THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY PARTY AS A 'PARTY FOR TURKEY': OFFICIAL AND GRASSROOTS POLITICS OF A CHANGING IDENTITY (2005-2009)

by

Şeref Kavak

Submitted to
the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History
in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Master of Arts

Boğaziçi University
2010

"The Democratic Society Party as a 'Party for Turkey': Official and Grassroots Politics of a Changing Identity (2005-2009)" a thesis prepared by Şeref Kavak in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Master of Arts degree at the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History.

This thesis has been accepted and approved by:

Asst. Prof. Berna Yazıcı (Thesis Advisor) _____

Prof. Ayşe Buğra _____

Prof. Abbas Vali _____

An abstract of the thesis of Şeref Kavak for the degree of Master of Arts from the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History to be taken in June 2010

Title: The Democratic Society Party As a 'Party for Turkey': Official and Grassroots Politics of a Changing Identity (2005-2009)

This thesis examines whether the DTP, Democratic Society Party, the last ring of the chain of pro-Kurdish legal political parties in the first decade of the twenty first century, evolved into what is called a 'Party for Turkey' *(Türkiye Partisi)*, which means it broadened its scope of political activity to issues other than that of the Kurdish question. This work on the transformation of a pro-Kurdish legal party examines not only the acts and thoughts of the political elites, but also the expectations and activities of the grassroots organization and voters. In this regard, apart from the textual analysis of the official documents of the party, the study builds on interviews with both party officials and voters in the Esenyurt district of Istanbul. Given the findings of this research, this thesis argues that there is a difference between how the party's grassroots and elites perceive the party. The supporters perceive the DTP as an ethnic party, though not one opposing its concerns with other problems of Turkey apart from the Kurdish question. In other words, they simply prioritize their ethnic problem. On the other hand, the chairpersons and officials of the party strongly support its being a 'Party for Turkey' in harmony with its founding documents and attempts made by its parliamentary group. However, this project of becoming a 'Party for Turkey' with a non-ethnic, broadly-based perspective still includes the struggle for the recognition of the identity and rights of Kurds. The emphasis on this struggle helps the party to maintain its ties with a grassroots who prioritize ethnic identity.

Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnklap Tarihi Enstitüsü'nde Yüksek Lisans derecesi için Şeref Kavak tarafından Haziran 2010'da teslim edilen tezin kısa özeti

Başlık: Bir 'Türkiye Partisi' Olarak Demokratik Toplum Partisi: Değişen Bir Kimliğin Resmi ve Taban Siyaseti (2005-2009)

Bu tez, yirmi birinci yüzyılın ilk on yılında yasal Kürt siyasi partiler zincirinin son halkasını oluşturan Demokratik Toplum Partisi'nin (DTP) bir 'Türkiye partisi'ne dönüşüp dönüşmediğini; bir başka deyişle siyasal eylem kapsamına Kürt sorunundan başka meseleleri dahil edip etmediğini anlamaya yönelik bir çabadır. Yasal bir Kürt partisinin dönüşümü üzerine olan bu çalışma yalnızca siyasi seçkinlerin düşünce ve davranışlarını değil, taban örgütü ve seçmenlerin beklenti ve faaliyetlerini de ele almaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, partinin resmi söylemini ortaya koyan belgelerin metin analizi yanında hem parti yetkilileriyle hem de İstanbul'un Esenyurt ilçesindeki seçmenleriyle yapılan mülakatlara dayanmaktadır. Elde edilen veriler ışığında bu tez, parti tabanıyla seçkinlerinin partiyi algılayışlarında bir farklılık olduğunu savunur. Taban, partinin Türkiye'nin Kürt sorunu dışındaki meseleleriyle de ilgilenmesine karşı olmamakla birlikte, DTP'yi etnik bir parti olarak algılamaktadır; daha açık bir ifadeyle, etnik sorununu ön plana çıkarmaktadır. Diğer taraftan, parti üst yönetimi ve yetkilileri, 'Türkiye partisi' olmayı, partinin kurucu metinleri ve meclisteki grubunun çabalarıyla uyumlu olarak kararlılıkla savunmaktadır. Ancak, etnik olmayan geniş tabanlı bir perspektife dayanan bu 'Türkiye partisi' olma projesi, Kürtlerin kimliğinin ve haklarının tanınması mücadelesini de kapsamaktadır. Bu mücadeleye yapılan vurgu, partinin etnik kimliği öne çıkaran tabanıyla olan bağlarını korumasını sağlamıştır.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would thank to my advisor, Asst. Prof. Berna Yazıcı, for her tolerance and unfailing support during the preparation of this thesis. I am also grateful to Assoc. Prof. Yüksel Taşkın, Assoc. Prof. Ahmet Demirel and Asst. Prof. Nurşen Gürboğa, who had great influence on my decision to be part of academic life. I am also grateful to Prof. Dr. Abbas Vali for his presence on my jury. I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Büşra Ersanlı for her critiques which contributed generously to my research. I would also thank Kathryn Kranzler for editing my thesis and Tracy Lord for her creative questions that drove me into a deeper investigation process during all phases of this thesis.

I owe special thanks to Prof. Dr. Ayşe Buğra, whose advice constituted the starting point of this research. I would also thank Mehmet Hanefi Kaya, who shared his personal ties with me and helped me enter the field site with ease.

I thank all my friends. This thesis could not have been completed without their support and encouragement, especially Özlem Dilber and Ahmet Karatay, who provided me great assistance throughout the year.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank to my mother, Ayten; and my father, Ziyattin, who has always been nervous about my interest in politics; and my eldest sister Gülbahar, and other four siblings for all their support throughout my life with their concern and love.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION.....1
A Start with an End……..……..1
Political Context and Its Effect on the Study……...…...5
Research Question: A Pro-Kurdish Legal Party in Pursuit of Being a *Party for Turkey*: Why and How?.....6
Pro-Kurdish Legal Parties Literature……..……...……....11
Scholarly Gap and the Contribution of this Work…….14

CHAPTER 2:
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....17
Ethnic Parties as a Sub-Field in Political Parties Literature.....17
Parties and Axis of Ethnicity: Ethnic, Multi-Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Parties……....21
Development and Party Systems……...24
Ethnic Parties as Political Parties: To What Extent?.....26
Figure 1: *Synthesis* Model of Ethnic Party Systems……..30
Parties for Turkey versus *Others*.....30

CHAPTER 3:
DTP ON THE STAGE VIA OFFICIAL PLATFORMS……..36
Party By-laws: "Democratic, Egalitarian, Left, Mass Party"……39
Pro-Turkey, Pro-EU and Pro-Kurdish……...41
Participation of DTP MPs in Parliamentary Debates on the Budget Act: A Multi-Issue Agenda within Five Spheres…….....46
Local/Ethnic Sphere……...47
National/Patriotic Sphere……...50
Socialist/Egalitarian Sphere……...52
Eco-Feminist Sphere……..54
Global/Universal Sphere……...56
Public Discourse of the DTP Elites……..…….....58
Turkey-fication instead of *Turkification*……....59
Quota Problem as an Obstacle to Carry out the Project of Turkey-fication……..64
A 'Party for Turkey' by Kurds……..……....66

CHAPTER 4:
GRASSROOTS: PARTY CULTURE AND PRIORITIES OF THE VOTER…….71
Why Istanbul?.....72
Why Esenyurt as the Field Site?.....73
Who Are They?.....75
Methodological Concerns…….....77
'*Our* Values' between Honor and Betrayal……..82
DTP as the Representative of Kurds…….85
A 'Party for Turkey' with '*Our* Values'……..……88
Non-Kurds…….91
Women……...96

CHAPTER 5:
CONCLUSION.....100
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....105

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I am nobody
Are you nobody, too?
Then, there's a pair of us-don't tell!
They'd banish us, you know![1]

A Start with an End

The boundaries of political party formation in Turkey have been drawn by strict principles especially around those which relate to the ethnic and religious tones of political representation. According to the fourth paragraph of Article 68 of the Turkish Constitution:

> The by-laws, programs, and acts of political parties cannot be against the independence of the State and its in-divisible integrity with its territory and nation, human rights, principles of equality and state of law, national sovereignty, and the principles of democratic and laic Republic; they cannot aim to claim or establish class or group dictatorship or any other type of dictatorship; they cannot promote commitment of crime.[2]

[1] Emily Dickinson, *Selected Poems* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1990), p. 9.

[2] The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, Article 68.4, (Ankara: Emek, 2008).
"Siyasi partilerin tüzük ve programları ile eylemleri, Devletin bağımsızlığına, ülkesi ve milletiyle bölünmez bütünlüğüne, insan haklarına, eşitlik ve hukuk devleti ilkelerine, millet egemenliğine, demokratik ve laik Cumhuriyet egemenliğine aykırı olamaz; sınıf veya zümre diktatörlüğünü veya herhangi bir tür diktatörlüğü savunmayı ve yerleştirmeyi amaçlayamaz; suç işlenmesini teşvik edemez." (Translated by the author).

This article constituted the legal base for the closure of the Democratic Society Party (DTP) that was claimed to be a focus of activities against the "in-divisible integrity of the State with its country and territory".[3]

This thesis focuses on the DTP, the then last ring of the chain of pro-Kurdish legal political parties and represented by a parliamentary group comprising 21 deputies in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) between 2007 and 2009.[4] Ironically, the end to the lifetime of a political party constituted the beginning of this study which investigates it.

What did these four years of political life witness on behalf of an ethno-political entity striving to exist within a limited actually prohibited political space? The answer to this question could make up volumes of work. That is why it is more convenient to present here only some factual notes concerning the short-lasted lifetime of the Democratic Society Party. Before the party was founded on 9 November 2005, it needed approximately a one-year process of political organization starting with the declaration of the Democratic Society Movement by the former deputies of the (defunct) Democracy Party (DEP) Leyla Zana, Orhan Doğan, Hatip Dicle and Selim Sadak in 2004. In the mean time, prominent leaders of the pro-Kurdish legal parties including the closed and functioning ones Feridun Yazar, Ahmet Türk, Murat Bozlak, Tuncer Bakırhan and others endorsed the movement.

[3] Republic of Turkey, *T.C. Resmi Gazete*, no. 27432, 14 December 2009.

[4] Eyüp Demir, *Öteki Kürtler: Bir Geleneğin Anatomisi ve 29 Mart Seçimleri* (Ankara: Orion, 2009), preface. In the process of transferring of the Kurdish political movements to legal platforms from 1990s on, nine parties in line with the same tradition were founded, namely the HEP, ÖZEP, ÖZDEP, DEP, HADEP, DEHAP, ÖZGÜR PARTİ, DTP, and BDP. However, this does not mean they were the only examples of legal pro-Kurdish parties. Although differing from the above-mentioned tradition, five others functioned on the legal platform: the Democracy and Change Party (DDP), Democracy and Peace Party (DBP), Rights and Freedoms Party (HAK-PAR), and Participatory Democracy Party (KADEP).

The Democratic Society Movement continued its activities even after the DTP was established. These activities were rendered by an Organization Commission which arranged popular gatherings in 41 cities and sought the expectations of the very grassroots and organized elections for 3067 delegates 880 of whom were women. The degree of local participation was to such a great extent that ballots were prepared for some 265,000 supporters who would vote for the election of 418 founding members including 141 women. Thus the party completed a full-fledged grassroots organization in 41 districts of Turkey.[5]

The DTP, following the People's Labor Party (HEP) and Democracy Party (DEP), became the third pro-Kurdish political party to have seats in the Parliament. For the 22 July 2007 National Elections the party applied a new strategy. Considering the 10 percent nationwide threshold which had hindered the earlier parties of the tradition from entering the parliament, the candidates of the DTP joined the elections as independents. As a result, it collected 3.9 per cent of the national vote. It formed a parliamentary group with its 22 seats, eight of which were women.[6] This result was not perceived as a success of the DTP; it rather seemed to be its defeat by the ruling Justice and Development Party in the Kurdish cities.[7] However, the DTP gained 5.6 per cent of the votes for the District General

[5] More details concerning the factual information on the formation of the DTP visit http://www.kurdshow.com/turkiye-nin-gundeminden-dusmeyen-parti-dtp.html [26 February 2010]

[6] The DTP MPs after the 22 July 2007 Elections were Ahmet Türk (Mardin), Emine Ayna (Mardin), Akın Birdal (Diyarbakır), Aysel Tuğluk (Diyarbakır), Gültan Kışanak (Diyarbakır), Selahattin Demirtaş (Diyarbakır), Şerafettin Halis (Tunceli), Osman Özçelik (Siirt), Pervin Buldan (Iğdır), Sırrı Sakık (Muş), Nuri Yaman (Muş), Fatma Kurtulan (Van), Özdal Üçer (Van), Hasip Kaplan (Şırnak), Sevahir Bayındır (Şırnak), Nezir Karabaş (Bitlis), İbrahim Binici (Urfa), Ayla Akat Ata (Batman), Bengi Yıldız (Batman), Sebahat Tuncel (Istanbul), Hamit Geylani (Hakkari), Ufuk Uras (Istanbul). Later Istanbul Deputy Ufuk Uras resigned from the DTP in order to return to his old party ÖDP (Freedom and Solidarity Party) and the total number of the DTP seats decreased to 21.
See Demir, ibid., p. 205. Also for detailed data regarding personal information about parlaimentarians visit official web page of the Turkish Grand National Assembly: http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekillerimiz_sd.sonuc?donem=23&adi=&soyadi=&il=&parti=DTP&kelime= [04 January 2009].

[7] Demir, pp. 205-207.

Assembly (*İl Genel Meclisi*) category, which is considered as equivalent to the national elections' level, which was an increase compared to that of the predecessor DEHAP, which had obtained 5.1 per cent in the Local Elections of 2004. Ölmez, a former press counselor of the HADEP and DEHAP, interprets this electoral revival of the DTP from 2007 Elections to those of 2009 as the approval of "identity politics" instead of "service politics" implemented by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government in the East and South East Turkey:

> That the Kurdish electorate must have interpreted the words that the Justice and Development Party (AKP) used as a slogan for election campaigns "We conduct service politics, not identity politics" evidently as the denial of the Kurds; they withdrew their temporary votes in 2009. The results are not so surprising in that respect: "identity politics" won, "service politics" failed. In other words, the ruling AKP lost to the DTP. [8]

Making a combined analysis of the elections in which the DTP took part and the discourse of the ruling party during the election campaigns, Ölmez concludes that the 2009 Local Elections once again demonstrated the fact that the Kurdish question does not emerge from economic backwardness and regional underdevelopment; it rather relies on political and cultural solutions.

This approach makes it more relevant to define the pro-Kurdish legal movement as an ethno-political entity and the Kurdish Question an ethno-political issue. This study looks at the role of ethno-political identity in DTP's political organization.

---

[8] Ibid., p.208. *"Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP)'nin seçim sloganı haline getirdiği Biz kimlik siyaseti değil hizmet siyaseti yapıyoruz" sözlerini Kürt seçmenler açık bir şekilde Kürtlerin inkarı anlamına geldiği yorumunu yapmış olmalılar ki, 2004 yerel seçimlerinde emanet oylarını 2009'da geri çektiler. Çıkan sonuçlar bu yönüyle çok şaşırtıcı değildir, "kimlik siyaseti" kazandı "hizmet siyaseti" kaybetti. Diğer bir ifadeyle bölgede, iktidar partisi AKP, DTP karşısında yenik düştü."* (Translated by the author).

Political Context and its Effect on the Study

When this research project was designed, the DTP had already been taken to the Constitutional Court by the Supreme Court of Appeal Chief Prosecutor on 16 November 2007. Considering the fact that all the antecedents of the DTP had been taken to the Constitutional Court on the basis of Article 68 of the Turkish Constitution mentioned above and several of them had received ruling to shut down, it was not hard to predict that the decision would be closure again.

Even before 11 December 2009, when the Court announced its decision of a ban on the DTP, public opinion mostly shaped by the major political parties and bureaucratic organs in Turkey had already tended to approve the closure implicitly by accusing the party of being secessionist and pro-PKK and claiming that it had missed the opportunity to be a pioneer of a solution for the Kurdish question. From the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), who had just overcome the same threat of closure for a different reason, "being a focus of anti-laic activities", to the major opposition parties the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), there arose no concrete reaction to the possible abolition of the DTP. Rather they preferred calling on the DTP to "distance itself from the terrorist organization"

The big actors of the Turkish politics labeled the DTP an "ethnic party" and claimed that it neglected the problems of Turkey and only focused on the Kurdish question from a narrow perspective. The ruling party with Islamic roots, the main opposition in pursuit of a strict Kemalist line, and the ultra-nationalist extreme right; this threefold majority in the National Assembly were unable to reach virtually any consensus on many major issues, but shared the same view on the DTP's closure case. Moreover, the DTP was already the *persona non-grata* of the Parliament since

it was the only party with a parliamentary group to vote against the decision to bomb the PKK units in the northern Iraq.

It is vital to note that this research was carried out in a heavily distressing and grave atmosphere within a context where the biggest pro-Kurdish legal party was investigated for a possible closure allegedly based on the fact that it had organic ties to the outlawed PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) that had rebelled against the Turkish state via armed struggle along mid-1980s and 1990s. Moreover, before and after the ruling of the Constitutional Court culminated, hundreds of party members, including some elected mayors and provincial chairpersons from various districts from Şırnak to Iğdır, were taken into custody by the police based on similar claims.

These developments taking place in the course of the work amplified the degree of reactions and militarization within the field site it was conducted. Nevertheless, the language of victimization was not only a piece of rhetoric but a real occurrence that had to be observed and reflected on seriously. On the other, hand this dark scene functioned as a driving motive for me to look into the ontological crisis of the Democratic Society Party and the Kurdish ethno-political legal movement substantively represented by it.

Research Question:

A Pro-Kurdish Legal Party in Pursuit of Being a *Party for Turkey:* Why and How?

This thesis examines whether the DTP, Democratic Society Party, the latest ring in the chain of pro-Kurdish legal political parties in the first decade of the twenty first century, evolved into what is called a “Party for Turkey” *(Türkiye*

Partisi), which means it broadened its scope of political activity to issues other than the Kurdish question.

The process of integration into the political system of Turkey while transforming this system to a certain extent was not experienced by the legal Kurdish movement suddenly. The effect of the illegal movement on the legal pro-Kurdish parties cannot be underestimated. With a relative decline in the use of force by the outlawed Kurdistan Worker's Party (*Partîya Karkerên Kurdistan;* in its Kurdish acronym, *PKK*), especially in the aftermath of the capture of its leader Abdullah Öcalan in February 1999, the legal political parties symbolizing the Kurdish movement experienced a discursive change basically toward democratizing the system in Turkey instead of seeking autonomy or federation-like solutions to the Kurdish Question. The signs of this change can be traced in Öcalan's statements when he was imprisoned on İmralı Island near Istanbul. Gunter, in an article on Öcalan's political evolution after his capture in Kenya, emphasizes the parallelism between the speeches of Öcalan and those of two eminent Turkish jurists, the president of the Turkish Constitutional Court, Ahmet Nejdet Sezer, and the chief justice of the Turkish Supreme Court of Appeals, Sami Selçuk, both of whom severely criticized the 1982 Constitution due to its restrictive manner on rights and freedoms.[9] He illustrates Öcalan's evolution by underlining his call for the implementation of true democracy to solve the Kurdish problem within the existing borders of a unitary Turkey:

> …and thus [Öcalan's call] fulfills Ataturk's ultimate hopes for a strong, united and democratic Turkey that can join what is now the European Union. As the centerpiece of his new attempt to reach a peaceful settlement of Turkey's Kurdish problem, it would be useful to analyze Öcalan's statement at some length: 'The historical conclusion I have arrived at is that the solution for this[Kurdish] problem which has grown so big, is *democratic*

[9] Michael M. Gunter, "The Continuing Kurdish Problem in Turkey after Öcalan's capture," *Third World Quarterly* 21 (2000): 849-869, p. 852.

> *union* with the *democratic, secular Republic*.' 'The democratic option … is the only alternative in solving the Kurdish question. Separation is neither possible nor necessary'[10]

The reflections of the change in the discourse of the PKK leader would soon be sensed in the language of the legal movement too. A 'transitory period' was experienced between the moderation of Öcalan and of the DTP respectively toward being a "politician for Turkey" and a "Party for Turkey" with "Turkey-fication" *(Türkiyelileşme)* attempts via successive parties of the movement, HADEP and DEHAP.[11]

For instance, in its official document titled *Year 2000 Perspectives of HADEP*, the party makes use of the "democratic republic" terminology in line with that of Öcalan.[12] However, as Güney underlines it, the footprints of this change can be pursued in the earlier moderate political stance the HADEP had held, which had been evident not only in its acts and approaches during the late 1990s, but also in its program back as early as 1995.[13] Yet the tone of moderation became more reliable and compatible with the relevant situation in Turkey in the aftermath of the capture of Öcalan, who then called for the PKK militants to cease fire and abandon the territory of Turkey.

Also, DEHAP's self-annulment in order to join the DTP on 19 November 2005 can be regarded as an expression of this opening which relied on such

---

[10] Gunter, p. 854. (Emphasized by author.)

[11] For the flaws in the transition from being pro-Kurdish legal parties in the conventional sense to being a "Party for Turkey" see Demir, p. 215.

[12] Aylin Güney, "The People's Democracy Party," *Turkish Studies* 3, no.1 (2002): 122-137, p.131.

[13] Ibid., pp. 129-135. She describes the change in HADEP as such : "Despite the internal divisions within the party, HADEP in general seemed to be moving towards a more politically moderate stance … Also the party no longer wants to be percieved as a one-issue, that is a solely Kudish-oriented, party. Furthermore, the HADEP has underlined the fact that its party program encompasses a wide range of issues and addresses all the major problems Turkey faces." (p. 135)

concepts as “democratic republic” and “democratic society” within the framework of “the Nation of Turkey” apart from a refreshment attempt after the 2004 Local Elections.[14] Thus, the wording “democratic society” giving birth to the name of the new party was far from being given coincidentally. This new stance of the Kurdish legal movement can be observed clearly in the tri-lingual (Turkish, Kurdish and English) booklet titled *Democratic Society Party’s Project of Democratic Solution to the Kurdish Question* in which the party explains its founding principles toward integration in Turkish society:

> “(…)the supra-identity of belonging to the Nation of Turkey”, “the democratic and peaceful solution of the Kurdish problem” and “concern for all problems of the country” and “inclusiveness” were attributed primary importance. DTP has also established its political stance and organizational structure on the basis of these fundamental principals[15]

In its two years’ parliamentary presence the DTP appeared on the speech platform 409 times, gave 572 inquiries *(soru önergesi)*, 56 Parliamentary investigations *(meclis araştırma önergesi)*, and 30 bills of law *(kanun teklifi)*.[16]

On one hand, by arranging inquiries concerning coup d’états, unrevealed murders, minority rights, gender inequality, deep-state structures like JİTEM and Ergenekon and labor problems, the DTP proved to have a multi-issue political

[14] Demir, pp. 198-203. When DEHAP remained under the nation-wide threshold in 3 November 2002 National Elections despite joining the Labor, Peace and Democracy Block consisting of HADEP, EMEP (Labor’s Party) and SDP (Socialist Democracy Party), Assoc. Prof. Ahmet Özer, the Mersin Deputy Candidate of DEHAP, in his evaluation of the elections, pointed out that ‘ Block’s inability to reflect the image of ‘Party for Turkey’ to and have the trust of the society properly.’ was the first reason for remaining under the threshold. (p. 198)

[15] *Demokratik Toplum Partisi’nin Kürt Sorununa İlişkin Demokratik Çözüm Projesi, Projeya Çareseriya Demokratîk A Têkildarî Pirsgirêka Kurd Ya Partiya Civaka Demokratîk, DTP - Democratic Society Party’s Project of Democratic Solution to the Kurdish Question, Demokratik Toplum Partisi Genel Merkezi* (Istanbul: Gün Matbaacılık, 2008), p. 41. In the Turkish version of the booklet *Democratic Society Party’s Project of Democratic Solution to the Kurdish Question* ‘the Nation of Turkey’ is used as the English equivalent for ‘*Türkiyelilik, ’* which implies an alternative way of defining the society instead of the strict nation-state conception of ‘Turkishness’. (… *“Türkiyelilik” üst kimliği, “Kürt sorununun demokratik ve barışçıl çözümü”, “ülkenin tüm sorunlarına duyarlılık” ve “kapsayıcılık” konusuna birincil önem verildi. DTP de siyasi duruşu ve örgütsel yapısını bu temel ilkeler doğrultusunda oluşturdu*.), p. 3.

