a complacent administration after the 1908 revolution caused this rebellion.[51] It was an undeniable fact that President Celal Bayar's Unionist background was stilll very effective.

[51] Öymen, Ve İhtilal, 354.

In 2005, a Turkish TV series called "Hatırla Sevgili" (*Remember Darling*) reflected the social and political atmosphere in Turkey. Two childhood friends, DP parliament Rıza and CHP supporter prosecutor Şevket were at loggerheads in the late 1950's because of rising political tension. Their children's (Ahmet and Yasemin) love story is also seriously damaged within this political tension and distance between the families. Furthermore, the coup d'état made things more difficult, while Rıza was spending his days in prison, Şevket became the prosecutor for accusations against the Democrats.

Another Turkish TV series in 2013 reflects more on today's political interpretation of republican history. ATV series called *Ben Onu Çok Sevdim* (I loved him so much) depicted the 1950s quietly in favor of today's hegemonic political atmosphere. However, in comparison to today's atmosphere, the series still depicted serious topics like Menderes' love affair with Opera Singer Ayhan Aydan. In the series, Adnan Menderes starred by very charismatic actor Mehmet Aslantuğ and İsmet İnönü starred by Turkish dramas' chronic heavy actor Şemsi İnkaya.

Apart from TV series, today, YouTube has become the most important source for ordinary people to learn about this period. Demirkırat, today, can only be watched from this platform and it is very popular among youngsters according to review statistics.

6

Conclusion

Turkey's polarization in the late 1950s is still significant for researchers and people who are interested in the transformation or evolution of the polarization in today's Turkey. It is natural that each period has its own phenomena and that's why I cannot call it surprising. In this thesis, the distinctiveness of the 1950s political atmosphere was considered. In the first two chapters, the main purpose was to conceptualize the term of polarization and its evolution until 1957.

Together with today's world polarized societies, Turkey's chronic polarization structure was highlighted. In the last part of the first chapter, the earliest polarization's nature was briefed within the early 20th century's ongoing modernization process in Turkey. On the other hand, in the second chapter, Turkey's democratization process after World War II and the first decade of the multi-party regime were discussed. Turkey's new route after

World War II within the upcoming Cold War conjuncture is essential to understand Turkey's domestic policy. Painful but consistent process of the democratic regime resulted in democratic transition in 1950. From 1950 on, the relations between two parties, changing power's psychological effects and ultimately tour de force and resilience were pointed. In the main chapters, major events of the 1957-60 period were analyzed to specify the importance and hazardous progress which was finalized with military intervention and revanchism. In the second part, how different were the incidents perceived and interpreted by both parties' leaders and media organs. Also, to emphasize the social reflection, some specific quarrels and public sphere divisions were analyzed.

Apart from the period which is covered in this thesis is the earlier example of the hazardous political tension, later periods also should be examined to better understand Turkey's political and social polarization. Famous core and periphery theory, may harm us to teleologically interpret many historical events and to reach certain prejudiced polarization reasons and results for today.

Although Mardin's core-periphery theory is a great contributor for understanding Turkey's political structure and certain political tensions in general aspects, it cannot define certain phenomena, periodical transformations and some exceptions. As in the previous chapter, we should find the reasons for the political tension between next door neighbors which probably have similar backgrounds. On the other hand, as Altan Öymen informed me in the

interview that I conducted with him that the National Vision movement is a very important phenomenon to study as an outlier in late 60s and 70s and its mainstreaming in the 1990s and its golden age with AKP as the center is critical to understand. As a master thesis, I intended to cover earlier chapters of this *longue durée* phenomenon. However, as İlker Aytürk noted in his Neo-Kemalism article, Turkey's Cold War period has to be covered more by researchers to better understand today's Turkey, rather than sticking into single-party era and early Kemalism.[1]

[1] İlker Aytürk, Post-Post-Kemalizm: "Yeni Bir Paradigmayı Beklerken," 47.

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