[16] http://www.kurdshow.com/turkiye-nin-gundeminden-dusmeyen-partidtp.html [26 February 2010].

agenda stretching far beyond the boundaries of an ethnic party with a single-issue agenda. To sum up, making such efforts in a wide range of problems relating to larger segments of the society, the DTP matured in such a short period under the roof of the Parliament. All these were signs of integration towards being a "Party for Turkey." On the other hand, it came into being as a different type of "Party for Turkey." This very same "Party for Turkey" also voiced demands in the TBMM such as that *Newroz*[17] be officially adopted as a holiday. In their parliamentary group meeting on 21 February 2008, the DTP co-chair Ahmet Türk made a small part of his speech in Kurdish since it was the occasion of Mother-tongue Day and he wanted to bring this occasion to the attention of the public. However, despite some improvements which broke down the taboos of the official ideology such as the formation of public station TRT 6 (Kurdish TRT Şeş) broadcasting exclusively in Kurdish since 1 January 2009, state policy had not yet mature enough to tolerate this "ethnic representation" in the National Assembly even on such an occasion arranged for reminding the public of vitality of one's mother tongue with regard to human rights.[18] The public television station TRT 3, which broadcasts live from all the party group meetings in the TBMM, stopped its release immediately after Türk began to speak Kurdish.

Obviously, this gradually adapting "Party for Turkey" was trying to provide itself a third space beyond the boundaries of the local and the nation-wide; the

[17] *Newroz* literally means 'New Day' and is used interchangably with *Nûroj* in Kurdish. It is a spring festival celebrated extendedly in the Middle East and Central Asia on 21 March. But in this case it symbolizes the Kurdish identity with its roots in the Kurdish epic hero *Kawa* and has been considered by the state authorities as an instrument to build up Kurdish nationalism.

[18] Although to have a public station broadcast in Kurdish was a significant development as a break down of century- old taboos concerning the existence of Kurdish as a distinct language, TRT Şeş could not have the anticipated positive impact on the DTP politicians and grassroots due to the fact that it was formed without any constitutional guarantee and therefore could be closed down by another government. Some of the DTP voters interviewed by the author even described it as 'an illusive and pragmatic step taken by the AKP government to fool the Kurds.'

ethnic and the patriotic, which can be best explained by the multicultural citizenship approach.[19] Simply, the DTP MPs sought to be perceived as "normal" as other political parties in the Parliament without suppressing their ethnic identities. But it is quite difficult to suggest that they were pushed forward by the legal and political structures toward managing this end.

Pro-Kurdish Legal Parties Literature

The history of the Kurds and also the Kurdish ethno-political movement in Turkey has been studied by several researchers.[20] However, the main focus mostly has been on the development of the armed conflict, the low-intensity battle between the PKK and the Turkish state,[21] and its effect on the occurrence of human rights deficits

---

[19] For this approach see Will Kymlica, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Anthony Simon Laden and David Owen eds., *Multiculturalism and Political Theory* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Charles Taylor et al., *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), Will Kymlica and Wayne Norman eds., *Citizenship in Diverse Societies* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[20] The literature on the Kurdish nationalism and history is very rich. See Martin van Bruinessen, "The Kurds in Turkey," in Martin van Bruinessen, *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism versus Nation-Building States: Collected Essays* (Istanbul: the Isis Press, 2000); David Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movements: Opportunity, Mobilization, and Identity* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: the Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1992); Abbas Vali (ed.), *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism* (California: Mazda Publishers, 2003); Abdulbaki Erdoğmuş and Mehmet Bekaroğlu eds., *Mahzun Mezopotamya: PKK ve Kürt Ulusalcılığının İnşası* (Istanbul: Elips Kitap, 2008); Jwaideh Wadie, Kürt *Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi, Kökenleri ve Gelişimi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007); Hamit Bozarslan, "*Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898–2000)*", in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasal Düşünce*. Vol. 4 Milliyetçilik (Nationalism): 841–870.

[21] Alice Marcus, *Blood and Belief, the PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence* (New York University Press, 2007); Ali Kemal Özcan, *Turkey's Kurds; A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); Henri J. Barkey and Graham E.Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, foreword by Morton Abramowitz, Lanham (Boulder, New York and Oxford, Rowman and Littefield Publisher, 1998); Kemal Kirişçi and Gareth Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-State Ethnic Conflict* (London: Frank Cass, 1997); Mesut Yeğen, *The Turkish State Discourse and the Exclusion of Kurdish Identity, Turkey: Identity, Democracy, Politics* (London: Frank Cass: 1998).

towards the Kurds and the exacerbating socio-economic indicators of Turkey.[22] In this vein, legal political parties and the changes encountered by them were not attributed sufficient academic interest. Yet, the attempts to produce in the newly developing field of pro-Kurdish legal parties cannot be underestimated though they are only a few in numbers.

Three articles came into prominence in the literature of the pro-Kurdish legal parties in Turkey in the late 1990s[23] and early 2000s.[24] The reasons for their belated emergence stem from several factors. However it may be argued that this is not only due to the hard-power oriented political atmosphere of Turkey, but also to the degree of maturation of the pro-Kurdish legal parties. Though there were already pro-Kurdish legal parties as early in the 1990s (the HEP and DEP), their self-representation fell short of an integration into the nation-wide politics of Turkey. Despite the fact that HEP and -on some occasions- DEP tried to send a "Party for Turkey" image to society and the political and bureaucratic elites, they were still perceived solely as one-issue oriented "Kurdish parties". This might be one of the determinants of the flaw in the literature of the legal movement.

Watts presents the discursive attempts made by some of the HEP politicians as a proof of the wider ideal of being a "Party for Turkey" stating that: "In the first year or so of its existence, the HEP deputies avoided red-flag words such as

---

[22] Nicole F Watts, "Allies and Enemies: Pro-Kurdish Parties in Turkish Politics (1990-1994)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 4 (Nov., 1999): 631-656, p. 631. Also Kerim Yıldız,*The Kurds in Turkey: EU Accession and Human Rights* (London: Arbor, MI: Pluto Pres in association with Kurdish Human Rights Project, 2005); Aslan Değirmenci, *Kürt Sorununda Yeni Dönem* (Istanbul: Vadi Yayınları, 2009); Doğu Ergil, *Doğu Sorunu; Teşhisler ve Tespitle; Özel Araştırma Raporu*, Stratejik Araştırmalar Dizisi; 1, TOBB, 1995.

[23] Watts, (1999). She recalls Barkey as the author of the first academic work on pro-Kurdish legal parties with his article: Henry J. Barkey, "The People's Democracy Party (HADEP): The Travails of a Legal Kurdish Party in Turkey," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 18, no. 1 (1998): 129-138.

[24] Güney, (2002).

'Kurdistan' and called the HEP a party for 'all of Turkey'.[25] However, she later points out the inconsistency of the party members with this goal.[26] As for the case of the successor DEP, the picture tended to move much further from being a "Party for Turkey" in that the pro-Kurdish politicians became more radicalized. At that point Watts gets trapped in a common misperception about the "moderate-radical" or "pigeon-hawk" distinction by drawing this distinction via pro-Kurdish politicians' being pro-PKK or not.[27]

Albeit in small numbers, works on the legal movement started to flourish as the 2000s witnessed a noteworthy transition of the pro-Kurdish parties, in a context in which "democracy" and "constitutionalism" were rediscovered as a panacea to the Kurdish problem by pro-Kurdish politicians as well as the higher platforms of the state in line with reformation attempts for a prospective EU membership.[28]

A common flaw in the literature mentioned above is that they make a PKK-centered analysis that attributes legal parties of secondary importance. This is especially true of Günel's recommendation to the pro-Kurdish party of the time (HADEP) "distancing itself from the PKK" as a prerequisite to contributing to the democratization of Turkey.[29] Moreover, both the works of Watts and Güney and also other limited researchers remain far from providing a picture of grassroots

---

[25] Watts, p. 636. Here the words 'a party for all of Turkey' can be regarded as a somewhat longer expression of the concept "Party for Turkey."

[26] Ibid., p. 637.

[27] Ibid., p. 638.

[28] Gülistan Gürbey, "Peaceful Settlement of Turkey's Kurdish Conflict through Autonomy?" in F.İbrahim and Gülistan Gürbey eds., *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey: Obstacles and Chances for Peace and Democracy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004); Eyüp Demir, *Yasal Kürtler* (Istanbul: Tevn yayınları, 2005); Nicole F. Watts, "Activists in Office: Pro-Kurdish Contentious Politics in Turkey," *Ethnopolitics* 5, no. 2 (June, 2006): 125-144. For an early example of the sort in Turkish, see A.Osman Ölmez, *Türkiye Siyasetinde DEP Depremi:'Legal Kürt Mücadelesi'* (Ankara: Doruk Yayınları, 1995).

[29] Güney, p. 136.

organizations of pro-Kurdish legal parties and the interactive process of politicization experienced by the elites and lay people. In order words, the literature on pro-Kurdish parties has not reached beyond a political history of the Kurdish problem in Turkey.

Scholarly Gap and the Contribution of this Work

This work on the transformation of a pro-Kurdish legal party (DTP) examines not only the acts and thoughts of the political elites, but also the expectations and activities of the grassroots organization and voters. Also, this study emerged from the intention to fill in the historical gap in the literature of pro-Kurdish parties, which have never been the subject matter of any thesis or dissertation until this day. Another reason for the preparation of such a thesis was to provide the academia with empirical and ethnographic data which had not yet existed and thus had been substituted by speculated information in the media. In this vein, the parliamentary endeavors of the DTP are covered. Participation in the debates for the TBMM Budget Act, presenting inquiries and bills of law to the Parliament were among such attempts. Furthermore the founding Regulation of the DTP *(DTP Parti Tüzüğü)* and *DTP's Project of Democratic Solution to the Kurdish Question* are examined with regard to clues they give about whether it was an ethnic party or a "Party for Turkey".

As for the field study constituting the other half of this work, I interviewed the party elites, including three parliamentarians. I also conducted interviews with prominent figures in the grassroots organization and voters of the DTP in Esenyurt,

a district of Istanbul, in order to formulate a comprehensive perspective.[30] Thus, contrary to the earlier literature which looked at the issue from the perspective of insurgency and ethnic conflict contesting the state, this study emphasizes the evolution of pro-Kurdish legal politics via its own legal institutions and self-representation.

In conclusion, this thesis argues that there is a difference between how the party's grassroots and elites perceive the party. The grassroots perceive the DTP as an ethnic party though not opposing its concerns with other problems of Turkey apart from the Kurdish question. In other words, they simply prioritized their ethnic problem. On the other hand, the chairpersons and officials of the party strongly supported its being a "Party for Turkey" in harmony with its founding documents and attempts made by its parliamentary group. However, this project of becoming a Party for Turkey with a non-ethnic, broadly-based perspective still included the

[30] Esenyurt, a newly formed administrative district located on the European side of Istanbul, has a population of around 335,000 in a 42.90 square kilometer area.
Source : http://www.ibb.gov.tr/trTR/Pages/Haber.aspx?NewsID=15773 [04 March 2010]. According to Address Based Population Registration System Population Census for the year 2008 by TUİK (Turkey Statistics Institute), Esenyurt's population is 373,017, which makes it the 14th most-crowded among 39 districts in Istanbul. Source: http://www.tuik.gov.tr/IcerikGetir.do?istab_id=139 [04 March 2010]. From 1989 to 2004, its population rose from 71,525 to 277,700. It is a newly developing town with vast migration movements from all over the country. Apart from others including those who have come from the Black Sea Region, Central Anatolia and post-Communist Bulgaria (ethnic Turks fleeing oppressive Bulgarian state policy, especially in the early 1990s), Kurds make up one of the major constituents of the population of Esenyurt. Not disparate from other above-mentioned groups, Kurds in Esenyurt mostly belong to lower or lower-middle social classes, usually working in the construction, manufacturing, and service sectors. We should also note that a sizeable Roma population resides here with quite visible settlements most of which are accummulated in the Gypsy Neighborhood *(Çingene Mahallesi)* centered in the downtown of the district. As in the above-taken snapshot of Esenyurt, it can be argued that this district can be regarded as a relevant sample of Turkey. For DTP's part, the process of being a "Party for Turkey" with a predominantly Kurdish grassroots could only be properly studied in an area such as Esenyurt. In 29 March 2009 Local Elections, the DTP received 14.7 percent (28,833) votes and thus came third after the AKP (42.2 percent) and CHP (31.7). The MHP came fifth with 7.9 percent. Source: http://secim.haberler.com/2009/sonuc.asp?il=esenyurt [05 March 2010]. In the 2007 National Elections, the then -in order not to be blocked by the national threshold- independent candidate for Istanbul 3rd Region, Sebahat Tuncel, who would join the DTP after the election, was elected with some 97.000 votes from the area including the overwhelmingly crowded districts like Bağcılar, Küçükçekmece and Esenyurt. That is why she was interviewed for this study.

struggle for the recognition of the identity and rights of Kurds. The emphasis on this struggle helped the party to maintain its ties with a grassroots who prioritize ethnic identity.

The second chapter scrutinizes the theoretical framework of the thesis which relies on ethnic parties and non-ethnic parties distinction. It also provides a more detailed discussion on the methodology of the research.

The third chapter elaborates the Democratic Society Party's self-representation via official platforms like the TBMM, and its founding documents. In this chapter the public discourse shared by the party elites and grassroots organization officials is analyzed.

The fourth chapter examines the dynamics at the grassroots and the expectations of the voters in Esenyurt district of Istanbul. This chapter has a great deal to say about the DTP's attempts at being a "Party for Turkey" vis-à-vis its voters.

Finally the fifth chapter consists of conclusions and prospects drawn from the textual and ethnographic work carried out for this study.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Ethnic Parties as a Sub-Field in the Literature of Political Parties

Political parties have attracted the deep interest of many political scientists. The property of being among the essentials of democracy might be the most important reason for their attractiveness to academia. Numerous works have been produced on the formation and evolution of political parties as well as their functioning and impact on social and political life.[31]

However, the field of *ethnic* political parties has not been paid enough attention as a distinct branch yet. This is evident in the "puzzle" metaphor used by Chandra, who considers "ethnic parties" literature to be in an almost instrumentalized position where "ethnic party" remains of secondary importance as a unit of analysis compared to "ethnic identification theories."

> (…) we have not so far identified the *ethnic* political party as a distinct phenomenon, or treated the question of ethnic party performance as a puzzle deserving theoretical attention. Instead, a voluminous literature addresses the rise of ethnic parties as part of the broader puzzle of ethnic "identification", a term used interchangeably with ethnic "participation", ethnic "mobilization",

[31]Among many others, these can be considered the most widely-accepted masterpieces of political parties literature providing a thorough theoretical framework: Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*, trans. Barbara and Robert North (London: University Paperback, 1964); M. Lipset Seymour and Stein Rokkan eds., *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives* (New York/London: Free Press, 1967); Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party System: A Framework for Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond, eds., *Political Parties and Democracy* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

> ethnic collective action, ethnic "conflict", ethnic "competition" and ethnic "group formation."[32]

One may wonder the reason for the contradiction between the abundance of works on political parties and the relatively poor literature on *ethnic* parties. Both categories match the essential apparatus of democracies, namely parties that make popular representation possible as organized coherent bodies. Then why is it less likely to find a comprehensive work on the formation and functions of legal ethnic parties? The answers to this question seem to be hidden in themore recent history of political parties.

As party politics gradually began to decline in the second half of the twentieth century[33] and were challenged by politics of gender, ethnicity, religious and cultural identities and ecological concerns especially in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, academia also started to pay more attention to those new concerns that were also classified under the category of *New Social Movements.*[34] Among these new issues, ethnicity emerged as the leading one, especially with the end of the Cold War, which meant the collapse of the bipolar system to pave the way for the revival of several national and ethnic groups that had been suppressed mainly due to block restraints.[35] However, the spread of ethno-politics coincided with a period of decline for the conventional party politics. In other words, ethnic identities and ethno-

---

[32] Kanchan Chandra, *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 8.

[33] Andrew Heywood, *Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 246-47.

[34] Touraine's works are typical examples drawing on the nature of the New Social Movements as a new category of political participation and an alternative to conventional class-based party politics. For instance, see Alain Touraine, *The Post-Industrial Society: Tomorrow's Social History: Classes, Conflicts, and Culture in the Programmed Society*, translated by Leonard F. X. Mayhew (New York: Random House, 1971).

[35] For a proper analysis of the impact of globalization on the new world order and the role of identity politics and human rights ideology in its formation, see Michael Keating, John McGarry, "Introduction" in *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*, eds. Michael Keating and John McGarry (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

politics were on the rise[36] whereas political parties in general were on the decline. A clear indication of this fall has been observed in many Western countries, the so-called *cradle of democracy*; levels of electoral participation have accordingly gone downhill. On the other hand, politics of ethnicity usually are accompanied by violent conflicts spread into many parts of the globe and naturally this would have some reflections in the academic world. To sum up, the literature on ethnic conflict and ethnic relations has prevailed over that on ethnic political parties.

As a prominent category "ethnic parties" have been underestimated if not simply denied. Therefore "the broader puzzle" that is to say, *theories of ethnic identification*, have dominated the field. Chandra classifies this theoretical framework in two basic sub-categories: *materialist approaches* and *social-psychological theory of ethnic conflict*. The former implies the motivation of individuals by material desires such as land, jobs, and markets which exemplify the material "benefits of modernity."[37] According to the latter, the socio-psychological theory of ethnic conflict, that is alternative to the materialistic explanation, individuals are motivated by "a desire for greater self-esteem" and "a sense of belonging."[38] This rival approach –drawn upon social psychology experiments of Henri Tajfel- was proposed by Horowitz in his influential work *Ethnic Groups in Conflict.*[39]

---

[36] Heywood, pp. 131-32.

[37] Chandra, ibid., p. 8. He also lists a number of examples for materalistic approaches to ethnic mobilization, including Robert Bates, "Ethnic Competition and Modernization in Contemporary Africa," *Comparative Political Studies* 6, no. 4 (1974): 457-483; Albert Breton, "The Economics of Nationalism," *Journal of Political Economy* 72, no. 4 (1964): 376-386; Michael Hechter, "Group Formation and the Cultural Division of Labor," *American Journal of Sociology* 84, no. 2 (1978): 293-318; Russell Hardin, *One for All: The Logic of Group Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).

[38] Ibid., p. 9.

The conceptual framework of this study builds on the "ethnic parties", "multi-ethnic parties" and "non-ethnic parties" distinction that is drawn clearly by Horowitz's party systems model. According to him, nonethnic parties are defined with regard to their "arrangement along a Left-Right, traditional-modern, urban-rural, aristocrat-commoner, secular-religious, or, for that matter any other axis except ethnic differences."[40] Here, what makes a political party *nonethnic* also helps establish the criterion for being *ethnic*.

Albeit agreeing on the general distinction determined by Horowitz's model, Chandra criticizes Horowitz's prioritizing the distribution of support for the party instead of its message to the voter to decide whether it is ethnic or not. Chandra states that:

> (…) according to this [his own] definition, it is necessary to examine the message that it sends to the electorate (what issues it highlights in its election campaigns and rallies, what policies it proposes or implements, how it promises to distribute resources). [Footnote]: The emphasis on a party's *message* distinguishes this definition from Donald Horowitz's in *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 291-3. For Horowitz, "the test of an ethnic party is simply the distribution of support" (291-2). What the party says and does, according to him, follows directly from its support base: "In practice, a party will serve the interests of the group comprising its overwhelming support or quickly forfeit that support" (291). This definition is not useful for the question driving this study. Incorporating the nature of a party's support base in the definition itself obscures the question of how it acquires such support in the first place. Defining an ethnic party based on its message, by separating the definition of the party from its base of support makes it possible to investigate why a party obtains its support principally from some ethnic category or categories to the exclusion of others…[41]

The aforementioned two rival views differing in the criterion that determine whether a party is ethnic or nonethnic do not necessarily bring about a contradiction in the

---

[39] Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 144-45, 46, 47, 49.

[40] Ibid., p. 301.

[41] Chandra, pp. 3-4.

analytical framework of this study. To the contrary, the two views provide this work with a broader perspective to analyze the topic in a two-dimensional way. As the thesis question is concerned with whether an heir of pro-Kurdish parties tradition in the case of the DTP can possibly be a "Party for Turkey," the seemingly dichotomy in the unit of analysis was considered as an advantage. Both the message of the party to its voters, and the expectations and demands of the voters from the party were comparatively evaluated to make more reliable inferences about the investigated (non)ethnic nature of the DTP. As a consequence, if Horowitz's approach is a *thesis* and that of Chandra an *anti-thesis* to the former; this study is a theoretical *synthesis* of the both.

Parties and Axis of Ethnicity: Ethnic, Multi-Ethnic and Non-Ethnic Parties

In his masterpiece *Ethnic Groups and Conflicts,*[42] the largest chapter of which was exclusively spared for the conceptualization of ethnic party systems, Horowitz attempts to create a model for party politics of ethnically divided societies, most of which are African and Asian cases. In this model, the term "ethnic party" is interchangeably used with "ethnically based party" that "derives its support overwhelmingly from an identifiable ethnic group (or cluster of ethnic groups),"and that "serves the interests of that group."[43] This definition introduces 'distribution of

[42] The book comprises five large parts that equal to 685 pages. The part concerning ethnic party systems consists of 152 pages and covers such subtitles as 'Ethnic Parties and Party Systems', 'Competition and Change in Ethnic Party Systems', 'Multiethnic Coalitions', and 'Multiethnic Alliances and Parties'. Apart from these issues, it provides comprehensive analyses under various headings including 'Ethnic Relations and Ethnic Affiliations', 'Conflict Theory', 'Militarization of Ethnic Conflict', 'Strategies of Conflict Reduction', and 'Ethnic Conflict and Democracy'.

[43] Horowitz, ibid., p. 291.

support' as the test of an ethnic party.[44] In other words, the nature of the support provided for a party determines whether it is ethnically based or not. According to Horowitz, even some limited heterogeneity of membership and support is not the measure of being a nonethnic party:

> The Jan Sangh became a Hindu party even though it was not formally restricted to Hindus and even though it did, on the rarest occasions, allocate tickets to Sikh candidates in the Punjab. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party is a Sinhalese party even though it has gained some support from the Muslim minority. A small fraction of support from another ethnic group can provide at best a bit of leaven, insufficient to divert a party from the interests of the group that provides its overwhelming support.[45]

It should be noted that in order to be considered as ethnically based, a party does not have to gain the exclusive support of an ethnic group. What makes it ethnically based is hidden in how the *party's* support is distributed and not how the *ethnic group's* support is distributed.[46]

The second political category with regard to ethnicity is "multiethnic party." By the literal meaning of the word, *multiethnic*, is implied a party that brings together two or more groups under its organizational aegis.[47] After this simple definition, Horowitz emphasizes the political context rather than the literal meaning of words in describing the character of parties:

> If we ask *whose* party the Voltaic parties were, the answer is clear: one was the party of the Mossi, the others were the parties of the non-Mossi, and each party aimed to advance the interests of that group against the interests of the other. For this reason, I would count…Voltaic parties as ethnically based even though some comprised members of more than one ethnic group. For present purposes, a party is multiethnic only if it spans the major groups in conflict… What is required is that the parties not break clearly along the ethnic cleavage that rends the society.[48]

---

[44] Ibid., p. 292.

[45] Ibid., p. 292.

[46] Ibid., p. 293.

[47] Ibid., p. 299.

[48] Ibid.

The above-mentioned case of Voltaic parties was a well-defined example to distinguish a multiethnic party from an ethnic one. As for the difference between a multiethnic party and a nonethnic one, the distinguishing property is "whether group members participate in the party on a group basis," which means that the party consists of a coalition of ethnic groups. As a good example of multiethnic party Horowitz mentions the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) around the time of independence and justifies this with the multiethnic nature of party organization.[49] However, he states, when a nonethnic reorganization of the PDCI was proposed, this attempt failed due to rejection by local/ethnic party leaders that had joined the multiethnic coalition under PDCI and that foresaw this would alter the very basis of party allegiance.[50]

Since the basis of party organization accounts very much for its being ethnic or multiethnic, this would also be functional in deciding whether a party is nonethnic. Therefore, this organizational-basis oriented approach provides us a clear definition of nonethnic parties. In Horowitzian terms; it is a residual category of parties arranged along a 'Left-Right, traditional-modern, urban-rural, aristocrat-commoner, secular-religious, or, for that matter, any other axis except ethnic differences.[51]

While developing his model of ethnic party systems, Horowitz, in fact goes beyond his earlier premise that it is *distribution of support* for a party. By underlining the nature of organizational efforts and arguments of grassroots

---

[49] Ibid., p., 300.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., p. 301.

organization-in a way- he comes to involve party's message to its constituents, which means an indirect message to its voters too. In order to predict the possibility for nonethnically organized parties to exist, Horowitz is concerned about the level of divisions in that society:

> Parties organized nonethnically are rare or nonexistent in such [severely divided] societies. They may, however, be found in countries where divisions do not run deep or where ethnic groups are so dispersed that it hardly makes sense to organize along ethnic lines for national level politics.[52]

Development and Party Systems

Contemporary historical experience overall has demonstrated that there is a negative correlation between the socio-economic development of and deep/severe ethnic division in a society and this is also manifest in the formation of party systems. In his work *Political Cleavages in 'Developed' and 'Emerging' Polities,* Lipset introduces a discussion of comparative party systems in Western democracies and developing polities of the Third World by presenting fundamental sources of diversity in political cleavages. He identifies the source of cleavages in Western countries with class struggles based on economic interests and the pursuit of higher status in the social stratum and according to him this feature separates the "developed" nations from the "developing" ones:

> Differences rooted in stratification are likely to be most preponderant in economically developed stable polities in which much domestic political controversy may be described as the 'politics of collective bargaining,' a fight over the division of the total economic pie, over the extent of the welfare and planning state and the like. Cultural or deeply rooted value conflicts are much more characteristic of the politics of developing countries with unstable polities.[53]

---

[52] Ibid., p. 301.

[53] Seymour Martin Lipset, "Political Cleavages in 'Developed' and 'Emerging' Polities," in Erik Allardt and Yrjö Littunen, eds., *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Systems* (Helsinki: Academic Bookstore, 1964), p. 35.

Whereas the sources of political cleavages are rooted mostly in cultural factors related to contrasts like traditional vs. modern, religious vs. secular, and the like along with newly emerging social strata, the situation in the deeply divided societies of the least developed polities in Asia and Africa presents a totally different picture than those ethnically divided societies in Western Europe. According to Horowitz, "party systems involving a combination of ethnic and nonethnic parties (or multiethnic and nonethnic parties) are unlikely in Asia and Africa; and such a system presupposes the prevalence of more than one issue dimension"[54] Horowitz's analysis of the nature of political cleavages and accordingly on the party systems in the developed and the developing countries seems compatible with that of Seymour:

> Ethnically divided societies in Western Europe, where parties simultaneously reflect a Left- Right, and a clerical-secular dimension as well as an ethnic one. Religion, class, and language are all strong predictors of party preference in Switzerland. In Belgium, religious and class issues, each well represented in the party system, for a long time impeded the growth of strong ethnically based parties. When these did emerge, they had to compete for support with the older Catholic, Liberal and Socialist parties, which in varying degrees spanned ethnic groups. This mixed party system reflects the existence of strong cross-cutting cleavages rising out of longstanding historical conflicts not strongly reflected in the party systems of developing countries.[55]

As the party system in the economically developed countries is classified as *mixed party systems*, the scope of party competition is identified in line with a multi-issue agenda. Then, severely divided Asian and African polities are inclined to displace rather than coexist with nonethnic parties and this brings about the occurrence of a one-dimensional party positioning along an ethnic axis.[56]

---

[54] Horowitz, ibid., p. 303.

[55] Ibid., pp. 303-4.

[56] Ibid., p. 304.

The evaluation of party systems on a basis of variety or singularity of issue(s) in the operational and structural characteristic of parties in a certain polity provides us with a profound insight into their very nature. On the other hand, we should note here that this type of evaluation also needs some criticism. Especially the three-world typology of the Cold War Era that sharply divided the globe into the "developed West", the "underdeveloped East" (or the Communist Block if you like) and those "developing countries in between" may need further work on it. Because ethno political movements reviving globally within the paradigm of human rights ideology with the end of the Cold War on one hand, and the dismay of bipolarity of world order on the other made it no longer meaningful to make mention of a sharp distinction between the developed West and the developing or underdeveloped societies of Asia and Africa. India is a typical example of a country with an ethnic party system as stated in Horowitz, Seymour and others. Yet it is no longer relevant to locate this newly roaring economic giant under a static title borrowed from the three-world typology for the analysis of the nature of party systems. This can also be argued when the recent situation in several multiethnic Asian countries is considered.

Ethnic Parties as Political Parties: To What Extent?

The definition of political parties has been a controversial issue, but the focal point of the problem has not been ethnicity at all. Hence, what makes us question the nature of ethnic parties with regard to political party conception is the definition of the term "party" in fundamental. As there are numerous definitions of parties, acceptance or rejection of ethnic parties as political parties may vary. However,

most of the conventional definitions of a *political party* fall short of including ethnic parties in the same category as political parties. Although there is no such thing as a single definition of parties, one would argue, there are a few preconditions for being named as a party that several political scientists agree upon. If we arrange a classification as *minimal* and *sophisticated* definitions of parties, each category provides us with different yet complementary qualifications for being accepted as a political party.

Epstein, who suggests "almost everything that is called a party in any Western democratic nation can be so regarded," defines a party as "any group *seeking votes* under a recognizable label."[57] If the west-centric aspect of this definition is underestimated, here the basic feature of a party is confined to electoral activity. Riggs prefers a structural definition according to which a party is any organization which nominates candidates for elections to an elected assembly.[58] Another scholar who depicts a minimal picture of a political party is Kenneth Janda. According to him, a party is an "organization that pursues the goal of placing its avowed representatives in governmental positions."[59] He makes no mention of elections but simply placement of its cadres to public posts. What he suggests is such a restrictive definition that it is judged to be even a sub-minimal one.[60]

---

[57] Leon B. Epstein, *Political Parties in Western Democracies* (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 9. (Italicized by the author).

[58] F. W. Riggs, *Administrative Reform and Political Responsiveness: A Theory of Dynamic Balancing* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1970), p. 580.

[59] Kenneth Janda, *A Conceptual Framework for the Comparative Analysis of Political Parties* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1970), p. 83.

[60] Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 63. Sartori justifies his critique by stating that Janda's definition "might well fail to distinguish parties from pressure groups, or even from military and religious organizations." He adds: "What if a party does not pursue the goal- because it is too small, or because it is an anarchic/revolutionary party whose declared goal is to restore direct democracy, or for still other reasons- of placing its representatives in "government positions"? Should it not be considered a party, in spite of the fact that it competes at elections identified by a party label?" p.69.

The aforementioned minimal definitions constrain the concept of *political party* within the domain of two practices namely joining *elections* and attempting to hold *public offices*. However, this domain remains too narrow to describe the properties and functions of parties distinguishing them from pressure groups, factions and the like. In this regard, more sophisticated definitions appear to be more relevant for conception of political parties compared to minimal ones.

The sophisticated definitions burden political parties with broader responsibilities. Parties meet public will by binding different segment and forces of the society to each other and also to public realm. For instance, Neumann argues that a party functions as "a great intermediary which links social forces and ideologies to official governmental institutions and relates them to political action within the larger political community."[61] In his classic *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups*, Key compares parties and pressure groups by contrasting respectively the "common interest" and "partial interest" seeking characters of the two:

> Political parties…must play down group interest by conciliating conflict, by compromising issues, by seeking formulas for the combination of many groups into a block strong enough to win… The pressure group must appeal to the partial interest; the political party, the common interest.[62]

Furthermore, in a later work, Key introduces the basic role of political parties as "the translation of *mass* preferences into *public* policy."[63]

In his analysis comparing parties and factions, Sartori defines a party as "a part of a whole attempting to a serve the purposes of *'the whole'*" and adds

---

[61] Sigmund Neumann, *Modern Political Parties* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p.397.

[62] V. O. Key, *Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups*, 3rd ed. (New York: Crowell, 1956), p. 177.

[63] Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy* (New York: Knopf, 1961), p. 443.

"whereas a faction is only a part for itself."[64] He also conceives the polity as a pluralistic whole by emphasizing the interplay between a whole and its parts:

> If it was wrong to neglect the association between part and party, it would also be quite wrong, on the other hand, to consider the party as a part that is unrelated to the whole. If a party is not capable of governing for the sake of the whole, that is, in view of a general interest, then it does not differ from a faction. Although the party only represents a part, this part must take a *non-partial* approach to the whole.[65]

Relying on the *holistic* understanding of parties as in Sartori's definition, Horowitz cites Almond's statement that "*particularistic parties* behave much like *interest groups*"[66] and in a way draws parallelism between the character and consequences of ethnic parties and pressure/interest groups:

> The association of the political party with the quest for public rather than particularistic interests is inimical to the very basis of an ethnic party (…) the ethnic party identifies narrow group interests with the totality of the common interest. The ethnic party does combine intra-ethnic interests, often very effectively. But it neither combines nor buckles nor takes a non-partial approach to the interests of various ethnic groups in a society.[67]

Hence, ethnic parties -in Horowitzian terms- "although, like all parties, seek power, distribute offices, and mobilize support, in some ways they behave differently" from broadly-based, that is to say, non-ethnic political parties. Since the political agenda of the ethnic party is dependent on the boundaries of the ethnic group that it gains most of its support, it usually lacks the flexibility to compromise required to put an end to intra-group conflicts.[68]

---

[64] Sartori, p. 25 (Italicized by the author).

[65] Ibid., p. 26 (Italicized in its original form).

[66] (Italicized by the author).

[67] Horowitz, p. 297.

[68] Ibid., p. 298. He states that "Ethnic parties make the mediation of group interests difficult, and this helps explain why ethnic party systems are so often conflict prone."

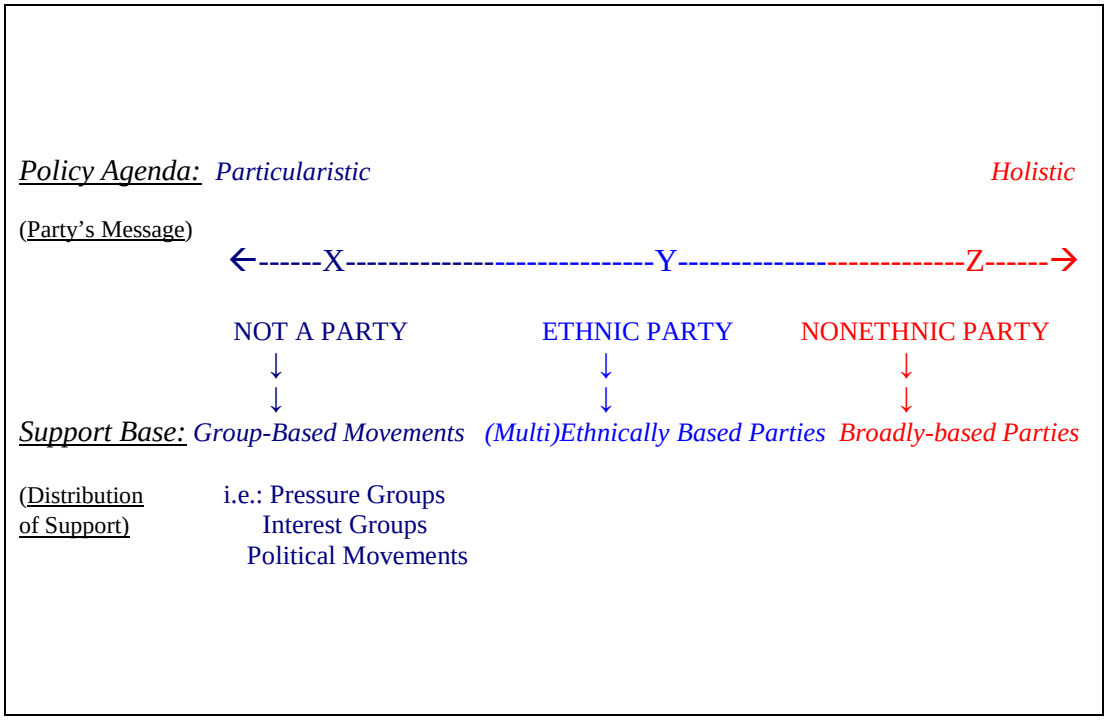


Figure 1: *Synthesis* Model of Ethnic Party Systems[69]

Parties for Turkey versus *Others*

The above-mentioned theoretical framework on ethnic party systems is also relevant for the case in Turkey despite some of its inadequacies similar to those faced when other examples of the developing countries are examined. In this vein, Turkey stands in a mid-range position. Evidently, it is not a polity severely/deeply divided along ethnic lines, which is the case in many Asian and African societies. Out of the five variables that account for presence or absence of division in a society along ethnic lines,[70] only one indicates ethnic division whereas the remaining four

[69] Figure is drawn by the author. This model is based on the combination of Chandra's *Party's Message* and Horowitz's *Distribution of Support* Models. Points X, Y, and Z refer respectively to categories 'Not a Party', 'Ethnic Party', and 'Nonethnic Party' and the line that symbolizes axis of ethnicity for parties is drawn unconstant. Hence, boundaries of each category are flexible and sometimes inclusive for one another that is particularly true of those located next to each other.

[70] Ibid., pp. 293-94.

are closer to prove that Turkish society is far less divided than those severely divided ones in Africa and Asia.

These criteria comprise "occupational specialization," "residential segregation," "habits of endogamy," "dietary customs," and "religious differences." Among these criteria, only occupational specialization can be claimed as a sharply distinguishing property of a Kurd and a Turk to a certain extent. No other ethnic group in Turkey is identified with being construction workers, traditional bazaar salesmen, or shoe-polish men as much as Kurds. Nevertheless, the interethnic marriage rate between Kurds and Turks is estimated to be at a high level. According to Tan, the number of interethnic marriages between Kurds and non-Kurds in Turkey is estimated to be one million.[71]

It is not easy to mention the existence of residential segregation against Kurds in Turkey. Moreover, Kurds reside in sizeable numbers almost in all parts of Turkey, to such a great extent that the larger Kurdish population lives in those areas other than the established Kurdish provinces of East and South East Turkey.[72] The distinction between the dietary customs of Kurds and Turks may need investigation, yet it is not present in urban Kurds and Turks. As for religion, it plays a crucial role

[71] Altan Tan, *Kürt Sorunu* (Istanbul: Timaş, 2009), p. 539.

[72] Kirişçi and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-state Ethnic Conflict* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), p. 26; Tan, ibid., p. 530. Most of the metropolitan cities outside of Eastern Turkey like Istanbul, Izmir, Adana and Mersin, Ankara and Konya, respectively, in the regions of Marmara, Aegean, Mediterranian, and Central Anatolia have either vast or sizeable Kurdish populations that accelerated during the 1990s due to massive migration movements mainly caused by state-led deportations of Kurds from their villages in East and South East Anatolia and also other socio-economic deprivations like poverty, unemployment, scarcity of educational institutions, and local/traditional dissents such as fued, honor-killing and so on… Further discussion concerning the forced migration of Kurds from East Turkey see Ayşe Betül Çelik, "I Miss My Village!: Forced Kurdish Migrants in Istanbul and Their Representation in Association," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 32 (Spring 2005); "Forced Evictions and Destruction of Villages in Turkish Kurdistan," Middle East Report, April-June, 1996; *Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu'da Boşaltılan Yerleşim Birimleri Nedeniyle Göç Eden Yurttaşlarımızın Sorunlarının Araştırılarak Alınması Gereken Tedbirlerin Tespit Edilmesi Amacıyla Kurulan Meclis Araştırma Komisyonu Raporu, Tutanak Dergisi* 53 (Dönem 20, 1998**)**; Hacettepe Üniversitesi Nüfus Etütleri Enstitüsü, *Türkiye Göç ve Yerinden Olmuş Nüfus Araştırması* (Ankara: Aralık 2006); Dilek Kurban et al.,*Türkiye'de Ülke İçinde Yerinden Edilme Sorunu: Tespitler ve Çözüm Önerileri* (Istanbul: TESEV Yayınları, 2005).

in the maintenance of strong ties between Kurds and Turks in Turkey for some due to their being heirs of the Ottoman Muslim legacy.[73] The majority of Kurds are Sunni Muslims, which is same for Turks, although they differ in sub-categories called *mezheb*s, respectively *Shafi* and *Hanefi* that slightly differ in practice.[74]

It would not be inconvenient to argue that there have emerged single ethnic (Kurdish) parties in Turkey whereas it has never witnessed an ethnic party system. The pro-Kurdish legal parties remain a tangible aspect of this phenomenon in Turkish political arena since 1990. The group support provided for the pro-Kurdish parties tradition from the HEP to DTP has always been identified with Kurdish ethnicity. Although non-Kurds usually from socialist and/or Alevi backgrounds have had sizeable support for them, it has remained pretty narrow as described in Horowitzian expression: "*Rough edges* in a party's support do not undermine its status as an ethnic party."[75]

While the DTP, among others, constituting the pro-Kurdish parties tradition is considered to be an ethnic party, the party system in Turkey is far from suitable for being conceived as multiethnic. That is to say, the pro-Kurdish parties have never encountered an ethnic Turkish counterpart as a rival. This is mainly due to the fact that none of other parties from secularists to Islamists, and Socialists to (Turkish) Nationalists identified with "ethnic Turkish identity." Even the nationalist

[73] Some authors argue that the demise of the Ottoman Empire and thus of the *millet system* (*millet sistemi*) that considered Turks, Kurds, and other Muslim groups in the same category (*nation of Islam*) was the source of legitimacy for Kurds to remain with Turks in the Ottoman polity and when this contract was violated with the formation of a *Turkish* nation-state and abandonment of the Caliphate. For further discussion in the same vein, see Mustafa Akyol, *The Origin of Turkey's Kurdish Question: An Outcome of The Breakdown of the Ottoman Ancien Regime,* M.A. Thesis, Boğaziçi University, The Ataturk Institute for Modern Turkish History, 2006. On the other hand, some others emphasize the reaction of the Ottoman Kurdish periphery namely the Kurdish tribal uprisings in the late Ottoman and early Republican period. See Hamit Bozarslan, "Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey: From Tacit Contract to Rebellion (1919-1925)," in Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism ed. by Abbas Vali (Costa Mesa, Calif: Mazda Publishers, 2003).

[74] Tan, pp. 43-4.

[75] Horowitz, p. 293. (Italicized by the author).

MHP has not considered itself as the pioneer of the "Turkish ethnicity," but the "Turkish nation," which implies the people living in Turkey. On the other hand, it can be suggested that the MHP also should be regarded as an ethnically-based party when the *distribution of support* criterion is used alone. But this work relies not only on the distribution of support for the party, but also the *message of the party to the voter*. Therefore, the idea that the party system in Turkish democracy is multiethnic by no means matches reality. In this case, there is an ethnic Kurdish party, but no counter-ethnic rival party as in the case in ethnically divided societies. Thus, the level of division does not suffice the optimum environment for the formation of an ethnic party system in Turkey.

The dissimilarity of the Turkish case to the deeply divided Asian and African countries evidently moves it closer to West European societies where nonethnic party organization is usual or ethnically organized parties coexist with others founded on a multi-issue base like left-right, religious-secular, urban-rural so forth. In Turkey, the DTP was doubtlessly perceived as an ethnic party, but this did not alter the situation that it had to compete with other parties, primarily the ruling AKP, that was never an ethnic one. Then the DTP, like its predecessors, strove to distance itself from its ethic nature instead of ethnicizing the political cleavage in the Turkish party system. Apart from the universalistic and idealistic orientation of the party statues and its parliamentary efforts, this intention of integration to the Turkish polity was facilitative for practical reasons, too. In order to gain greater electoral power, the DTP had to have a say in various sociopolitical matters other than the Kurdish problem.

It is vital to note that the terms *ethnic party* and *ethnically based party* that are interchangeably used to define pro-Kurdish legal parties -particularly the DTP in

our case- are obviously conceived as *defensive ethnic parties.* Horowitz emphasizes the rationale of defensive ethnic parties with such motives as "attempts to resist exclusion, demands for equal treatment and for an inclusive polity."[76] It seems that no other conception of ethnic parties could describe the mood of pro-Kurdish politicians in Turkey better.

In the course of the work, the concept *Party for Turkey* (party of Turkey, *Türkiye partisi*) is used to imply the non-ethnic or broadly-based qualifications that the DTP attempted to gain at least in its self-presentation. The tensions between DTP's endeavors to turn into a Party for Turkey on one side and its inevitably binding as heir to the Kurdish ethno political movement one the other brought about pressure on both its leading cadres and grassroots while providing an invaluable potential for the transformation of the political regime in Turkey. The following chapter deals with manifestations of such attempts by the DTP elites to transform the party into a Party for Turkey by looking at its foundational documents, the contribution of its MPs to critical debates in the Turkish Grand National Assembly as well as listening to the voices of party officials from the local and nation-wide through their self-presentation.

I am aware that the theoretical models that I draw on rely on ethnicity as a fixed category. In other words, the major weakness in these theoretical perspectives is that they assume ethnicity to be a self-contained category which is determined by the intrinsic dynamics of the group in question. This fixed notion of ethnicity is then assumed to define the group and its social movement. However, ethnicity is a fluid and dynamic construct which is always also shaped by the politics of the state and particularly by the latter's repressive policies. This is also true in the case I study.

[76] Ibid., p. 294.

As the relevant literature shows, ethnicity became an issue and Kurds became an ethnic group under the centralizing policies of the late Ottoman Empire. The fact that the state is the "other" in relation to which the Kurds' ethnic identity becomes significant is also revealed in the informants' narratives which I discuss in the following chapters. I will utilize the theoretical models discussed in this chapter despite their theoretical weakness in treating ethnicity as a dynamic construct. Since I focus on the party organization and not societal relations at large, I believe this weakness of the theoretical models does not constitute a major drawback for my study.

CHAPTER 3

DTP ON THE STAGE VIA OFFICIAL PLATFORMS

In the process of policy-making and the creation of a public opinion on the Kurdish Issue, hegemonic political actors often attempt to dismiss the DTP with the argument that it was an ethnic party and not a "Party for Turkey." This chapter aims to reveal the fact that whether the DTP really acted as an ethnic party in its literal meaning or had a say in different fields of politics concerning various parts of Turkey in addition to East and South East Anatolian Regions which hold a predominant Kurdish population.

The controversy on this question of whether the DTP was an ethnic or broadly-based party has mostly developed in the form of speculations and personal opinions rather than grounded discussions on concrete evidence Therefore, this chapter should be regarded as a modest attempt to provide the reader with some data-analysis on the issue.

I took two primary sources reflecting official view of the DTP as the main material to be analyzed in this work. One of them is the parliamentary sessions on the Central Administration Budget Act Draft for the Year 2008 in the Planning and Budgetary Commission *(2008Yılı Merkezi Yönetim Bütçe Kanunu Tasarısı İle 2006 Yılı Merkezi Yönetim Kesin Hesap Kanunu Tasarısı Plan ve Bütçe Komisyonu*

Görüşmeleri), held on 30 October-22 November 2007.[77] The debates on the Budget of the Central Administration are quite rich for observing the reflection of the parties in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) on major problems of Turkey because, the budget provides us with the shares of and arrangements about all the Ministries of the Cabinet and also other institutions and sub-directories. Therefore, how a party group in the Parliament approaches all these different fields may help us to draw certain conclusions about how it perceives the situation in Turkey and whether it produces solutions to the problems of the country. In the context of this thesis, the evaluation of these documents may help us decide about the DTP's status as an ethnic or broadly-based party.

The other major source I benefitted from is the DTP Party By-laws *(DTP Parti Tüzüğü)*, especially to see how the party defines itself and presents its goals. However, it was impossible to access the official website of the DTP; then I realized that it had been censored by an ultranationalist hacker. Hence, I had to search the By-laws in other web pages and could hardly find it. This encounter demonstrates part of the handicaps a researcher of the Kurdish politics may face in Turkey: a lack of tolerance even for the official website of a legal political party with 21 seats in the Parliament. Even this fact seems to be one of the challenges to the solution of the Kurdish Question itself.

Apart from the budgetary debates and the DTP By-laws, such official documents as Parliamentary Inquiries and Bills of Law and others presented in the TBMM, *Democratic Solution to Kurdish Question Bulletin*, and March 2009 Local

[77] All the sources regarding the debates on the Budget Act are accessed via official webpage of Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM). In order to have access to entire sessions of the debates visit http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/butce/2008_komisyon_gundem.htm [04 February 2009].

Elections Declaration of the DTP also are included in the textual analysis of the official platforms of the party.

Finally, the stances and ideas proposed by the party elites from the parliamentary level to grassroots organization officials are reflected via ethnographic analysis based on in-depth interviews conducted with them.

This chapter has the biggest focus on the official documents constituted in the last quarter of 2007, namely the debates on the budget. Because 2007 was the very date that the DTP deputies entered the Parliament and therefore those debates on the budget are the first and the only ones in which they participated. In addition, the DTP By-laws, which obviously was the founding document of the party, is also analyzed. What I try to do is not to analyze the political stances taken towards the party, but rather whatever it proposes for Turkey and how it conceives the "politics of Turkey" in general. Thus, this is not a work constrained to the Kurdish Question, but one that elaborates on the possibilities of a "Kurdish party" to act in an inclusive manner on the national-scale or even beyond scope.

Moreover, one should not neglect the fact that this chapter does not aim to analyze the whole political behavior of the DTP. It rather seeks insight into the official view of the party, especially of its group in the TBMM. However, if there is any "informal" approach of the party towards Turkey and Turkish politics, it should be sought with more extensive research based on a comparative evaluation of the vernacular politics of the party and its interaction with other social and political forces and a huge comparison among all mentioned above.

Party By-laws: "Democratic, Egalitarian, Left, Mass Party"

The DTP By-laws show how the party describes itself and its goals as a political party. In the *General Points* of the By-laws, the definition of the party comes right after the information about the name, headquarters, and the emblem:

> The DTP is a democratic emancipatory egalitarian left mass party that considers a society with such values of democratic civilization era as freedom, equality, justice, peace, pluralism, participation and multiculturalism as richness and promotes reformism; and that adopts human and society focused, dialogue and consensus-based democratic- local-horizontal mechanism, and that firmly promotes democratic inner mechanism instead of authoritarian-central-hierarchical politics; prioritizes a peaceful democratic line, adopts universal values, rejects all kinds of segregation and racism, relates, the emancipation of humankind to gender equality, and in this regard aims at a democratic-ecological society. [78]

The democratic and liberal/left spirit reflected in the definition of the party can be observed in its strong egalitarian jargon. Values and concepts like liberty, equality, justice, pluralism, and participation are considered as the essentials of the "era of democratic civilization." After pluralistic and participatory properties it adds multiculturalism as a quality for its ideal society and guarantees this ideal with reformism. Yet, it does not clarify whether this *çok kültürlü toplum* (multicultural society) refers to mainstream models of multiculturalism based on the politics of recognition. It puts *yenileşme*[79] (innovation) after multicultural society. This makes

[78] DTP By-laws, Definition of the Party (Article 2), (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi Tüzüğü, Partinin Tanımı) (Madde 2)* source: http://www.sosyalistforum.org/dtp/6268-demokratik-toplum-partisi-tuzugu.html [27 December 2008].
"DTP, demokratik uygarlık çağı değerleri olan özgürlükçü, eşitlikçi adaletçi, barışçı, çoğulcu, katılımcı, çok kültürlü toplumu zenginlik olarak gören ve yenileşmeyi savunan; insan ve toplum odaklı diyalog ve uzlaşıya dayalı, otoriter- merkezi- hiyerarşik siyaset yapma tarzı yerine, demokratik- yerel –yatay işleyişi benimseyen, demokratik iç işleyişi kararlılıkla savunan, barışçıl demokratik siyaseti esas alan, evrensel değerlere sahip çıkan, her türlü ayırımcılığı ve ırkçılığı ret eden, insanlığın özgürleşmesini, cinsler arası eşitlikte gören, bu temelde özgür, demokratik-ekolojik toplumu hedefleyen demokratik özgürlükçü eşitlikçi sol bir kitle partisidir." (Translated by the author).

[79] The word *yenileşme* literally translates into Turkish as 'innovation'. However, aside from its literal meaning, it sounds closer to innovations that are carried out with reforms. Then, *yenileşme* is equivalent to 'reformation'.

us imagine that kind of society not to be expressed via fixed identities and cultures but would be open to changes and innovations; in the final analysis it might be read as a strong sign for "reformism."

By its definition, the party makes a sharp distinction between the "authoritarian-central-hierarchical" political line and the "democratic-local-horizontal" one and prefers the latter. This preference drives it to adopt democratic mechanisms both in domestic and external affairs. Here, the stress is on peaceful democratic policies and universal values which have devastating connotations also for foreign policy affairs. From irredentism to any kind of aggressive policies can be claimed to be disapproved by this very definition. In addition, the strong emphasis on "universal values" can be given as a crucial sign for its respect for international law at least at the level of general worldview. Basic human rights, though not mentioned yet, might be the core values meant here. It is further reinforced with the disapproval of any kind of discrimination.

It should not be ignored that a "green" tendency is revealed in this definition with the use of premises of gender equality and ecologism. "Human emancipation" is assumed to stem from gender equality and in this regard democratic-ecologic society is underlined by this "egalitarian left mass party." Here we should note that the party describes itself as a mass party, rather than a regional or national party. It introduces itself as an egalitarian, ecologist, democratic left mass party with universalistic references such as those to humanity and human emancipation within this scope. Therefore, the *particularistic vs. holistic* distinction between nonethnic parties on one side and ethnic parties and pressure groups on the other is not relevant for the Democratic Society Party when it is considered an ethnic one. Although a dominant ethnic support-base it has, this fact does not necessarily make

the DTP particularistic at least by the definition section of the By-laws that tends towards quite an idealistic and universalistic manner.

Pro-Turkey, Pro-EU and Pro-Kurdish

DTP By-laws cannot be distinguished from those of other political parties in Turkey in the sense that it prefers a national/inclusive discourse right at the beginning of the section titled *Aim of the Party*:

> DTP states that *Turkey*[80] is in an urgent need to be restructured with comprehensive democratic reforms in all the fields such as legal, political, administrative, social, economic, and cultural and the like and that social reconciliation should be managed in order to make this process effective and sustainable.[81]

As the above-written extract indicates, the first sentence of the "aim" part of the By-laws starts with the national unit, Turkey, and therefore the problem-solving strategies and decisions are supposed to be established on this base. The DTP as a legal political party of Turkey uses an inclusive nation-wide discourse while offering solutions for Turkey in a reformist manner visible in the expression "Turkey is in an urgent need to be restructured with comprehensive democratic reforms in all the fields such as legal, political, administrative, social, economic, cultural and the like…"[82] For such a process of reformation it proposes an urgent

---

[80] (Italicized by the author).

[81] Aim of the Party (Article 3-a) (*Partinin Amacı Madde 3-a)* in the DTP By-laws http://www.sosyalistforum.org/dtp/6268-demokratik-toplum-partisi-tuzugu.html [27 December 2008].
"DTP; Türkiye'nin, hukuki, siyasi, idari, sosyal, ekonomik, kültürel ve diğer bütün alanlarda kapsamlı demokratik reformlarla yeniden yapılandırılmasını ve bu sürecin etkin ve kalıcı kılınabilmesi için toplumsal barışın sağlanmasını acil bir ihtiyaç olarak tespit eder." (Translated by the author).

[82] Aim of the Party (Article 3-a). *"DTP; Türkiye'nin, hukuki, siyasi, idari, sosyal, ekonomik, kültürel ve diğer bütün alanlarda kapsamlı demokratik reformlarla yeniden yapılandırılmasını…"* (Translated by the author).

social reconciliation, endeavors to include large segments and groups within the society, yet gives priority to the laborer and this takes it closer to the left of political spectrum:

> For that reason, based on popular democratic will and without any ethnicity, class or gender-based discrimination; [the DTP] as the common organization of struggle principally for those segments of the society that make a living by laboring and others like women, youth and various faith-based groups carries out its emancipatory democratic political struggle by institutionalizing it.[83]

A significant feature of the DTP By-laws is that it takes the EU project as a significant constituent of its aim. It supports the EU process of Turkey heavily but is also cautious enough to define the EU as "not only a union of states but also peoples"[84] underlining the supra-national dimension of the Union.[85] It also announces that it will have a watchful eye on the implementation of the reforms essential to the process. Here the By-laws depart obviously from the conventional *national interests* approach. It rather prefers empolying expressions such as the "broadest interests of the society": "…it makes attempts to promote active participation in the negotiation process that has been launched for serving the broadest interests of the society."[86] In this regard, the definition of the party which puts great emphasis on plural democratic society is rather strengthened adopting a

---

[83] Aim of the Party (Article 3-a) *"Bunun için, halkın demokratik iradesine dayalı, etnisite, sınıf cins ayrımı yapmadan, başta emeğiyle geçinen tüm toplumsal kesimler olmak üzere. kadın,gençlik ve farklı inanç gruplarının ortak mücadele örgütü olarak, kuruluşu ve işleyişiyle özgürlükçü demokratik siyasal mücadelesini kurumsallaştırarak yürütür."*(Translated by the author)

[84] Aim of the Party (Article 3-b). *"…salt bir devletler topluluğu değil, aynı zamanda bir halklar topluluğu…"* (Translated by the author)

[85] According to *supranational theory* of European integration, the European Union cann*o*t be reduced to a mere *intergovernmental* gathering of *states* that enables its members to pursue their national interests as wholly sovereign bodies described conventionally by the Westphalia nation-state system. In this regard, for supranationalists, the EU is a supranational entity that came into existence as a result of a supra-national consent given by its members that carries its goals and values to a higher position than those of each member states.

[86] Aim of the Party (Article 3-b), Partinin Amacı (Madde 3-b) *"bu sürecin toplumun en geniş çıkarlarına hizmet etmesi için başlamış bulunan müzakere sürecine aktif katılımı öngörecek girişimlerde bulunur."*

supra-national/universalist approach vis-à-vis EU adhesion process and common good of the society that implies a wider perspective contrary to particularistic parties' tendencies.

Although the holistic/inclusive manner in the DTP party By-laws is quite visible, it also has some contradictions. The third article of the aim part of the party By-laws appears with a controversial statement: "It states that the Turkish Republic was founded by Turks, Kurds and *other*[87] ethnic groups and that brotherhood is deeply rooted in history." [88] The expression "Turks, Kurds and *other* ethnic groups" seems to be insufficient for the creation of an ideal Turkey in an inclusive manner. Although Kurds are included as founding elements of Turkey and thus it intends to bring an end to the discrimination against Kurds, this statement stands discriminatory as well; this time against "*other* ethnic groups." In other words, this formula sets two privileged ethnicities instead of one and naturally this implies another deficit in a democratic settlement. So, the understanding of multicultural society expressed in the definition part of the By-laws is repeated with a narrower insight of recognition of the Kurdish identity. The rest of the expression comes as such: "[the DTP] regards voluntary coexistence in the same country and Democratic Republic as the solution to the Kurdish Question."[89] As we see, whereas it insists on politics of recognition for the Kurdish identity, it also presents a firm stance that is for coexistence in the same country within the criterion of the Democratic Republic.

---

[87] (Italicized by the author).These 'others' are likely to used for ethnic groups not as crowded as Kurds such as Circassians, Albanians, Bosniaks, Laz, Abkhazians so on.

[88] Aim of the Party (Article 3-c), Partinin Amacı (Madde 3-c).
"Türkiye Cumhuriyetinin Türkler, Kürtler ve diğer etnik gruplar tarafından kurulduğunu ve kardeşliğin temelinin tarihin derinliklerinde yattığını beyan eder." (Translated by the author).

[89] Aim of the Party (Article 3-c), Partinin Amacı (Madde 3-c). *"…Kürt sorununun çözümünü ortak vatanda özgür birliktelikte ve Demokratik Cumhuriyette görür."*

The next article of the party By-laws is a direct demand for a new Constitution compatible with universal law within the framework of democracy based on such values as peace, liberty, equality, change, pluralism and participation. After this lengthy description it adds: "… [The DTP] champions broadly-organized civil society based on needs, democratic politics, and a social structure in which all can improve their identities."[90] The identity issue is highlighted once again; this time as a major point to be covered in a prospective constitution. Thus, the party considers the new constitution as a guarantee for the existence of identities and as a facility in the social structure to enable the individual to improve his/her properties of identity.

Another point is the stress on education in one's mother-tongue as a right: "… [The DTP] struggles for the provision of education in one's mother-tongue for everyone and for establishment of emancipatory and democratic mentality in such fields as press, thought, culture, arts and the like."[91] At that point the party gives up the narrow and exclusive sort of identity politics and chooses a more pluralistic/democratic phrase for everyone" in an inclusive manner and voices this demand not under a group-rights terminology and completes it with freedom of expression in any field of life from media to arts.

The next two articles of the aim part cover gender issue. The expression "gender discrimination against and any kind of violence towards woman is disapproved" in Article 3-f is further reinforced for the benefit of women in Article 3-g: "Considering that promoting gender emancipation is a determinant for reaching

[90] Aim of the Party (Article 3-d), Partinin Amacı (Madde 3-d) *"…ihtiyaçlara dayalı yaygın örgütlü sivil toplumu, demokratik siyaseti, herkesin kendi kimlik özelliklerini geliştirebileceği toplumsal bir yapıyı savunur."* (Translated by the author).

[91] Aim of the Party (Article 3-e), Partinin Amacı (Madde 3-e).
"…herkese ayrımsız, anadilinde eğitim ve öğretim hakkının sağlanması, basın, düşün, kültür-sanat ve diğer alanlarda özgürlükçü ve demokratik anlayışın yerleşmesi için mücadele eder." (Translated by the author).

the goal of democratic society, it [the DTP] firmly strives for the removal of all obstacles primarily paving the way for woman organizations based on their free will."[92] The strong emphasis on the struggle against gender inequality in the DTP Party By-laws is coherent with the composition of its MPs in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. The Democratic Society Party had 21 seats, eight of which were held by women. Surprisingly, the DTP seemed to be not only a "Party for Turkey," but also an innovator party in the sense that its woman MPs in the TBMM equaled approximately 40 per cent of the total number of its MPs since the party provide Turkey with a new model of representation in which women had an equal platform to express themselves. When we consider how strong the traditional structures summarized as patriarchy have been so persistent in the regions where these DTP woman MPs were elected, the picture gets more complex.[93] It is hard to underestimate that woman's representation and woman-politics carried out by the DTP introduces us a new role-model that is achieved in those regions with the hardest circumstances for women. Some feminists even go further and suggest that *'Türkiyelilik'* cannot be achieved without the consent and equal contribution of women since they constitute half of the society.[94] Thus the DTP seemed to have a potential to serve the creation of a wider common ground for the social stability of Turkey as a new type of "Party for Turkey".

---

[92] Aim of the Party (Article 3-g), Party Partinin Amacı (Madde 3-g) "*Cinsiyet özgürlüğünü sağlamanın demokratik toplum hedefine ulaşmada belirleyici bir etken olduğundan hareketle, cinsiyet özgürlüğü önündeki bütün engellerin ortadan kaldırılması için başta kadınların öz iradesine dayalı olarak gelişecek kadın örgütlülüğünü yaratarak, kararlılıkla mücadele eder."* (Translated by the author).

[93] See Bruinessen, Agha, *Shaikh and State; the Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London and New Jersey: Zed Boks, 1992).

[94] For instance; during my talks with Professor of Politics Büşra Ersanlı, who joined the DTP and after its closure became a Party Assembly member of the successor BDP, argued this idea many times.

Participation of DTP MPs in the Parliamentary Debates on the Budget Act: A Multi-Issue Agenda within Five Spheres

The Parliamentary debates on the Central Administration Budget Act for the year 2008 in the Planning and Budgetary Commission meeting held on 30 October-22 November 2007 stands as an indicator of certain conceptions like individual, society, law, and politics by the parties partaking in these sessions.

Out of the 18 days of the budgetary-work, DTP representatives attended 15 workdays. During the three days that they were absent, the debates were on the budgets of the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Education, the TBMM, the Presidency and some other sub-directories among other institutions. Therefore, the DTP's stance towards these fields is not known directly regarding the budgetary debates on them. In this part, we will take a look at some striking points in the expressions of DTP representatives, namely Hasip Kaplan, Şırnak Deputy, and Gültan Kışanak, Diyarbakır Deputy, who participated in almost all the sessions of the Budgetary Commission.[95]

Indeed, there is evidence that the DTP had already sought to evolve toward national relevance in broadening its agenda via its Party By-laws. As for the budgetary debate, the picture becomes clearer since the party took firm positions on a wider range of issues. It appears to be formulating a *sui generis* political identity with local/ethnic, national, socialist, feminist and ecologic, and global/universal themes. These themes are unique in respect to mainstream political discourse, both in terms of originality of formulation and in their centrality to the DTP agenda. Hence, in the debates, the DTP appears with an identical stance. One can say that it

[95] Before their active political participation both Kaplan and Kışanak were professionals. The former was a lawyer expertized in International Law whereas the latter was a journalist. It is crucial here to note that Kışanak would be one of the BDP co-chairs in the aftermath of DTP's closure.

is neither just an ethnic party nor a mere national one. It operates at different levels and spheres of existence: 1) Local/Ethnic Sphere, 2) National/Patriotic Sphere, 3) Socialist/Egalitarian Sphere, 4) Eco-Feminist Sphere, and 5) Global/Universal Sphere.

Local/Ethnic Sphere

This sphere can be regarded as the nucleus of the support base for the party since the majority of the DTP MPs are elected in the districts with the dense Kurdish populations of Turkey. Therefore, ethnic identity demands were often voiced by the DTP MPs. This was the case in the session on the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where the discussions on the operation of the Turkish Army on PKK targets in Northern Iraq witnessed a battle royal between the DTP MPs on one side and MPs of other parties on the other.

The DTP represented by Hasip Kaplan and Gültan Kışanak emphasized the Kurdish Question in Turkey with regard to identity and citizenship rights and criticized homogenization and Turkification policies carried out since formative years of the Turkish Republic. As Kışanak states:

> Today we can see that it is neither right nor realistic to regard people monotype, uni-model, mono-culture, and mono-lingual. In other words, as several academicians, political scientists, sociologists clearly state, we can see that-indeed- homogenization and assimilation were on the agenda with policies pursued in the aftermath of the formation of the Turkish Republic and that it was not an effective policy that was neither right nor realistic to melt such a big population as Kurds although these policies could melt some smaller groups as it is seen in today's problems.[96]

[96] http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/butce/2008/pbk14112007.htm [04 January 2009].

"Artık insanları tek tip, tek model, tek kültür, tek dil olarak tanımlamamızın doğru da olmadığını, gerçekçi de olmadığını bugün görüyoruz. Yani çok açık net bir şekilde bazı akademisyenlerin de, siyaset bilimcilerin de, sosyologların da söylediği, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluşundan bir süre sonra geliştirilen politikalarla aslında bir tekleştirme politikasının bir asimilasyon politikasının gündemde olduğunu, bu da bazı küçük nüfusları eritmeye yettiğini ama Kürtler gibi çok büyük bir

The criticisms were not restricted to early Republican Turkey; they also reflected handicaps that Kurds come across with recent experiences. For instance, prohibition of the Kurdish language in political activity was severely criticized:

> There are dozens of politicians trialed and prosecuted just because of greeting their voters in Kurdish language during election campaigns. Furthermore, one of the reasons for closing the preceding party [the HADEP] was that in a booklet published by the party, the letter *w* which did not exist in the Turkish Alphabet was used. [97]

The rest of the speech went on in an interesting way. Kışanak started with a national discourse drawing parallels between Kurds in Turkey and our "Turkish cognates in Bulgaria": "…So many strict bans are at issue. There is parallelity between the demands to remove these [bans], and the demands of our *Turkish cognates, Turkish siblings*[98] in Bulgaria."[99] This Turkish nationalist discourse based on kinship relations was made use of in order to obtain legitimacy in the eyes of the rival political sides as a practical solution to beat the opponents through their own nationalist discourse. She also gave Bulgarian Turks as an example to legitimize the right to education in Kurdish as one's mother-tongue.[100] After the issue of the language rights of Kurds, Kışanak clarified the DTP's attitude towards an

---

nüfusu eritmeye yeten bir politika olmadığını, doğru olmadığı gibi gerçekçi olmadığını da bugün yaşadığımız sorunlarla görüyoruz."

[97] Same webpage. *"…sadece ve sadece seçim mitinglerinde seçmenine Kürtçe merhaba dediği için yargılanan ve ceza alan onlarca politikacı vardır. Hatta ve hatta geçen DTP'den bir önceki partinin kapatılma gerekçelerinden birisi de, bastırdığı broşürde Türk alfabesinde yer almayan w harfinin yer almasıdır."*

[98] (Italicized by the author)

[99] Same webpage. *"…bu kadar katı yasaklar söz konusudur. Bunun kaldırılmasını talep etmekle, Bulgaristan'daki Türk soydaşlarımızın, Türk kardeşlerimizin talepleri arasında gerçekten bire bir bir paralellik vardır."*

[100] Former co-chair of the DTP Nurettin Demirtaş had already brought the human rights issue of Bulgarian Turks to the attention of the Turkish public. See *DTP Sofya Modeli İstedi* (DTP asked for the Sofia Model), *Milliyet*, 9 November 2007. For reactions to this parallelity claim made by the highest DTP official see Güneri Civaoğlu's column also in Turkish daily *Milliyet* on 10 November 2007.

autonomous Kurdish region in Turkey by saying: "For my part, and on behalf of my party, we do not stand up for an autonomous Kurdish region; we do not want this and do not even find it right." [101] This clear disapproval of ethnic/regional autonomy was signified by the Democratic Autonomy Project that was adopted as the *Political Stance Document* in the Second Extraordinary Congress of the DTP held on 8 November 2007[102] and formulated with a strong emphasis on *democratic republic* rather than ethnically based federation-like models:

> Our congress depicts the contemporary conceptualization of the model "democratic autonomy" which is predicated upon the gaining of autonomy of all diversities on matters of free self expression and the rendering of voice to the people in all localities protecting the integrity of the country. Democratic autonomy, also meaning democratic self-governance, introduces the essentials of Democratic Republic.[103]

It is evident that the DTP basically advocated the decentralization of administrative system in Turkey. Yet, the DTP's stress on the local/cultural/ethnic and thus in a way political elements at a symbolic level cannot be underestimated especially when the demands voiced in the *Democratic Autonomy Project* are observed:

> … rather than a purely "ethnic" and "territorial" conception of autonomy, democratic autonomy defends a regional and local structure through which

---

[101] http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/butce/2008/pbk14112007.htm [04 January 2009].

"…bu ülkede de, ben kendi partim adına ve kendi adıma biz, özerk bir Kürt bölgesi savunmuyoruz, istemiyoruz, bunun doğru olduğunu da düşünmüyoruz."

[102] For more information see http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/11/08/son/sonsiy17.asp [04 January 2009]. *"Demokratik Özerklik Projesi" Türkiye'nin bütün siyasi ve idari yapılanmasını kapsayan, etnik kökeni dikkate alarak değil, coğrafi yakınlığı, belki ekonomik entegrasyonu, belki ulaşım kapasitesini, farklı etkenleri göz önünde bulundurarak Türkiye'nin yirmi ya da yirmi beş bölgeye ayrılmasını, şu anda seksen bir il üzerinden yürütülen idari yapılanmanın demokratik bir katılımcılığa fırsat vermediğini, daha çok merkezî hükûmeti güçlendirdiğini, yerindenlik ilkesine uymadığını bunun ortadan kaldırılmasını ve yerel yönetimlerin güçlendirilmesini esas alan bir projedir. Asla ve asla partimiz etnik kökene dayalı, bölgesel bir özerklik talebinde bulunmamıştır. Böyle bir şeyi siyasi talep olarak da gündeme getirmemiştir. "*

[103] DTP's *Democratic Autonomy* Project Available (online): http://rastibini.blogspot.com/2008/11/dtps-democratic-autonomy-project-part.html [08 April 2010]. *"Kongremiz, ülke bütünlüğü içinde halkın yerelde söz ve karar sahibi olmasını sağlayacak ve tüm farklılıkların kendini özgürce ifade edebileceği düzeyde özerklik kazanması temeline dayanan modelin çağdaş kavramlaştırılışını "demokratik özerklik" biçiminde tanımlamaktadır. Demokratik öz yönetim anlamına gelen demokratik özerklik, Demokratik Cumhuriyet'in içinin doldurulmasıdır.*

> cultural differences are able to freely express themselves. Observance with the "Flag" and "Official Language" are binding for the whole territory; yet, democratic autonomy also envisages the establishment of *democratic self-governance by each region and autonomous unit with their own colors and symbols.*[104]

As we see, regional autonomy based on ethnicity is not demanded. The DTP argued that the project was an initiative to pave the way for democratic participation which was possible by the implementation of such norms as decentralization, subsidiarity and strengthening local administration so that wealth of the country was allocated effectively and efficiently.

National/Patriotic Sphere

When we observe the debates on the budget, the DTP's inclination to take part in national sphere is accelerated. As I was reading the documents of debate on the budget, I underlined the words relating to the national sphere in red. After a while I noticed that the pages of the document had turned into red-dominant ones in such an abundance that I could not have predicted. Expressions such as *73 milyon insanımız, ülkemiz, ulusumuz, milli birlik ve bütünlüğümüz, askerimiz*[105] and a narration from the 1st plural person is often employed in the course of the speeches

[104] Demokratik Toplum Partisi'nin Kürt Sorununa İlişkin Demokratik Çözüm Projesi, Projeya Çareseriya Demokratîk A Têkildarî Pirsgirêka Kurd Ya Partiya Civaka Demokratîk, DTP - Democratic Society Party's Project of Democratic Solution to the Kurdish Question, p.9 "(*Demokratik Özerklik) salt "Etnik" ve "Toprak" temelli özerklik anlayışı yerine kültürel farklılıkların özgürce ifade edildiği bölgesel ve yerel bir yapılanmayı savunur. "Bayrak" ve "Resmi Dil" tüm "Türkiye Ulusu" için geçerli olmakla birlikte her bölge ve özerk birimin kendi renkleri ve sembolleriyle demokratik öz yönetimini oluşturmasını öngörür*." *DTP's Democratic Autonomy Project* that was adopted in 2007 by the party congress was later in 2008 included in the trilingual booklet *Demokratik Toplum Partisi'nin Kürt Sorununa İlişkin Demokratik Çözüm Projesi, Projeya Çareseriya Demokratîk A Têkildarî Pirsgirêka Kurd Ya Partiya Civaka Demokratîk, DTP - Democratic Society Party's Project of Democratic Solution to the Kurdish Question*.

[105] "[Our] 73 million fellow citizens, our country, our nation, our national unity and integrity, our soldiers… All the words counted here are used in 1st plural person, *we* that connotes nationalist or patriotic discourse that homogenizes will and interests of all constituting a *nation*."

of the DTP MPs in the Planning and the Budgetary Commission. On some occasions it reaches the edge of strong territory *nationalism* especially in such cases as privatization:

> Saying "we will continue with structural reforms, fiscal discipline and privatization." means: Halk Bank, TEKEL, PETKİM[106] are also waiting for their turn to be privatized. In these days when 2/B Act Draft is on the agenda and the mentality that puts up shores, ports, bridges, history, mountains, plains, and rivers for sale, the mentality to put up the country for sale, after five years' sales to the foreign investor, Arab sheikhs, indicate how terrible it is to make this budget. [107]

In a session where issues concerning institutions including the State Planning Organization (DPT), Capital Markets Committee (SPK), Banking By-laws and Supervision Committee (BDDK), Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP BKİB), Turkish Statistics Institute (TUİK) and the Treasury Undersecretary, Hasip Kaplan-without naming it directly- referred to the cost of the fight against the PKK and considered it as a cause of the budget deficit in the Turkish economy by stating:

> Mr. Deputy Prime Minister, it came to my attention that data are given all the time, yet there remains one point missing. I mean, there has been no emphasis on expenditures costing 300 billion dollars due to tragic events in the last twenty three years that caused debt and therefore brought about deficit. I mean, has not this tragedy, this reality we encounter, had any role in the deficit in *our*[108] budget, in foreign debts. [109]

---

[106] Halk Bankası, TEKEL and PETKİM are Public Economic Enterprises. For differences between their legal status see Metin Günday, *İdare Hukuku* (Administrative Law), (Ankara: İmaj Yayınevi, 2002), pp. 462-63.

[107] http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/butce/2008/pbk30102007.htm [04 January 2009].
""Yapısal reformlar, mali disiplin ve özelleştirmeye devam edeceğiz." demenin anlamı: Halk Bankası, Tekel ve PETKİM özelleştirme için zaten sıra bekliyor. Beş yıldır yabancı sermayeye, Arap şeyhlerine yapılan satışlardan sonra 2/B taslağının da gündemde olduğu bugünlerde kıyıları, limanları, köprüleri, tarihi, dağları, ovaları, akarsuları satışa çıkaran mantık, vatanı satışa çıkaran mantık ile baktığımızda böyle bir bütçeyi denkleştirmenin ne kadar korkunç olduğu gözüküyor."

[108] (Italicized by the author).

[109] http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/butce/2008/pbk20112007.htm [04 January 2009].
"… Sayın Başbakan Yardımcım, dikkat ettim, hep veriler konuluyor, ama bir nokta eksik. Yani, son yirmi üç yılda yaşadığımız acı olaylardaki 300 milyar dolarlık giderin bu cari açıkta borçlanma konusundaki sıkıntısına hiç vurgu yapılmadı. Yani, gerçekten bu acı yaşadığımız bu gerçek, ama, hiç mi bütçemizin açık vermesinde hiç mi dış borçlarda hiç mi bunda etkisi yok…"

Thus, Kaplan viewed the damage caused by the Kurdish Question within the framework of the Turkish Economy and as a consequence cares about welfare of the Turkish society as a whole. This is a crucial point supporting the argument that the DTP acts for Turkey as a "Party for Turkey" rather than being restricted to the region, its MPs were elected.

Socialist/Egalitarian Sphere

It is the sphere of existence that the DTP can best express itself on a concrete basis due to the obvious socio-economic underdevelopment of the eastern regions of Turkey, especially in a huge disparity in contrast to the west. So, the party makes numerous comments and critique on the deficit in social policy and the ignorance toward the disadvantageous parts of society from the laborer to the civil servant, from the elderly to the disabled and from women to children.

During my observations on the budgetary debates, I used blue to underline the speeches relating to the Socialist Sphere with social concerns mentioned above. In the end, blue appeared as the main color of the entire document. Therefore, I only present some instances of the DTP MPs with this "blue discourse." They regard social and economic inequalities as the biggest problem of Turkey on many occasions. In the session on the whole of the draft of the Budget Act, Gültan Kışanak starts her speech with a tripartite figure of inequality: "I would like to emphasize three major inequalities. First, inequality between the rich and poor. Second, gender inequality. Third, inequality between regions. Today, these three major inequalities are at such a problematic level that can harm the perception of

justice in our country." [110] In the session on the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Kışanak brings the regional disparity aspect of the seasonal *agricultural workers* issue to the stage:

> Another point I would like to accent about seasonal workers is that almost all of them are especially from East and South East Anatolia regions. And this is related to dreadful situation in disparity of development between regions, poverty in the region and generally all economic and social indicators in general. [111]

While the DTP attached great importance and priority to problems of the seasonal agricultural workers, it explained the situation on a regional socio-economic development disparity basis rather than injustice that an ethnic group was exposed to. In relation to the agricultural policies, it preferred references to international treaties and used the jargon of developmental economics.

In the same session, the *sui jeneris* nature of the region is mentioned on two occasions: one is ethnic, the other is regional. The former is the need for the public use of Kurdish language in such fields as agriculture, animal-farming education and health justified completely with social and economic concerns whereas the latter is the complaint about the loss of the "fertility of Mesopotamia" (*Mezopotamya bereketi*) that the region could have had under standard circumstances, but was then neglected with wrong policies.

After this comment, the Chairman of the Commission warned Gültan Kışanak, saying: "The name of our region is South East Anatolia, not Mesopotamia.

---

[110] http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/butce/2008/pbk30102007.htm [04 January 2009].
"Üç temel eşitsizlik üzerinde durmak istiyorum. Birincisi zenginler ile yoksullar arasındaki eşitsizlik. İkincisi, cinsler arasındaki eşitsizlik. Üçüncüsü de bölgeler arasındaki eşitsizlik. Bu üç temel eşitsizlik bugün ülkemizdeki adalet duygusunu zedeleyecek boyutlarda sorun teşkil edecek düzeydedir..."

[111] http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/butce/2008/pbk07112007.htm [04 January 2009].
"…mevsimlik işçilerle ilgili bir başka değinmek istediğim nokta da, özellikle mevsimlik işçilerin neredeyse tamamının Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi'nden olmasıdır. Bu da bölgeler arası gelişmişlik farkının, bölgede yaşanan yoksulluğun ve genel olarak bütün ekonomik göstergelerin, sosyal göstergelerin çok kötü olmasıyla ilgilidir."

Mesopotamia is as dead as the dodo" [112] and prevented the word "Mesopotamia" from being recorded. Kışanak answers: "You can look at history books. We also call Turkey Anatolia. What is wrong with this?" [113] The use of the historical name given due to the well-being of a region is clearly employed to highlight the need for more cautious agricultural policies that can revive prosperity is not tolerated and is perceived as political/territorial. The reply of the Chairman was ironic in the sense that he used the historical/geographical name *Anatolia* to describe Turkey while trying to make a correction: "…if we speak this way, we must also change the names of some other places in *Anatolia*."[114] Then he feels the need to correct himself too: "Anatolia, [I mean] Turkey…" The example of agriculture shows us how different spheres of existence are interlinked (ethnic/local, socialist, and universal in this case) in the various expressions of the DTP members. As a consequence, this is a strong signal for multi-issue basis of the DTP agenda.

Eco-Feminist Sphere

The green sphere-as I name it- involves such themes as gender issues, ranging from violence towards women to women's employment and ecologic/environmental concerns. Therefore, this is sphere can also be named the *eco-feminist* sphere. In the session on the budget of the Office of the Prime Minister and some other sub-directories, Kışanak introduced the gender equality issue as the most important problem of today's world and Turkey and later puts forward fundamental demands:

[112] Same webpage. Chairman of the Budgetary Comission reacts by saying: *"Bölgemizin adı, Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi'dir, Mezopotamya değil. Mezopotamya, tarihte kalmıştır."*

[113] Same webpage. ***"****Tarih kitaplarına bakabilirsiniz. Anadolu da diyoruz mesela Türkiye'ye, Anadolu diyoruz. Bunda ne beis* var?"

[114] Same webpage. *"…öyle konuşursak Anadolu'nun başka yerlerine başka isimler vermemiz lazım.***"**

> It is necessary to consider the woman's issue as a policy of gender equality differentiating it from a mere social work issue. Hence, instead of its current status that regards it as a small part in a work linking all social work bodies under a Ministry of State, it is also necessary to take measures and make By-laws to found a Ministry of Equality, to provide woman with the status she deserves in all fields and stages of life as a free and equal individual in this society. [115]

She also proposes a strengthening of the local mechanisms for preventing violence towards women:

> I do not think that Violence toward Women Watch Committee, a centralized committee comprising high bureaucrats in Ankara or politicians, will be sufficient in solving the problem. This is why, violence watch committees in the local level, say, in provinces must be unconditionally founded and this non-governmental organization must be included in them.[116]

In the session on the budget of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, the DTP voiced its green tone by opposing the establishment of a nuclear power station in Turkey with ecologist concerns. Hasip Kaplan emphasized the significance of 30,000 points in the wind-map of Turkey as a potential alternative source of energy and criticized the government for its attempts for nuclear energy by stating:

> These days Europe has abandoned nuclear power stations. Why set up power stations that have been second, third class and redundant in Europe in the most beautiful parts of *my*[117] country, like İğneada on the Bulgarian border, Cudi on the Iraqi border, Akkuyu, Fırtına Deresi-Samsun? Why do we laze

---

[115] http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/butce/2008/pbk31102007.htm [04 January 2009].
"…kadın konusunu bir sosyal hizmet konusu olmaktan çıkartarak bir cinsiyet eşitliği politikası olarak ele almak ve bu nedenle de şu andaki statüsü yerine bir Devlet Bakanlığına bağlı bütün sosyal hizmet kurumlarını birleştiren bir çalışmanın içerisinde küçük bir parça olarak ele almak yerine bir eşitlik bakanlığının kurulması ve kadının bu toplumun özgür, eşit bir bireyi olarak bu toplumda hak ettiği, hayatın her alanında, her kademesinde hak ettiği yere kavuşabilmesi için gerekli önlemleri almak, düzenlemeleri yapmak gerekiyor."

[116] Same webpage. *"…kadına yönelik şiddeti izleme komitesinin de Ankara'da merkezî yüksek düzeyli bir bürokratların katıldığı bir komitenin ya da siyasi görevlilerin katıldığı bir komitenin sorunu yeterince çözmekte yeterli olabileceğini düşünmüyorum. Bu nedenle, mutlaka illerde yerelde şiddet izleme komitelerinin kurulması ve bu komitelere sivil toplum örgütlerinin de dâhil edilmesi gerekiyor."*

[117] When he says *my country* (ülkem) he means *our country*. One can easily see that DTP deputies do not miss any opportunity to emphasize their patriotic stance which is not solely restricted to the Kurdish identity but to the entire *nation of Turkey* as they name it *(Türkiyelilik).* The places vulnerable to negative effects of nuclear energy counted by Kaplan are mostly non-Kurdish regions of Turkey like Thracian İğneada, Mediterranian Akkuyu and Fırtına Valley of the Black Sea region. Out of four, only Cudi is from South East Turkey, which is pre-dominantly Kurdish.

around while we have good and distinctive sources, so many opportunities that do not pollute the environment?[118]

This statement by Kaplan also proves the intersectional character of the spheres I have defined: DTP Şırnak Deputy Hasip Kaplan mentions the problems faced not only by the East, but also counts İğneada, Akkuyu, Samsun as the "most beautiful parts of my country" and therefore represented the intersection of the national and the green spheres.

Global/Universal Sphere

The Universal/Global Sphere is the most complex and continuously produced sphere of existence. It includes economic, political, legal, and ideal values and norms and is continuously formulated with one or the other of the four spheres. As for the DTP, it seems that the party functions best with the legal opportunities this sphere provides for it. The moral power of universal legal norms especially human rights and of the new approaches to security namely "human security" operates for the sake of DTP like the vessels of a body. Therefore, one will definitely come across a widely-used jargon of International Law with the discourse of universal human rights and international organizations as legitimating of core determinants of the party's reflection. What I can do here is not present this usual tendency of the party in numerous examples but, rather give a striking one.

---

[118] http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/butce/2008/pbk06112007.htm [04 January 2009].

"… Avrupa'nın terk ettiği nükleer enerji santrallerine bugünlerde Avrupa'nın ikinci, üçüncü model durumuna düşmüş, atıl kalmış enerji santrallerini ülkemin en güzelim yerlerine, Bulgaristan sınırında İğneada'ya, Irak sınırında Cudi'ye, Akkuyu'ya, Fırtına deresine -Samsun'a,…Bunca güzel, özel kaynaklarımızın olduğu çevreyi kirletmeyen konularda imkânlarımız varken niye bunun kolayına kaçıyoruz…"

In the session on the Ministry of Justice, the High Courts and some other institutions, Kaplan gave some information about claims of torture and maltreatment in F-type jails and then brings one of the most controversial matters to the attention of public by stating:

> I want to ask if it is possible to have a legal system arranged exclusively for a person. If it is not so, why is there a jail for only one person on İmralı, and why are lawyers that visit the İmralı Prison bodily searched being undressed completely and attacked while leaving there. [119]

Even on such a taboo, Kaplan had certain demands since he used the language of universality under the name of general principals of law and was able to criticize the extraordinary situation of Abdullah Öcalan without naming him explicitly.

Kaplan also made such demands as the change in the system of Turkish judges' nomination to the European Court of Human Rights and emphasized the vitality of merits, of the independence and neutrality of jurisdiction and of a much bigger budgetary share for the jurisdiction. He tried to reinforce his argument on the necessity to increase the share of the jurisdiction in the budget by using the words of "national honor":

> It is time for an honorable start, a take off and I find this budget inadequate. I think it should be increased at least 100 times. This is necessary for 73 million people, for the honor of this country, for all of us. [120]

There was also a critical view of the party concerning the fifth sphere especially its "globalization" dimension. In the session on the Ministries of Health and of Culture and Tourism, Kaplan said:

---

[119] http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/butce/2008/pbk08112007.htm [04 January 2009].
"…kişiye bir özel hukuk olur mu, bunu soracağım? Eğer olmuyorsa, neden İmralı'da tek kişilik cezaevi, İmralı'da tek kişilik cezaevi yönetmeliği var ve İmralı'ya giden avukatlar çırılçıplak soyundurularak aramadan geçiriliyor ve çıkarken de saldırıya uğrayabiliyorlar…"

[120] Same webpage. *"…onurlu bir çıkış, bir kalkış yapmanın zamanıdır ve ben bu bütçeyi az buluyorum. En az yüzde 100 artırılması gerekir diye düşünüyorum. Bu, 73 milyon için, ülkenin onuru için, hepimiz için gereklidir…"*

> …a song by one of our well-beloved artists is universalized. For instance, the song *Şıkıdım* by Tarkan is available almost in every language, but an artist that is a Turkish citizen cannot have a copyright of the song that is released in every language. [121]

Kaplan suggested that the local and the national was *global*ized and becoming *universal* then. He also stated that along with the fact that culture-arts was also a global sector, the protection of the loyalties of the laborers of this sector could be protected with measures on national and global scales and that the Ministry was responsible for taking these measures. In this case, the fifth sphere intersected with the local, national and the social. Consequently, the fifth sphere did not imply an independent entity; it rather functioned as cement interconnecting the remaining four.

Public Discourse of the DTP Elites

This section builds on open-ended in-depth interview with semi-structured questions conducted with DTP elites both in higher offices and grassroots organization. The former include party co-chair and Mardin deputy Ahmet Türk, Muş deputy Sırrı Sakık, and Istanbul deputy Sebahat Tuncel, co-chairs of Istanbul party organization Mustafa Avcı and Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar. As for the latter, namely the grassroots organization in the Esenyurt district of Istanbul, co-chairs Metin Sanin and İlkay Özkan Kartal and party official Mehmet Hanefi Kaya were interviewed.

My access to grassroots officials was not difficult at all since I had relatives living in Esenyurt. One of them, a sympathizer of pro-Kurdish parties, traditionally

---

[121] http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/butce/2008/pbk19112007.htm [04 January 2009].

"…bizim çok değerli bir sanatçımızın bir türküsü, bir şarkısı dünyada evrenselleşiyor. Örneğin, Tarkan'ın "Şıkıdım" şarkısını her dilde dinlersiniz, ama her dilde yayınlanan o şarkının telif hakkını Türkiye Cumhuriyeti vatandaşı bir sanatçı takip edip alma hakkını, hukukunu yapamıyor…"

functioned as a *sponsor* in Hammersley and Atkinson's words for me to meet the party official Mehmet Hanefi Kaya and by this means I was able to penetrate into the field so much as to interview several other people ranging from co-chairs to voters.[122] In addition to local officials, it was not so difficult either to reach urban authorities, namely the co-chairs of Istanbul and the parliamentarians. Their quest to be "understood" made it easier for me to conduct all these interviews in a period of a few weeks. The overall picture of the elite discourse of the Democratic Society Party presents a critical point which aims to achieve its "transformation" into a "Party for Turkey" *qua* Kurd instead of being "Turkified".

Turkey-fication instead of *Turkification*

When I interviewed Ahmet Türk, the then former co-chair and Mardin MP of the DTP, politically banned after the closure of the party, he had just been attacked provocatively by a Turkish nationalist in front of a court in Samsun where a case about local unrest in Muş had been transferred. Türk seemed to be quite tolerant of this event, emphasizing its provocative nature during the interview. He insisted on a "mental revolution" implying a dialogue-based political culture where differences can best express themselves freely. He answered my question: "What are the biggest problems in Turkey?" as follows:

> …a perspective change, a mental revolution is necessary. Legal amendments do not work. The internalization of cultural differences is necessary. The people of a geography that has flourished on Anatolian and Mesopotamian cultures should have a mentality to acknowledge this.[123]

[122] Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 3rd edn, (London: Routlegde, 2007).

[123] Ahmet Türk, interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 18 April 2010. "*…sorunlara bakışın değişmesine, bir zihniyet devrimine ihtiyaç var Yasaların değişmesi ile bir şey*

(Ahmet Türk, Age: 68-DTP co-chair, Mardin deputy)

The "mental revolution" that Türk mentioned may have implications about whether being an ethnic or broadly-based party in that this view suggests recognition of differences in the society. Among these differences, ethnic identities are supposed to be meant first. In this regard, recognition of the Kurdish identity is often demanded by DTP elites. On the other hand, they express their ambition to be part of the socio-political processes taking place in Turkey. In other words, they want to be "Turkey-fied" not "Turkified," meaning they want to coexist with the greater society in Turkey and thus prefer neither being an ethnically-based entity nor assimilated to Turkish ethnicity:

> Turkey-fication is a very broad term. When we say 'Turkey-fication', we assess it as acceptance [recognition] of different identities. However, a certain mentality perceives and wants to see Turkey-fication as Turkification. Therefore, we are not considered a 'Party for Turkey' because we are not Turkified.[124]
>
> (Ahmet Türk, Age: 68-DTP co-chair, Mardin deputy)

I met Istanbul deputy Sebahat Tuncel at a feminist panel at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. In the panel, titled "Militarizm ve Kadına Yönelik Şiddet" (Militarism and Violence towards Woman), Tuncel was one of the panelists as a BDP MP among other feminist activists including a member of the BDP Party Assembly, Attorney at Law Eren Keskin, who is famous for founding an association that struggles against sexual harassment under detention. Tuncel based her speech mostly on the relation between war and violence towards women. She criticized the manner taken towards women especially during wartime and put accent on the harder situation for Kurdish

---

sağlanmıyor. Kültürel farkılıkların içselleştirilmesi gerek. Anadolu ve Mezopotamya kültürü üzerinde yeşermiş bir coğrafyanın insanlarının bunu kabullenecek bir mantığa sahip olması gerek."

[124] Ahmet Türk, interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 18 April 2010.
"*Çok geniş bir kavram Türkiyelileşmek. 'Türkiyelileşmek' dediğimiz zaman farklı kültürlerin farklı kimliklerin kabulu anlamında değerlendiririz. Belli bir zihniyet ise Türkiyelileşmeyi Türkleşmek olarak algılıyor ve o şekilde görmek istiyor. İşte Türkleşmediğimiz için Türkiye partisi sayılmıyoruz.*"

women due to being victimized both as women and Kurds. Then she offered some solutions to this problem exemplifying it by their parliamentary attempts, like making enquiries about increasing the number of women shelters and their rehabilitation. After the panel, she gave me a short but beneficial interview which centered on the very question of being a Party for Turkey. Her attitude was clearly in favor of being a "Party for Turkey," meaning to have a broadly-based, multi-issue agenda which did not exclude the problems of the peripheral groups:

> To be a 'Party for Turkey' does not mean that our Turkish friends [ethnic Turks] are with us [the DTP]. To produce solutions to the problems of Turkey… Social, political, and ecological problems… For instance, *we can be a Party for Turkey qua Kurd.* We can also be a Party for Turkey only consisting of Kurds. I mean, there isn't any obstacle before this. *We can solve the problems of Turkey*[125] [as a party] with the support of several groups: Socialists, feminists, ecologists, anarchists… I mean we are assertive for this.[126]
>
> (Sebahat Tuncel, Age: 34-Istanbul deputy)

Istanbul co-chair Uçar points out to the criterion of the *Türkiyelileşme* (Turkey-fication). According to her, the DTP's Turkey-fication vision is a long-term attempt that has been planned and prepared by its predecessors since the second half of the 1990s. She also argues that a concept cannot exist without the criteria determining it and for her the criterion for Turkey-fication is struggling for the democratization of Turkey:

> There is no other party that struggles for the democratization of Turkey as much [as the DTP]. The criterion for Turkey-fication is this [democratization of Turkey]. There is no better criterion than this for Turkey-fication of a party. (…) [Pro-Kurdish parties] has further internalized politics after [the year] 95. I shall give the example of Bakırköy DTP Administration in 99,

[125] Emphases belong to the author of the thesis.

[126] Sebahat Tuncel, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 March 2010. *"Türkiye partisi olmak, Türk arkadaşlarımızın bizimle birlikte olması anlamına gelmiyor. Türkiye sorunlarına, Türkiye'de yaşanan toplumsal sorunlara, siyasal sorunlara, ekolojik sorunlara çözüm üretmek… Mesela biz bir Kürt olarak da Türkiye partisi olabiliriz. Sadece Kürtlerden oluşan bir parti olarak da Türkiye partisi olabiliriz. Yani bunun bir engeli yok. Sosyalistler, Feministler, Ekolojistler, Anarşistler bir çok kesimin desteklediği bir şey olarak Türkiye sorunlarını çözebiliriz. Yani bu iddiamız var."*

> 2000, 2001, and 2002: Kurd, Laz, Alevi, Armenian, and Turk were next to each other. What is the criterion for Turkey-fication? What determines to what extent other parties in Turkey have been Turkey-fied?[127]
>
> (Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar, Age: 32-DTP Istanbul Organization co-chair)

The widespread discourse of "Turkey-fication" in the DTP circles offers a huge "project" rather than a mere concept. The main reason behind the emergence of this project is claimed to be the failure of the preceding pro-Kurdish parties which underestimated the changes of the world order and thus became boxed in the narrow domain of regional/ethnic presentation. Istanbul co-chair and founding member of the party, Avcı, also a former Secretary General of the KESK (Public Servants Syndicate), elaborates this process and admits that the DTP could not succeed in this project:

> This party set out to work as a Turkey Project. Before this party, there were already many parties of the same political tradition. There were HADEP and DEHAP. They were introduced as regional parties, Kurdish parties, but they failed. Therefore, the DTP emerged as a self-critique of the preceding tradition. Technology has changed, the world has changed and capital knows no boundaries. The socialist block and socialism have been dismantled. We determined that a mentality that preserves its boundaries and seeks freedom within these boundaries is no longer possible in the circumstances of our time. Kurds had to give up demanding freedom in narrow boundaries. Why? Because, now if Kurds desire[d][128] a democratic solution, they must obviously know that the [Kurdish] problem can neither be solved only with Kurds nor only with Turks or the Turkish Republic. Then, it was essential to extend to a scope that would go beyond Kurds. Therefore, the DTP emerged as a Turkey Project but to be frank we could not realize this goal.[129]

---

[127] Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 16 March 2010. "*Türkiye'nin demokratikleşmesi için bu kadar mücadele veren başka bir parti yoktur. Türkiyelileşmenin ölçüsü de budur. Bundan başka bir partinin Türkiyelileşmesinin daha iyi bir ölçüsü yoktur.(…) 95 sonrası siyaseti daha çok sahiplenmiştir. 99-2000-2001-2002 Bakırköy DTP* [she means DEHAP] *yönetimimizden şunu örnek veriyim: Kürt, Laz, Alevi, Ermeni, Türk yan yanaydı. Nedir Türkiyelileşmenin ölçüsü? Türkiye'deki diğer partilerin ne derece Türkiyelileştiklerini belirleyen nedir?*"

[128] Since the Kurdish problem in Turkey still remains unresolved, it is likely that DTP Istanbul co-chair Mustafa Avcı prefers using the present tense contrary to the past language prevalent in his comment.

[129] Mustafa Avcı, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 16 March 2010. "*Bu parti bir Türkiye Projesi olarak çalışmalarına başladı. Bu partiden önce de aynı siyasi geleneğin pek çok partisi vardı. HADEP vardı, DEHAP vardı. Bir bölge partisi olarak lanse edildiler, Kürt partisi olarak lanse edildiler. Ancak başarılı olamadılar. İşte DTP, bundan önceki geleneğin bir*

(Mustafa Avcı, Age: 54-DTP Istanbul Organization co-chair)

Avcı concludes his remarks on Turkey-fication with another definition for the above-mentioned project: "Turkey-fication is the project of adoption of all the problems that have not been solved in Turkey." In addition, Uçar gives a similar definition of *Türkiyelileşme*. According to her, it is the state of being in an attempt to "grip all the social, political, economic problems of Turkey." As we have seen, the DTP elites shared a common point of view regarding Turkey-fication (*Türkiyelileşme*) in that it is a significant project to be realized and that they strongly opposed "Turkification" which they thought threatened Kurds and other identities and thus endangered democracy in Turkey.[130] Moreover, they all presented a multi-

---

özeleştirisi olarak ortaya çıktı. Teknoloji değişti, dünya değişti ve sermaye sınır tanımıyor. Sosyalist blok ve sosyalizm darmadağın oldu. Sınırlarını muhafaza eden ve bu sınırlar içersinde özgürlük arayan bir anlayışın artık günümüz koşullarında çok da olanaklı olmadığının tespitine ulaşmıştık. Kürtlerin dar sınırlar içinde özgürlük talep etmekten vazgeçmeleri gerekmekteydi. Neden? Çünkü artık Kürtler demokratik bir çözüm arzu ediyorlarsa, şunu net olarak bilmeliler, sorun sadece Kürtlerle değil; sadece Türklerle değil; sadece Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti ile çözülemez. O zaman Kürtleri aşan bir kapsam ihtiva etmek zorunlu idi. Bu yüzden DTP bir Türkiye Projesi olarak ortaya çıktı ama açıkçası bu hedefimize ulaşamadık."

[130] "Turkification" is a sociological term used to imply assimilationist state policies directed towards and as a result social, cultural and economic processes experienced by different ethnic groups other than the Turkish ethnicity. The formative years of the Turkish Republic demonstrate how the harsh conditions Turkification policies would be especially for Kurds. What makes the Turkification process most alarming for the existence of the Kurdish identity is more evident in the centrally-conducted, systematic state-policies towards regions with big Kurdish populations. Şahin mentions the 1927 East Reform Plan (*Şark Islahat Planı*) that gave birth to Martial Law in Kurdish regions until they were 'thoroughly reformed'. It also ordered public services and the courts in the region to be de-Kurdified, Kurdish immigrants located on the former-Armenian areas to be deported and Turkish immigrants to be situated there, languages other than Turkish to be prohibited, in the regions that are under the 'threat of Kurdification' such as Malatya, Elazığ, Diyarbakır, Bitlis, Van, Muş, Urfa, Ergani, Hozat, Çemişkezek, Ovacık, Hekimhan, the ones who speak Kurdish in the City Hall, schools and bazaars to be punished,…speaking Kurdish to be definitely prohibited in the regions to the west of the Euphrates. See Bahar Şahin, Türkiye'nin AB Uyum Süreci Bağlamında Kürt Sorunu: Açılımlar ve Sınırlar, in *Türkiye'de Çoğunluk ve Azınlık Politikaları: AB Sürecinde Yurttaşlık Tartışmaları*, Ayhan Kaya, Turgut Tarhanlı, TESEV, 2005, p.106. For a qualitative field analysis on minorities' encounter with Turkification, See Suavi Aydın, "Azınlık Kavramına İçeriden Bakmak", *Türkiye'de Çoğunluk ve Azınlık Politikaları: AB Sürecinde Yurttaşlık Tartışmaları* (der. Ayhan Kaya ve Turgut Tarhanlı), TESEV 2005. Evaluation of Turkification is also carried out with respect to homogenization of the nation by economic means. Despite regarding non-Muslim minorities rather than Kurds, this literature show that Turkification is a process that was debutantly designed for all different groups living in Turkey but then inclined more towards assimilating Muslim minorities primarily Kurds not non-Muslims since they were regarded so 'different' as foreigners. For a typical example of the literature on non-Muslims, Turkification of the economy and homogenization

issue agenda including a broad range of problems from identity to socio-economic inequalities, ecology to gender issues. This fact strengthened the DTP's message to the public to have a broad-based character and thus did not fit into the ethnic party definition with regard to the criteria of the party's message to the voter.

Quota Problem as an Obstacle to Carry out the Project of Turkey-fication

The Turkey-fication Project was adopted by the DTP politicians as a new initiative with the deepening influences of globalization also on Turkey. However, despite its being a new project, there was something older which would also hinder its success. This was the 10 percent nation-wide threshold, a national quota in general elections which had prevented the pro-Kurdish parties from entering the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) unless they entered into election alliances with bigger parties like the SHP (Social Democrat Populist Party) until the DTP members chose to be independent candidates in order not to handicapped by the 10 percent quota in 2007 General Elections. Türk puts forward the quota as one of the obstacles to their Turkey-fication Project:

> There are big obstacles before us regarding our Turkey-fication Project. What is one of them? The 10 percent [election] quota. Since there is such a quota, you have to join the elections with independent candidates and thus you have to narrowly side with groups that make attempts for liberation of a certain culture. And in this case, it seems as if you were a Kurdish party in the eye of some. However, if we hadn't had an obstacle like 10 percent quota, we could have had the opportunity to make a wider mass party by transferring 35-40 percent Turkish democratic powers to this party but we are face to face with a logic that tries to prevent our Turkey-fication Project.[131]

---

policies see Ayhan Aktar, *Varlık Vergisi ve Türkleştirme Politikaları* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000).

[131] Ahmet Türk, interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 18 April 2010.
"*Türkiyelileşme projemizi yaşama geçirme konusunda önümüzde büyük engeller var. Bunlardan biri nedir? Yüzde 10 barajı. Bu baraj olduğu için siz bağımsız adaylarla seçime girmek zorundasınız ve*

(Ahmet Türk, Age: 68-DTP co-chair, Mardin deputy)

Türk continues his statement by analyzing the historical background and the rationale behind the threshold whereas Muş deputy Sakık goes one step further to extend the target of the quota not only to Kurds but also to "Turkish democratic powers":

> The pro-status quo mentality and founding elites of the Republic consider themselves the owners of the Republic. That's why they have always assumed different identities and cultures dangerous with a mentality "we created the Republic, we are its owners and we will protect it." Especially because they see the Kurdish people with a 40 million population in the Middle East as potential threat, they try to fixate their societies in a certain point and continuously with nationalist discourses they ask their societies to build barriers before our demands for rights and freedoms.[132]
>
> (Ahmet Türk, Age: 68, DTP co-chair, Mardin deputy)

> We can't pass over the quota by ourselves. It is obvious that quotas were arranged to exclude Kurds from the parliament.(…) We make this proposal not only for ourselves, but also for union of Turkish democratic powers because in any case we have the chance to enter the parliament numbering around 30 [seats]. But if the quota is abolished, we can unite with Turkish democratic powers and bring a new acceleration in Turkish politics while in greater number and thus play the role of major opposition party. We stand up for Turkish democratic powers. Only this union can democratize and liberate Turkey. (…) We have 20 seats in the parliament. Be sure that with these 20 seats we do what current major opposition party [the CHP] cannot. We can contribute to democracy of Turkey with a strong and efficient major opposition.[133]

---

sonuç olarak burada emek veren belli bir kültürün özgürleşmesini isteyen ve bu konuda çaba gösteren kesimlerle dar tutmak, birlikte hareket etmek zorunda kalıyorsunuz. Ve bu durumda da birilerinin gözünde sanki bir Kürt partisi olarak görünüyorsunuz. Oysa ki bugun önümüzde yüzde 10 gibi bir baraj engeli olmasaydı biz bu partiye yüzde 35-40 Türkiye demokrasi güçlerini taşıyarak daha geniş bir kitle partisini oluşturmak şansına sahip olurduk ama yüzde 10 barajıyla Türkiyelileşme projemizi engellemeye çalışan bir mantıkla karşı karşıyayız."

[132] Ahmet Türk, interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 18 April 2010.
"*Statükocu anlayış ve cumhuriteyi kuran seçkin ve elit [sic] kesimler kendilerini cumhuriyetin sahibi olarak gördükleri için "Cumhuriyeti biz yarattık, cumhuriyetin sahibi biziz; biz koruyacağız." mantığıyla hep farklı kimlikleri, kültürleri bir tehklike saymış. Özellikle Ortadoğuda 40 milyon nüfusa sahip Kürt halkını potansiyel tehlike gördüklerinden sürekli milliyetçi söylemlerle kendi toplumlarını belli bir noktada tutmaya çalışıyorlar ve bizim hak ve özgürlük taleplerimiz karşısında set oluşturmalarını istiyorlar.*"

[133] Sırrı Sakık, interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 18 April 2010.
"*Barajı aşamıyoruz tek başımıza. Barajların Türk Demokrasi Güçlerine ve Kürtlerin parlamentoya girmemeleri için konulduğu çok aşikar bir şey.(…)Bu önerimizi sadece kendimiz için değil Türkiye Demokrasi Güçlerinin birliği için yapıyoruz çünkü biz herhalukarda 30 civarında bir sayı ile*

(Sırrı Sakık, Age: 53, Muş deputy)

Sakık's statement reveals an interesting point about the function of the quota as an obstacle to democratic forces in Turkey regardless of their ethnicity. He considers the quota problem within a broader framework that describes the characteristics of the anti-democratic regime in Turkey. Furthermore, he introduces the reduction of the threshold as prescription to the lack of major opposition backed up by democratic forces in Turkey.

A 'Party for Turkey' by Kurds

As was evaluated in earlier sections of this chapter, the DTP's parliamentary contributions and its By-laws proved that the DTP was not an ethnic party, rather it presented itself as a broadly-based party or "Party for Turkey" in our case. The discourse of the DTP elites undoubtedly reinforced this fact. Nevertheless, public opinion in Turkey was heavily occupied by the alleged ethnic nature of the DTP. Therefore, I felt the necessity to address the very question to its elites: "Is the DTP an ethnic party?" although I had already investigated it via different questions. Since this question had been too often asked to them, they seemed to be ready to answer it and thus gave me sudden and clear responses without any hesitation. The answer was as common as a motto among all of them: "We are not an ethnic party!"

> We are a Party for Turkey because we struggle for further liberation of Kurdish and Turkish peoples but we are also a party that has an aim regarding the realization of Kurds' increasing demands absolutely.(…) We are a Party for Turkey but also assertive for defending the rights of peoples.

---

parlamentoya girme şansımız var ama baraj kalkarsa Türk Demokrasi Güçleri ile birlik olur ve daha geniş bir sayıda Türk siyasetine yeni bir ivme kazandırabiliriz ve ana muhalefet partisinin rolunu üstlenebiliriz. Biz Türk Demokrasi Güçlerinin birliğini savunuyoruz. Bu birlik ancak Türkiye'yi demokratikleştirebilir, özgürleştirebilir. (…) 20 kişi ile parlamentodayız ve 20 kişiyle emin olun mevcut ana muhalefet partisinin yapamadığını yapıyoruz. Türkiye demokrasisine güçlü ve verimli bir anamuhalefet ile katkıda bulunabiliriz."

> This is the demand of 20 million [Kurds in Turkey]; yet we are a Party for Turkey because we want to solve this demand [Sic.], this problem within the integrity of Turkey.[134]
>
> (Ahmet Türk, Age: 68, DTP co-chair, Mardin deputy)

> [The DTP] is a Party for Turkey which defends rights of Kurds on the most accurate basis. Not ethnic… I don't find the conception 'Kurdish party' suitable for this party because we perceive the Kurdish Problem not as ethnic problem but fundamentally a democracy problem.[135]
>
> (Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar, Age: 32-DTP Istanbul Organization co-chair)

Although DTP elites put great emphasis on that they were not an ethnic party, they argued that their attempts to promote "freedom of a people" did not necessarily make them an ethnic party. To the contrary, they thought not to support the struggle for freedom of a people distances a party from being a "Party for Turkey." Hence, some DTP elites regarded themselves as true Party for Turkey compared to others, especially the CHP and MHP:

> S.T.: In the parliament, there are several political parties that are not Parties for Turkey. For instance, the CHP is not a Party for Turkey. The MHP is not a Party for Turkey.
> *Ş.K.: Why not?*
> S.T.: Because, actually those who deny 20 million Kurds in Turkey and their rights and freedoms and who have no solution projects. I mean even the AKP is not [a Party for Turkey] at all. In fact, a Party for Turkey is one that has a solution perspective for the problems of all segments of the society like Turks, Kurds, Laz, Circassians, and Alevis.[136]

---

[134] Ahmet Türk, interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 18 April 2010.
"*Kürt ve Türk halkının daha özgürleşmesinin mücadelesini verdiğimiz için biz Türkiye partisiyiz ama Kürtlerin yoğunlaşan taleplerinin mutlaka gerçekleştirilmesi konusunda bir amacı olan bir partiyiz. (…) Bir Türkiye partiyisiz ama halkların haklarını savunmak konusunda da iddialı bir partiyiz. 20 milyonun [Kurds in Turkey] talebi bu; fakat biz bu talebi, bu sorunu Türkiye'nin bütünlüğü içerisinde çözmek istediğimiz için bir Türkiye partisiyiz.*"

[135] Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 16 March 2010.
"[DTP] *Kürtlerin hakkını en doğru temelde savunan Türkiye partisidir. Etnik değil. Kürt partisi tanımlamasını bu partiye yakıştıramıyorum çünkü biz Kürt sorunun etnik bir sorun değil temelinde bir demokrasi sorunu olduğu algılaması içindeyiz.*"

[136] Sebahat Tuncel, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 March 2010.
"*S.T.: Türkiye partisi olmayan çok parti var parlamentoda. Örneğin CHP bir Türkiye partisi değil. MHP bir Türkiye partisi değil.*
Ş.K.: Neden?
S.T.: Çünkü onlar aslında Türkiye'de yaşayan 20 milyon Kürd'ü yok sayan, Kürtlerin hak ve özgürlüklerini yok sayan ve bir çözüm projesi olmayan… Hatta AKP de dahil yok yani… Aslında

(Sebahat Tuncel, Age: 34-Istanbul deputy)

> Some suppose that we are a nationalist party like the [Turkish Nationalist] MHP. But, we are not. (…) Even if the [Iraqi] Kurds attack the identity of Turks in Kirkuk, we defend the difference and values of those Turks. Crude nationalism is different from defending culture[s].[137]
>
> (Ahmet Türk, Age: 68, DTP co-chair, Mardin deputy)

The DTP elites clearly voiced their intention of being a "Party for Turkey" while still tending towards identity politics based on cultural rights and the recognition of the Kurdish identity as a major agenda item and this was a continuity from predecessors of the DTP to the BDP. As a result, the MPs and officials of the DTP including even those politically banned, namely Ahmet Türk used "present" language not "past" although the DTP was closed at the time of the interviews. Thus, the internalization of the closure of their political parties possibly drove the legal Kurdish movement into a crisis between their endeavor for Turkey-fication by legal means on one side and being prohibited due to being "different" from the mainstream political regime in Turkey on the other. This crisis of the pro-Kurdish parties is present in the statement of Sakık, who justified their ethnic sensitivities and ethnicity-based priorities by stressing its temporariness and being a reactionary yet peaceful attitude towards denial policy of the state. In the final analysis, he put accent on their not ignoring various problems of Turkey other than the Kurdish Question in addition to pursuing identity politics:

> We have the right to pursue identity politics. If our identity had not been rejected and denied, it might have been argued that we didn't have such a right, but now we have this right. What we do is definitely not Kurdish

---

Türkiye partisi Türk, Kürt, Laz, Çerkes, Alevi bütün toplumsal kesimlerin sorunlarına bir çözüm perspektifi olan bir partidir."

[137] Ahmet Türk, interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 18 April 2010.
"*Bazıları bizim MHP gibi milliyetçi bir parti olduğumuzu sanıyor. Ama değiliz.(…) Kerkükte bile Kürtler Türklerin kimliğine saldırır ise O türkün farklılığını değerlerini savunuruz kaba milliyetçilik başka bir şey kültürü sahiplenmek farklı bir şey.*"

> nationalism. Nationalism does not flourish in our body, but our right to identity politics derives from the denial of our identity. While we pursue this identity politics, we don't turn our back on main problems of Turkey. We perceive them as our own problems. Yes, for instance, in a period of three years the Kurdish identity has been on the agenda more, but we also put other problems on the agenda. We have such a political tradition; we make mention of coexistence. This coexistence is carried out by adopting other problems but struggling for identity is also our most democratic right.[138]
>
> (Sırrı Sakık, Age: 53, Muş deputy)

Sakık's words reveal a paradoxical situation. They strive to be broadly-based to lessen the degree of ethnicity labeled on their political line. Yet they are repeatedly referred to as an ethnicity-based party; even sometimes as a Kurdish *nationalist* party, which is usually used with references to Kurdish *secessionism*. Naturally, this inability to convince the public about what they are *not* makes the pro-Kurdish legal domain squeezed. At that point it should be kept in mind that the pro-Kurdish parties' tradition did not dramatically move away from the Kurdish nationalist movement in a sharp manner historically or discursively. Yet, later actors of the pro-Kurdish legal movement sided more with broadly-based perspective instead of a nationalist discourse and praxis. Accordingly, images played a key role in the incomplete project of being non-ethnic. For instance, the DTP elites have some complaints about denial of their attempts to be a "Party for Turkey" especially via the media. These manipulations of the social and political world by reproducing exaggerated, or underestimated if not totally distorted images of the policy agenda

---

[138] Sırrı Sakık, interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 18 April 2010.
"*Kimliğimiz üzerinden siyaset yapma hakkımız var. Kimliğimiz red ve inkar edilmeseydi böyle bir hakkımızın olmadığı savunulabilirdi ancak şu anda bu hakkımız var. Bizim yaptığımız bir Kürt milliyetçiliği asla değil. Milliyetçilik bizim bedenimizde filizlenmez ama kimlik siyaseti yapma hakkımız kimliğimizin reddedilmesinden kaynaklanıyor. Biz bu kimlik siyasetini yaparken Türkiye'nin temel sorunlarına sırt çevirmiyoruz. Onları da kendi sorunlarımız olarak algılıyoruz. Evet mesela 3 yıllık süre içersinde Kürt kimliği diğer sorunlardan daha fazla gündeme gelmiştir ama biz diğer sorunları da gündeme getiriyoruz. Böyle bir siyasal geleneğimiz var; ortak birlikte yaşamdan bahsediyoruz. Bu ortaklaşma diğer sorunlara sahip çıkarak yapılır ama kimliğin mücadelesini sürdürmek de en demokratik hakkımız.*"

of the DTP are introduced as a key point that affected their chance to be a "Party for Turkey" negatively:

> The problems of Turkey are many, but as a matter of course we are a party that is perceived rather with the Kurdish Question. In Turkey, there is a media embargo on the other [than the Kurdish issue] things we do. There are things [bias, double-standard?] against us by the system. I mean, we insisted on matters that we contemplated and approved. This is at the same time our responsibility not only to Kurds but also to the entire society of Turkey because the peoples of Turkey have been hitherto misinformed and there has been experienced a state of otherization via this misinformation. Therefore, we are in an attempt to find how to do this better. (…) Besides, we have Turkish friends with us. This is also a significant thing because [it means] Turkey's perception [of the DTP], in other words, the meeting of Turkish people with us… Because, as I have just said, an ethnic perception [of the DTP] was created. This is *not* something we chose. We do not consider ourselves that way.[139]
>
> (Sebahat Tuncel, Age: 34-Istanbul deputy)

The above-mention crisis of the DTP politicians derived from the conflict-prone situation in which they are labeled as mere Kurdish politicians despite their increasing attempts to be broadly-based, nationwide politicians of wider segments of Turkey. Apart from this misrecognition if not non-recognition of the DTP agenda, there is significant point that points out to the crisis encountered within the DTP. This time, incompatibility occurs between the "pro-Turkey-fication elites" and the more Kurdish Question-oriented grassroots of the party. The following chapter evaluates this very differentiation which is a question of priorities that brings about the questioning of an entity with different perspectives by its major constituents, the grassroots and officials.

---

[139] Sebahat Tuncel, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 March 2010. "*Türkiye'nin sorunları çok fazla ama biz daha çok Kürt sorunuyla algılanan bir partiyiz doğal olarak. Yaptığımız diğer şeylere Türkiye'de medyanın ambargosu var. Sistemin bize karşı şeyleri var. Yani düşündüğümüz ve doğru bildiğimiz konularda ısrar ettik. Bu aynı zamanda yalnız Kürtlere değil Türkiye toplumuna karşı da sorumluluğumuzdur. Çünkü Türkiye halkları yanlış bilgilendirildi bugüne kadar. Ve bu yanlış bilgi üzerinden bir ötekileştirme durumu yaşandı. Dolayısıyla bunu daha etkin nasıl yapabiliriz çabamız var. (…) Ayrıca bu dönem Türk arkadaşlarımız da var bizimle. Bu da önemli bir şey. Çünkü Türkiye [DTP] algısının yani Türk halkının bizimle buluşması…Çünkü biraz önce dediğim gibi etnik bir algı yaratıldı. Bu bizim seçtiğimiz bir şey değil. Biz öyle görmüyoruz kendimizi.*"

CHAPTER 4

GRASSROOTS: PARTY CULTURE AND PRIORITIES OF THE VOTER

This thesis has an intention to include the voice of the DTP grassroots movement as well as its elites and their official representation. This chapter focuses on the party culture and expectations of the DTP voters in the Esenyurt district of Istanbul. Therefore, it has a big say for the investigated achievement of the DTP in attempt to be a "Party for Turkey" (*Türkiye partisi*) vis-à-vis its voters. Theoretically, it derives from my approach to ethnicize political parties based on what I have already called "Synthesis Model" in Figure 1, the combination of two rival views debating over whether the *party's support base* or its *message to the voter* count as the criterion that determines being ethnic. Accordingly, it would not be convenient to be stuck in 'high political' intra-elite debates over the status of the party. The inclination of social historians to include the everyday lives of "ordinary people" constitutes another motive that drove me to examine the representation of the party grassroots. Kaye, in his comprehensive work on the British Marxist School of History, exemplifies this anti-elitist approach to historiography with reference to a perspective known as *history from below* or *history from the bottom up*:

> (…) as opposed to a history written from the perspective of the elites or ruling classes –which traditionally has characterized historical studies- the British Marxist historians (…) have taken seriously the historical experiences, actions and struggles of the 'lower classes', recovering the past which was *made* by them but was not *written* by them.[140]

[140] Harvey J. Kaye, *The British Marxist Historians: An Introductory Analysis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p. 6.

Therefore, this work -although using the theoretical assets of political science- methodologically tries to contribute to the process which can help "recover" the neglected experience of the DTP grassroots, including its voters and members as well as officials.[141]

Why Istanbul?

One may question the validity of choosing samples only from the DTP voters in Esenyurt and drawing conclusions about being an ethnic or nonethnic party based on such allegations as other samples from Eastern Turkey, the geographical historical center of the Kurdish Question, might have possibly led to different conclusions about the stance of the voter. Such concerns are understandable, especially when the complexity of the Kurdish Issue and spectrum of the human capital of the Kurdish Movement are considered. However, due to the "de-Kurdification" of the Kurdish villages all through 1990s due to ongoing "low-intensity war" circumstances between Turkish troops and the PKK, a large number of people had to migrate from their villages to eastern provinces like Diyarbakır or to western metropolis like Istanbul and Izmir. This process gave birth to the making of a devoted grassroots movement for pro-Kurdish parties that operated like the agents of mostly lower class, victimized Kurds newly settled in the big cities (either forcibly migrated or economically, socially, etc., motivated to do so because of having no better alternatives.) For instance a DTP voter in a squatter-neighborhood of Istanbul and another one whose village was burnt down by the state and thus who had to migrate to Diyarbakır share many things in common though with some nuances. Both have

[141] For further discussion on new approaches to 'subject' matter in contemporary social sciences particularly sociology, see Alain Touraine, *Le retour de l'acteur: essai de sociologie* (The Return of the Actor: Essays on Sociology) (Paris: Fayard, 2002).

had to face the trouble of adaptation to urban life encountering shifts from agricultural production to service sector or industry, for example. Both groups are more or less likely to have problems relating to accommodation, education of their children, and employment of their households and so on.

The conduct of this fieldwork in Istanbul granted another advantage which cannot be underestimated with respect to the question of *Türkiyelilik.* In Istanbul, particularly in the Esenyurt district, a "Turkey mosaic" clearly exists. The coexistence of lower, middle and upper classes; in regional/ethnic terms: Black Sea region originating people, Kurds, Bulgarian Turkish immigrants, Alevis, Gypsies, and *Caferi*s altogether in an almost half a million populated district may imply meaningful inferences on the notion of *Türkiyelileşme*. In other words, in such a large area as Esenyurt where wide segments of the "society of Turkey" live in sizeable numbers, the achievement in transformation to a broadly-based political line can be best tested. Thus, the possibility of Kurds' success in this process is not independent from their being motivated by other elements of the society.

Why Esenyurt as the Field Site?

Esenyurt, a newly formed administrative district located on the European side of Istanbul, has a population of around 335,000 in a 42.90 square kilometer area.[142] According to the Address-Based Population Registration System Population Census for the year 2008 by TUIK (Turkey Statistics Institute), Esenyurt's population is 373,017, which means it is the 14th most-crowded among 39 districts

[142] Source : http://www.ibb.gov.tr/trTR/Pages/Haber.aspx?NewsID=15773 [04March 2010].

in Istanbul.[143] From 1989 to 2004, its population rose from 71,525 to 277,700. It is a newly developing town with vast migration movements from all over the country. Apart from others including those who came from the Black Sea Region, Central Anatolia and post-Communist Bulgaria (ethnic Turks fleeing oppressive Bulgarian state policies especially in the early 1990s), Kurds make up one of the major constituents of the population in Esenyurt. Not disparate from the other above-mentioned groups, Kurds in Esenyurt mostly belong to lower or lower-middle social classes, usually working in the construction, manufacturing, and service sectors. We should also note that a sizeable Roma population resides here with quite visible settlements most of which are accumulated in the Gypsy Neighborhood *(Çingene Mahallesi)* centered in the downtown of the district.

As in the above-taken snapshot of Esenyurt, it can be argued that this district is a relevant sample to gain insight into Turkey in general. For the DTP's part, the process of being a "Party for Turkey" with a predominantly Kurdish grassroots support could be properly studied in such an area as Esenyurt. In 29 March 2009 Local Elections, the DTP received 14.7 percent (28,833) of the votes and thus came third after the AKP (42.2 percent) and CHP (31.7). The MHP came fifth with 7.9 percent.[144] In the 2007 National Elections, the then -in order not to be blocked by the national threshold- independent candidate for Istanbul 3rd Region, Sebahat Tuncel, who would join the DTP after the election, was elected with some 97,000 votes from the area including the overwhelmingly crowded districts like Bağcılar, Küçükçekmece and Esenyurt. That is why she was included in the research as an interviewee.

[143] Source: http://www.tuik.gov.tr/IcerikGetir.do?istab_id=139 [04 March 2010].

[144] Source: http://secim.haberler.com/2009/sonuc.asp?il=esenyurt [05March 2010].

Who Are They?

Among 22 in-depth interviews conducted with the DTP people in the course of this research, 17 of them were carried out in the headquarters of the DTP in Esenyurt and its voters in the district. Therefore, it can be said that politics in the vernacular lies at the heart of this thesis. Nevertheless, all these 17 people cannot be counted as "ordinary people" voting for the party and staying home after the polls. Three were officials of the DTP Esenyurt District Organization (*Esenyurt İlçe Örgütü*).[145] As for the remaining 14, a distinction between "active members" and "voters" should be made. However, there is no common property among these "active" participants, such as the degree of education or class base. An illiterate housewife, Makbule; a lycee student, Berivan; a religious practicer, *mele* (Kurdish equivalent for the Turkish word *imam*) Abdurrahman; and an ex-official of the pro-Kurdish parties who lost her two daughters, that were PKK militants.[146] Hometown, education level, exact class base among these active members differed to a certain extent. Therefore, the common denominator among the diverse active members can be traced in the "consciousness of the Kurdish cause" and willingness to fight actively for their "values" (*değerler*) by them and enhance this consciousness in others, too. Here it should be noted that voters of the DTP in Esenyurt other than active members are not simply de-politicized masses. Almost all of my informants in the category of voters stated that they felt like home in the DTP headquarters in Esenyurt and that they had attended demonstrations, meetings, and election campaigns of the DTP from time to time spontaneously.

[145] These officials are co-chairs Metin Sanin and İlkay Özkan Kartal and an experienced party official responsible for financial issues and public relations , Mehmet Hanefi Kaya, who provided me easy access to the DTP people in the course of the field research.

[146] As will be explained detail below, all names used for non-officials are pseudonyms.

Out of 17 informants in the field site Esenyurt, five were women aged between 18-53 and the remaining 12, men between ages 23-55. Two of the informants defined themselves as “non-Kurd”. Interestingly, both of them stated that they were not Kurds, but DTP voters and supporters though I had not asked such a question to them. One of them identified himself as being indigenous (*yerli*) referring to his Turkish origin emerging from having been settled for long in Kars province of the North East and the other one to a *Terekeme* (Caucasian-Turkic) origin in Ardahan province of the same region. The remaining 15 totally identified themselves with Kurdishness. During my *participant observation* in the DTP Esenyurt Headquarters, I had chats with hundreds of people visiting the party cafeteria for different reasons and with many of them I had to speak in *Kurmanci* (the most widely spoken Kurdish dialect both in Turkey and entire Kurdistan). During these casual talks, I was asked whether I was a “Kurd” or not. From time to time and I strove to speak fluent Kurdish in an attempt to prove that I was *insider* enough to deserve to be among them.

Excluding the 22 year-old co-chair İlkay Özkan Kartal, who was a married young woman, the three youngest informants between the ages 18-28 were single while remaining 14 were married with young or middle-age. The average of the ages of my informants was approximately 41. One of the flaws in this work is the disability to include old aged people as interviewees. Although I had short chats with elder voters while drinking tea in the cafeteria of the party headquarters, they were quite reluctant to be interviewed formally. Therefore, I conducted *informal interview*s with them. Also social and cultural factors might have counted for the difficulty to reach woman informants in a one to one environment necessary for an interview. These factors, if not made it impossible to have contact with female

informants strictly, it might have caused them to set back by self-censor. Yet, these informal interviews did not function as successfully as the formal ones. As Bernard explains, this is due to the more tiring nature of the former which burdens a researcher's mind with the extra endeavor to remember the details of the notes jotted down about the talks taking place in the "field site."[147] In the case of the DTP people, informal interviewing helped me to a great extent especially to build greater rapport with them and therefore have better access to other informants and to be more familiar with the concerns of the grassroots in Esenyurt which might have been overlooked otherwise.

Methodological Concerns

Although the question of being a "Party for Turkey" pervaded my mind throughout my research, the design and analysis of the fieldwork developed in the course of the field experience. That is to say I found myself in what ethnographers call *iterative-inductive* research, meaning a reflexive process which operates throughout every stage of a project.[148] On the other hand, my methodology does not simply fit bare "inductive" approach which enables the researcher to make an investigation independent from a theoretical base. In O'Reilly's definition, a *deductive* approach as the antonym of inductive approach is "one where a hypothesis is derived from

[147] Harvey Russell Bernard, "Unstructured and Semistructured Interviewing" in *Social Research Methods*, (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 190.

[148] Hammersley and Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 3rd edn, (London: Routlegde, 2007), p. 24.

existing theory and the empirical world is explored and data are collected, in order to test the truth or falsity of the hypothesis."[149]

This thesis stands in a mid-range position that takes the "ethnic party systems" theory as the starting point, but does not avoid focusing on new perspectives developed in the field process. Thus, the DTP's theory-based ethnic label is reconciled with new opportunities to change and create different forms of existence and political activity.

Another methodological question regarding this field research is the dimension of ethics. Ethical concerns about qualitative field research are crucial. As a researcher, a participant observer in the grassroots organization of the DTP in Esenyurt, I strove to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of my informants. I revealed my "researcher identity" and avoided any covert research all through the field process. Pseudonyms were used for the informants. It's an interesting fact that almost all of my informants stated that they would not mind their real names being used in the analysis of the interviews. This was not true for the Turkish voters of the party. They did not want their names to be revealed. That might be interpreted in two ways: First, the Turkish interviewees may have felt unsecure about explicitly stating that they voted for a "Kurdish party."

Second, they might have been anxious about being perceived as weird for voting for a Kurdish party. Both inferences drawn from this methodological issue point out to the ethnic perception of the DTP. Thus it is obvious that method cannot be strictly separated from substance. My offer to use pseudonyms for interviewees was considered unnecessary for most of the DTP people, especially by Kurdish voters of the party. The majority of them, especially those more active in grassroots

[149] Karen O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods*, (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 26.

politics of the party, spoke in a similar way, such as "No, I don't mind if you use my real name" or "It is OK for me. You can use my real name. *We* are used to troubles. *We*[150] no longer fear." To my surprise, I was even criticized by an interviewee due to my offer to keep his name secret or replace it with a pseudonym:

> Why won't you use my real name! Let me tell you something: Don't take seriously the speeches of those who conceal their names because, the word of such a person would be worthless. In addition, it would not even be helpful for your research. It is a scientific work. [151]
>
> (Ahmet Yılmaz, Age: 58- baker/ex-party official)

Once again it should be noted that this informant was not only a former official of the pro-Kurdish parties, but also a father whose two daughters that were PKK militants who had been killed. It is likely that their demand not to conceal their names came out of the notion of "sacrifice" for what they call "*our values*," meaning the "Kurdish cause." That was a wide-spread manner among my informants. Yet, with an ethical concern to protect them, I gave pseudonyms to all my informants except for the party officials, who were already public figures and wanted to express opinion as themselves and the above mentioned ex-official of the same party tradition.

I preferred conducting in-depth interviews with all my informants. These interviews lasted from fifty minutes to two hours depending on the convenience of the informant and of the physical and psychological environment in which the interview was done. Among these qualitative interviewing experiences, I also had the opportunity to conduct a focus-group interview in which I addressed my questions not only to a single informant but to a group of three interviewees

[150] *We* language implying the party identity based on loyalty to the Kurdish cause will be analysed below.

[151] Ahmet Yılmaz, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 12 January 2010. *"Neden gerçek adımı kullanmayacakmışsın! Sana bir şey söyleyeyim mi: Adını saklayanların konuşmalarını ciddiye alma. Böyle bir kişinin sözünün bir kıymeti olmaz ki. Sonra, araştırmana da faydası olmaz. Bu bilimsel bir çalışma*."

comprising a couple and their daughter. The focus group was more fruitful than the single-informant interviews in that the former uncovered certain points that might not be uttered in the latter. For instance, when I asked about their everyday life in Esenyurt, the mother in the focus group stated that they were not discriminated against due to being Kurd in their neighborhood,[152] but her daughter immediately rejected her mother's statement saying that they were truly stigmatized, being called "reptile" or "crude" (*kro*)[153]

As for special difficulties I encountered in the course of this research, two major issues should be mentioned: access and the problem of language: Since access and sampling are two interlinked matters of ethnographic field research a successful sampling cannot be imagined without safe and sound access to the field. In the case of the DTP, I was lucky enough to have relatives living in this district. One of them was my *sponsor*, allowing me into the field site. In this way, I was introduced to Mehmet Hanefi Kaya, an experienced official of the DTP Esenyurt Organization, who then provided me several contacts ranging from voters to the DTP Esenyurt Organization co-chair. Despite his generous assistance to provide me access to informants, I found it risky to "penetrate" in the field through a single channel. This could be risky because it would possibly provide me with a *biased sampling*. Thus, I tried to reach the DTP voters by different means. For that matter, I endeavored to build a strong rapport both with usual visitors and newcomers to the party headquarters in Esenyurt. In this regard, it took me nearly two months to gain a reputation among the DTP people in the field site. In time I felt that I was perceived

[152] Gozé (pseudonym), focus-group interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 21 January 2010.

[153] Ziné (pseudonym), focus-group interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 21 January 2010.

as an "enlightened Kurdish researcher of the Kurdish cause" by the sympathizers of the party often visiting the headquarters. Moreover, I made friends and developed personal ties with them. This rapport building process also provided me several informants, both formal and informal interviewees.

My use of *impression management*[154] might have played a significant role in this process particularly as I strove to speak to my informants in fluent Kurdish or at least Turkish with a Kurdish accent, either of which would make the informants feel not as distant from me as a researcher. Nevertheless, this so-called bilingualism would also be problematic in some interviews. As I have already mentioned, most of my informants spoke Kurdish as their mother tongue and they could also speak Turkish though with distinct Kurdish accents. Interviews were conducted in Turkish, despite including dialogues in Kurdish from time to time. Whenever the conversations were about such fields as politics and society, some of the informants had difficulty even in understanding the question itself. This may imply that Turkish, which is the dominant language in "public life," was not learnt properly even by the Kurds living in Istanbul.

On the other hand, when I addressed my questions in Kurdish, they still had troubles in answering them thoroughly since Kurdish was the language of "informality" and "private life" for them, which might have been reinforced by the lack of education in Kurdish. In other words, when I talked about casual things like "*How is life going?*" they would respond in Kurdish, but when the question was something like "*What is your idea about the parties of the tradition DTP belongs*

[154] Hammersley and Atkinson, ibid., p.66-73.
Impression management as an ethnographic method refers to various aspects of researcher's self-presentation such as dress, speech and demeanour. In an overt research compared to a covert research, it is more difficult for the researcher to manage his/her impression in a way to make field relations work in his/her favor. Since you tell everyone that you are doing a field research with them, your attempts to manage your personality and appearance closer to their identity and characteristics in order to be considered as an *insider* meaning "one of them" might be found artificial.

to?" unexceptionally the response would be given in Turkish. Therefore, the anticipated advantage of bilingualism turned out to be a problem, what some linguists call "one and a half lingualism," which means to speak two languages, but without a safe knowledge of the either to express oneself comfortably. Put differently, the interview process itself revealed a split that my Kurdish informants lived through in their daily life: That is, the split between Kurdish as the language of informality, domestic life and Turkish as the language for discussing politics.

Finally, it should be noted that the timing of the interviews might have certain effects on the findings of the research in the sense that my informants who were DTP voters or officials were definitely affected by it. All the interviews were conducted in a two month period following the closure of the DTP by the Constitutional Court in 11 December 2009. As a result, this might have contributed to rise of the ethnic tone of support base for the DTP.

'*Our* Values' between Honor and Betrayal

Among the Kurdish voters of the DTP in Esenyurt, its support base was usually legitimized with loyalty to Kurdishness. According to many of my informants, Kurdishness, with values such as honor and trustworthiness, basically depended on loyalty to the Kurdish cause that in the political arena necessitated to vote for the DTP, which was obviously seen as the party of Kurds; in their words: '*our* party'

> If you want to do something for your own language you need to vote for your language. If you are a Kurd you should vote for your party but I didn't force people to that. Kurds who don't vote for DTP… That's the way it is in East and Southeast Anatolia. I see them as betrayers [to the Kurdish cause].[155]

[155] Fatih (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 January 2010.

(Fatih, Age: 28- construction worker)

The widely used "we" language of the voters implies "Kurds" at first sight. However, it means further than that. In this context, "we" is those Kurds who at least vote for the DTP and who-if possible- strives for its success. Therefore, Kurds who vote for other political parties are condemned as dishonorable and disgraceful traitors betraying their own people, meaning fellow Kurds.

> Our vote is our honor! If we don't vote for it [the DTP and the parties of the same tradition], who else will we vote for? Our party… It is *our* party, the Kurdish people. We have only one party. If we become dishonorable and traitor… None [of us] is likely to vote for the CHP, MHP or others. I tell everyone [Kurds]: [he starts to speak Kurdish here] "Come on, Let *us* vote for *ourselves*. Don't we betray!"[156]
>
> (Emin, Age: 27- textile worker)

The last word Emin uses is *nefroşin* meaning "don't (we) sell." Use of the word 'sell' for 'betray' has another connotation than merely not vote for the DTP. Some of my informants argued that the ruling AKP had gained votes thanks to distributing 'material aid' like food, coal and refrigerators. Therefore, according to them, "dishonorable Kurds" vote for the AKP which is seen as selling one's honor for a pack of macaroni:

> The AKP is a traitor. It collects *our* [Kurds'] votes forcefully by [distributing free] coal, macaroni, washing machine, dishwasher, refrigerator… Our vote is our dignity, our honor. A man should not sell his vote. [If he does so] he loses his honor and dignity to [the AKP] Tayyip Erdoğan. Let *us* unite. We are all Kurds. We have only one party.[157]

"*Diline sahip çıkmak istiyorsan dilin için oy kullan, Kürt isen kendi partine oy vermelisin demekteyim ama zor kullanmadım. DTP'ye oy vermeyen Kürtler doğu ve güneydoğuda bu böyledir, onları satılmış olarak atfediyorum.*"

[156] Emin (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 January 2010. "*Oyumuz namusumuzdur. Ona vermesek başka kime vereceğiz. Bizim partimiz… Bizim Kürt halkının partisidir. Bizim tek bir tane partimiz var. Biz şerefsizlik, kalleşlik yaparsak… CHP'ye MHP'ye, diğerlerine veren olmaz. Herkese [Kürtlere] diyorum:'Werin em rayé xwe bidin xwe. Em nefroşin!"*

[157] Emin (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 January 2010. "*AKP haindir. Bizim oylarımızı zorla alıyor, kömürle, makarnayla, çamaşır makinasıyla, bulaşık makinasıyla, buzdolabıyla… Oy én me şerefé namusé me ye. Divé meri oyé xwe nefroşe. [Ew ki oyé xwe difroşe] ew namusé xwe dide Tayyip Erdoğan. Werin em bibin yek. Em hemû Kurdun. Yek partiyé me tené heye."*

(Emin, Age: 27- textile worker)

The widely used *we* language among my informants has certain implications apart from being voters of a political party. As they emphasize the vitality of the Kurdish cause to their lives, the significance of the PKK is also implied. For many of my informants, what they called "our values" referred not only to moral values such as equality, tolerance, respect for one's [particularly the Kurdish] identity, but also the Kurdish paramilitary "insurgency" (*serhildan*) carried out by the PKK. In other words, my informants persistently and most of the time openly, valued the PKK militants and regarded slain militants as "martyrs." It should also be noted that almost all of my informants had some relatives that have, in their words, "gone to the mountain" and become "PKK guerillas." This deep internalization of the PKK by the DTP voters was paradoxically made possible and reinforced by the maltreatments to what they were exposed by the state authorities, ranging from the operations of the army including depletion of Kurdish villages to detention by the police. The more they are accused of being a threat due to their sympathy for the PKK, the stronger their emotional ties with the PKK become and thus they value its militants as "sacrificing heroes of the Kurdish people." Fatih mentions the maltreatment he was exposed to in his first contact with preceding pro-Kurdish legal party DEHAP:

> There was fear at first. DEHAP was the party in that period. Our DEHAP visits had our Turkish friends saying "how come you are going? You might be monitored" And that was true. We were actually being monitored and for that reason I was questioned by police forces why I had visited the Party and what had I done while I was there. Most of the time I had to bear detention in police station (…) Once I was taken to the police station with my eyes tied when I was carrying on the activity in DTP youth branches and I was offered by the police to be a spy.[158]

[158] Fatih (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 January 2010. *"Başlarda korku vardı. DEHAP vardı o dönem. Türk arkadaşlarımız DEHAP'ı ziyaret etmemizden ötürü 'Nasıl gidersiniz, sizi takip ederler.' gibi konuşurlardı ve hakikaten takip edilmekteydik ve sırf bu yüzden niçin partiyi ziyaret ettiğim ve ziyaretlerimde neler yaptığım gibi emniyet güçlerinin bu*

(Fatih, Age: 28- construction worker)

Emin, who answered my question about whether the DTP was a Kurdish party or a Party for Turkey with the sharp response: "We are absolutely a Kurdish party, *heval*![159]" and who considered the end of the bloodshed between the Turkish army and the PKK and freedom of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan as the "most important issues in Turkey" had already expressed his deep traumatic mood deriving from his past experiences caused by the state authorities. All through the interview, he repeatedly mentioned his bitter past hysterically:

> They gave my father an injection and tortured him. I was tortured, too. I swear *heval*! It was such a torture that, *heval*, we won't forget it in all our life. They burnt down our home. They tore apart our animals. We had animals: cows, sheep, goats… They tore them all apart. We won't forget it all our life. We suffered too much, really too much![160]
>
> (Emin, Age: 27- textile worker)

DTP as the Representative of Kurds

Voters of the Democratic Society Party in Esenyurt consider their party to be the true representative of Kurds in Turkey. As I have already mentioned, the fact that not all- even not the majority of- Kurds vote for the DTP is legitimized on the grounds that Kurds who do not vote for the DTP are not loyal to the Kurdish cause.

---

yönde sorularına muhattap edildim. Karakolda ifade vermek zorunda kaldım çoğu zaman (…) DTP Gençlik kollarında faaliyet sürdürürken gözüm bağlı olarak karakola götürüldüm. Gözüm bağlı karanlık bir yere götürüldüm ve bana ajanlık teklif edildi."

[159] The word *heval* means "friend" in Kurdish. In this context, the informants use it in the meaning of comradeship to the Kurdish cause. My informants knew that I was also Kurd and especially Emin had difficulty in expressing himself in Turkish and therefore, during the interview, we often had to switch from Turkish to Kurdish. Thus, he might feel this comradeship with me.

[160] Emin (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 January 2010. "*Babama iğne yaptılar, işkence ettiler. Ben de işkence gördüm. Sana yemin ederim heval. Öyle bir işkence verdiler ki heval, ömür boyu unutmayacağız. Bizim evimizi yaktılar. Hayvanlarımızı paramparça ettiler. Hayvanlar vardı, inekler, koyunlar, keçiler vardı… Paramparça ettiler. Ömür boyu unutmayacağız. Çok çektik, çok!*

Thus, the task of representing Kurds is granted to the DTP. However, this claim of representation is proof of the ethnic character of the party. Gozé's statement is a striking example demonstrating the fact that the DTP is perceived as an ethnic party by its voters with a clear classification of political parties as those of Kurds and Turks:

> I do not have enough information. [But] for example: A Turk makes mention of a fellow Turk, who votes for the DTP, saying "one who has dirt in his blood votes for the DTP; otherwise how could a Turk vote for the DTP!" But a Kurd votes for the AKP. This person says, "What is wrong with that? I will vote [for the AKP] and get the title deed. We [both Kurds and Turks] pray and fast. So what is the difference between us?" and this person votes for the AKP. A Kurd, who does not seek any advantage, doesn't vote for the AKP. Kurds follow *Turkish parties* because of poverty.[161]
>
> (Gozé, Age: 52-housewife)

> Yes, not all of the Kurds vote for the DTP, but there are Turkish people who votes for the DTP among us. In Esenyurt 30,000 people voted for the DTP. I am sure that at least 5000 of it or more are Turks. In other words, I assume how I vote for the DTP blindly, the groups whom the Turks support tell them to vote for the DTP and they vote for the DTP. Whoever is nominated by the DTP, nobody questions the criteria [qualifications] of that candidate. If my party nominated this candidate, it must be the best choice. Then, I must vote for it. I vote blindly. For example, I vote blindly because the DTP is the party that voices my problem and that defends *my identity*.[162]
>
> (Makbule, Age: 33-housewife)

[161] Gozé (pseudonym), focus-group interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 21 January 2010. "*O kadar bilgim yok. Bir Türk, mesela DTP'ye oy veren Türk hakkında "Kanında kir varsa verir, yoksa bir Türk nasıl oy versin DTP'ye*" *der; ama bir Kürt gider AKP'ye oy verir. "Ne var ki ben oy verecem, tapuyu kazanacam.*" *der. "Namaz kılıyoruz, oruç tutuyoruz ne var farkımız* [sic]" *der Kürt ve oyunu gider AKP'ye verir. Çıkar peşinde olmayan bir Kürt AKP'ye oy vermez. Yoksulluktan düşüyor Kürtler Türk partilerinin peşine.*"

[162] Makbule (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 December 2009. *"Bütün Kürtler, evet, DTP'ye oy vermiyorlar ancak aramızda DTP'ye oy veren Türkler de var. Esenyurt'ta 30 bin oy aldı DTP, ben eminim ki bundan en az beş bini veya fazlası Türk'tür. Yani Türklerin DTP'ye oy vermesini nasıl ben körü körüne DTP'ye oy veriyorsam onlar da destekledikleri örgüt DTP'ye oy atın diyorsa o yüzden atıyordur sanırım. DTP kimi getirirse getirsin o adaydaki kriterlere sorgulayıcı bakmıyor kimse. Benim partim bu adayı getirmiş ise en iyisi budur. O zaman ona oy vermem lazım. Körü körüne oy veriyorum. Mesela benim sorunumu dile getiren parti benim kimliğimi savunan parti DTP. O yüzden körü körüne oy veriyorum bende."*

On the other hand, the most noteworthy points in this party are introduced not only as abstract Kurdishness, but as "humanistic values" and "emotionality" deriving from the lives of flesh and bone real persons. Yet, these persons -implicitly or explicitly- imply no one but Kurds:

> *Ş.K.: What is the most noteworthy thing in this party?*
> B.: It is not like we support the DTP only because it is our party… Because of certain pains, in the emotional sense, they want something to happen, and because they see the DTP as the only alternative. Here are the expectations: We have losses, unresolved assassinations, 4000 children are in prison, 3600 villages were emptied, 50,000 people are dead, and 17,000 people were murdered in unresolved assassinations… That these are ignored makes these people emotional, at this point I see solidarity. The most valued thing in this party is humanistic values. I observe everything, this solidarity and approach to people. For instance, there is no sexual discrimination in this party. Humanistic values encourage this solidarity. Maybe it [the DTP] is attractive to us because we are in search of something. The attractive thing is we have realized that signboard parties which do not meet our expectations will not bring any solution. Grievances have got to the top, in emotional sense, and now they want their expectations to be met and this causes emotionality.[163]
>
> (Berivan, Age: 18-student)

Moreover, Berivan says: "Another alternative to represent the Kurdish identity… No, I can't see any alternative to the DTP." This strengthens the status of the DTP as an ethnic party that represents the "Kurdish identity" in the eyes of its voters. Therefore, in a way, she helps us reveal that her real perception of the DTP is still ethnicity-based.

---

[163] Berivan (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 27 December 2009. "*Ş.K.: Bu partide en dikkat çekici olan şey nedir?*
B.: DTP bizim partimizdir sahip çıkalım gibisinden değil… Belli acılar yüzünden duygusal anlamda artık bir şeylerin olmasını istiyorlar ve kendilerine tek alternatif olarak gördükleri partinin DTP olmasından dolayı. Beklentiler şunlar ;kayıplarımız faili meçhullerimiz var, 4000 çocuk cezaevinde, 3600 köy boşaltılmıştır, 50.000 insan ölmüştür, 17000 faili meçhulümüz var. Bunların görmezden gelinmesi duygusallaştırıyor bu insanları. İşte ben burada dayanışma görüyorum. Bu partinin en çokdeğer verdiği şey insani değerlerdir bu dayanışmayı insanlara olan yaklaşımını hepsini gözlemliyorum. Bir kere bu partide cinsiyet ayrımı yoktur. Bu dayanışmayı yüreklendiren insanlık değerleridir. Belki bize çekici gelen tarafı arayış içinde olmamızdır, çekici olan ise beklentilerimize cevap veremeyen tabela partilerinin bir çözüm getiremeyeceklerini idrak etmemizdir. Acılar kavrularak zirveye çıkmış ve duygusal anlamda artık beklentilerinin gerçekleşmesini istiyorlar bu beklenti duygusallığa yol açıyor.

A 'Party for Turkey' with '*Our* Values'

My informants constituted an ethnic support base for the DTP and most of their statements were compatible with this Kurdish identity-centered perception of *their* party. Nevertheless, their understanding of a Kurdish party did not necessarily rule out the possibility to be a "Party for Turkey." That is to say, despite prioritizing Kurdishness on any grounds, they did not oppose the idea that the DTP could and should be a "Party for Turkey." When I asked their view on whether the DTP should be a "Party for Turkey," meaning extending its policy agenda to those issues other than the Kurdish Question, they responded positively. Some of them also added such words as:

> Of course, it [the DTP] should be concerned with the problems of the entire Turkey. In addition, we don't have any problems with the Turkish people, but with the state which has deprived us of our rights.[164]
>
> (Selahaddin, Age: 50-worker)

A female informant who also gave the green light for the suggestion that the DTP be a broadly-based "Party for Turkey" justified this with the sisterhood of mothers regardless of their ethnicity:

> The problem of the Turk and Kurd is the same. Poverty is the problem of both; death [caused by the conflict between the army and the PKK] is the problem of both (…) Mothers cry regardless of being Kurd or Turk. Not only the mother of the Kurd, the guerilla, but also that of the Turk, the soldier, cries. So, it is necessary to give a hand to the problem of the Turk, too. Besides we don't have any problem with the Turk. We don't have any problem with the Turkish people.[165]
>
> (Gozé, Age: 53-housewife)

---

[164] Selahaddin (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 16 December 2009. "*Tabi ki bütün Türkiye'nin sorunlarıyla ilgilenmeli. Bir de bizim Türk halkıyla bir sorunumuz yok. Sorun bizi haklarımızdan mahrum bırakan devletle…*"

[165] Gozé (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 21 January 2010. "*Türk'ün de Kürd'ün de sorunu aynı. Fakirlik ikisinin de sorunu, ölüm her ikisinin de sorunu (…) Kürt Türk demeden ağlıyor analar. Sadece Kürd'ün, gerillanın anası değil, Türk'ün, askerin de anası ağlıyor. E o zaman, Türk'ün sorununa da el uzatmak lazım. Zaten, Türkle bir sorunumuz yok. Türk halkıyla sorunumuz yok.*"

The DTP grassroots' doubtlessly perceive their own party as a Kurdish party. However, they find it legitimate to broaden its political scope with a vision that does not exclude any problem of Turkey. At the same time, they want to give messages to the society of Turkey that the DTP is a party to save the rights of the Kurds, the Kurdish identity and the Kurdish language. By doing this, the grassroots keeps their faith that no other actor than the DTP sincerely wants to and by no means can save their rights. Accordingly, they don't mind being considered as a Kurdish party by *others.*

There is a contradictory situation here. It is understandable that the DTP voters want to save their identity, but being perceived as a Kurdish party stands as an obstacle to accomplish its goals as a political party which is -at least in principle- supposed to act not in a particularistic manner. As any political party would like to be supported by wider segments of the society, they also believe that being a "Party for Turkey" would provide them a wider platform on which to express themselves and thus be more active in shaping the future of the country. Especially the officials of the grassroots organization think that way. For instance, the Esenyurt District organization co-chair Metin Sanin describes the scope of the party using the language of the "oppressed" in a way that is not limited to Kurds:

> We are definitely not the party of a certain segment. We reject this. We are in touch with all segments that adopt to live peacefully in this country, that do not think radically, that do not think the way like "you either like it or leave it!", that do not even know what it to separate Alevis, Turks, and Kurds. There are Alevi families from [their hometown] Tunceli, we visit them with our families. Moreover, we are able to maintain political relations with these people. This is same in our By-laws; our doors are open to anyone who wants to live humanely. This party is the party of the oppressed and Kurds are an oppressed people in this country. Yet, they [Kurds] are not the only oppressed people. As we look at this country, everyone is oppressed. Hence, this party is not exclusively the party of Kurds, but of everyone, of all segments [of the society] that are oppressed. Since the people, who were killed, exiled and whose villages were burnt down are Kurds, this segment

> has come to the party of the oppressed and that's why the majority [of the party] are Kurds.[166]
>
> (Metin Sanin, Age: 45-Esenyurt district organization co-chair)

Although it is very well known that the DTP, like other pro-Kurdish legal parties, has its roots in the Kurdish nationalist movement, Sanin tries to shift the ethnic perception of the party toward a broadly-based "Party for Turkey." In this regard, he includes not only Turks, but also Alevis as major examples of the oppressed groups in Turkey. This inclusion of other ethnic and religious groups cannot be regarded merely as an attempt to extend the number of the party sympathizers. Rather, he draws a radical picture of the DTP contrary to the constructed image of the party in the Turkish public. In this picture, Kurds are not exclusively defended. Why they have found such a place of top priority is justified by their being oppressed most. For Sanin, the main criterion this party is bound while defending a certain group is their being oppressed. Thus, the DTP grassroots in Esenyurt present a stance similar to the party elites toward being a non-ethnic party meaning they are ambitious to deal with the problems of broader segments of the society and by doing this they do not ignore the fact that their major support base is Kurds as a result of the heavy oppression exerted on them. Consequently, the idiom of *our values* which is mostly used to refer to Kurdishness and the Kurdish cause gradually evolves into the ailment of the wounds of those that are oppressed, which is expected to bring peaceful coexistence in a democratic regime.

---

[166] Metin Sanin, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 January 2010.
"*Biz kesinlikle belli bir kesimin partisi değiliz. Bunu kabul etmiyoruz. Bize yakın bütün kesimlerle bu ülkede kardeşçe yaşamayı benimseyen, radikal düşünmeyen, ya sev ya terk et tarzında düşünmeyen, Aleviler, Türk ve Kürt ayrımı yapmak nedir bilmeyenlerle görüşüyoruz. Tuncelili Alevi ailecek gidip geldiğimiz aileler var. Bu insanlarla siyasi ilişkiler de kurabiliyoruz. Partimizin tüzüğünde de bu böyle, insanca yaşamak isteyen herkese kapımız açıktır. Bu parti ezilenlerin partisi ve Kürtler bu ülkede ezilen bir halk ancak ezilen tek halk değil. Bu ülkeye baktığımızda ezilenler herkes. Öyleyse bu parti yalnızca Kürtlerin değil herkesin partisi, ezilen tüm kesimlerin partisi. Öldürülen, sürülen, köyleri yakılan insanlar Kürt olduğu için ezilenlerin partisine bu kesim gelmiş ve bu yüzden de ağırlık Kürtlerde.*"

Non Kurds

Can a non-Kurd vote for a Kurdish party? This question has particular importance in our case. When the electorate base in Istanbul is considered, it is not only Kurds who voted for the DTP although its voters with non-Kurdish origin are estimated to be in small -yet sizeable- proportion. My informants, including both officials and non-officials, made estimations between 10 to 20 percent regarding the proportion of non-Kurds voting for the DTP. Among other non-Kurdish voters, those who had migrated to Esenyurt from the Black Sea region were overemphasized by many of my Kurdish informants:

> We have non-Kurdish voters, but the majority are normally Kurds. Some Turks reached me and told me that they had voted for us. I trusted these statements and I find them convincing. We have friends whose hometowns are Sinop, Tokat and Samsun; they appreciate our party politics.[167]
>
> (İlkay Özkan Kartal, Age: 22-Esenyurt district organization co-chair)

> We have 60 members that are of [a Central Anatolian province] Çorum origin and non-Kurds. We have over 700 members registered in the computer system. 100 to 150 of them are Turks. Moreover, in our district organization, we have a friend of [an East Anatolian province with an Alevi majority] Tunceli origin, who is neither Alevi nor Kurd. We don't speak Kurdish when he is with us and that doesn't disturb us. We don't say: "It is enough if Kurds only support our policies."[168]
>
> (Metin Sanin, Age: 45-Esenyurt district organization co-chair)

---

[167] İlkay Özkan Kartal, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 December 2009.
"*Kürt olmayan seçmenimiz vardır ancak çoğunluk tabi yine Kürtlerdedir. Telefon ile birkaç Türk ulaştılar ve bize oy verdiklerini açıkladılar. Ben bu açıklamalarına güvendim ve inandırıcı buluyorum. Parti politikalarımızı beğenen Sinop, Tokat, Samsun'lu görüştüğümüz arkadaşlarımız var.*

[168] Metin Sanin, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 January 2010.
"*Çorumlu ve Kürt olmayan 60 tane üyemiz var. Üyelerimiz bilgisayar sistemine kayıtlı ve 700'ün üzerinde üyemiz var. Bunların 100-150 tanesi Türktür. Hatta şu an ilçe yönetimimizde Alevi olmayan ve Kürt olmayan Kürtçe bilmeyen Tuncelili bir arkadaşımız var ve onun yanında biz Kürtçe konuşmayız ve bu bizi rahatsız etmez. Biz "Sadece Kürtler politikalarımıza destek versin yeter." demiyoruz.*"

> There are also non-Kurds that joined the [DTP] party. I saw one from the Black Sea region. There was someone from [Northwest Turkey] Edirne. He was an educated man. He joined us because he was able to see the right and wrong. Our living together as one within the other is appreciated by Turks. Particularly, women see us striving together.[169]
>
> (Fatih, Age: 28-construction worker)

As the people of Black Sea origin have a reputation symbolized with Turkish nationalism, by highlighting the support of the Black See people for the DTP, my Kurdish informants might have tried to prove that their party is "not as ethnic as people suppose." In spite of the fact that the Black Sea people were overemphasized as non-Kurdish voters of the DTP, I was able to access those non-Kurds who had migrated to Esenyurt only from the Northeast Anatolia, namely Ardahan and Kars provinces. I interviewed two non-Kurds, middle-aged and middle-class men, the former a shopkeeper in central Esenyurt, and the latter a teacher. Both of them were university graduates and had revolutionary socialist backgrounds; they had partaken in the "revolutionary struggle" in their youth.

The non-Kurdish informants underlined the responsibility of the constituents of a society to each other. Accordingly, they argued that if any group of people who live together with you have some problems about their freedom, their language, their human dignity and especially if they are victims of a crime against humanity, all these problems must to be fought against by all living in that country. This seems to be the main motive driving my non-Kurdish informants to support a party known as a "Kurdish party". Nadir justifies his siding with pro-Kurdish political parties by negating the right and left parties in Turkey, especially the left movement and

[169] Fatih (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 January 2010. *"Kürt olmayanlardan da partiye katılanlar var. Bir Karadenizli gördüm. Edirneli biri vardı. Eğitilmiş bir insandı ve doğruyu ve yanlışı gördüğü için katıldı. İç içe birlik içinde yaşamamız Türkler tarafından takdir ediliyor. Özellikle bayanlar, bizim birlikte bir mücadele verdiğimizi görüyorlar.*"

locating himself hand in hand with the "social opposition of peoples" against the tutelage regime of September 12 1980 coup in Turkey:

> On the social front, it was necessary to accompany whoever were comrades. I would contribute either to the continuation of war or to the seizure of the rights of a people. I would serve the seizure of workers' rights. There was no difference between parties like the CHP, MHP, [National] Salvation [Party], ANAP, and [RP] Welfare Party. There was no difference between voting for these parties and doing [seizure of rights, etc.] the same thing. That's why it was necessary to take part in an oppositional power (…) The left movement in Turkey hasn't been able to face its own problem, yet. The Turkish left has not been able to get rid of its dogmas and find common truths. The tutelage of September 12 [1980 military coup in Turkey] continues in every field of life. Therefore, common interests of peoples against this tutelage are [Sic.] an important truth. [170]
>
> (Nadir, Age: 55-shopkeeper)

When he mentions the reason why he votes for the DTP, Nadir puts great emphasis on the struggle carried out by the Kurdish movement to save the "seized rights of the Kurdish people":

> To stand by the Kurdish people doesn't mean Kurdish nationalism. It means to stand by a legitimate uprising. Besides, those who carry out this struggle have a serious left perspective. I mean, they have a populist and revolutionary struggle. The aim of the Kurdish contenders, of the Kurds, is nothing but "I demand my fraternal rights, too." Therefore, to stand by such a struggle does not mean Kurdish nationalism.[171]
>
> (Nadir, Age: 55-shopkeeper)

---

[170] Nadir (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 17 January 2010.
"*Sosyal cephede dostlar kim ise bunlarla birlikte hareket etmek gerekti. Savaşın sürmesine katkıda bulunacaktım ya da bir halkın hakkının gasbedilmesine hizmet sunacaktım. İşçilerin haklarının gasbedilmesine hizmet edecektim. CHP, MHP, Selamet, ANAP ve Refah Partisi gibi partilerin birbirinden hiçbir farkı yoktu. Bu partilere oy vermekle aynı şeyi yapmak arasında bir fark yoktu. İşte bu yüzden mutlaka bir muhalif gücün içinde yer almak gerekti. Türkiye sol hareketi kendi sorunuyla yüzleşemedi, sabit doğrularından çıkıp ortak doğruları bulamadı Türkiye Solu. Fabrikada işçinin haklarını isteyemeyen, üniversitede öğrencinin hakkı gasp edilmiş YÖK ucubesi gelmiş yüksek öğrenimin tepesine balyoz gibi indirilmiş Türkiye solunun sesi çıkmıyor. Yaşamın her alanında 12 Eylül'ün vesayeti sürüyor. İşte bu vesayete karşı halkların ortak çıkarları önemli bir doğrudur."*

[171] Nadir (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 17 January 2010.
"*Kürt halkının yanında olmak Kürt milliyetçiliği yapmak değil. Haklı bir başkaldırının yanında yer almaktır. Üstelik bu mücadeleyi yürütenlerin ciddi bir sol bakış açısı da var yani halkçı ve devrimci bir mücadeleleri var. Kürt mücadelecilerin; Kürtlerin amacı "Ben de kardeşlik haklarımı istiyorum."dan başka bir şey değildir. İşte böyle bir mücadelenin yanında olmak Kürt milliyetçiliği yapmak değildir.*"

His words like "stand by the Kurdish *contenders*" indicate that he is not solely a voter of the DTP. He signals that he has made contributions to the attempts of the Kurdish political movement. However, he strongly rejects calling this struggle Kurdish nationalism and therefore denies any possible accusation that he sides with Kurdish nationalists and that this makes him act like a Kurdish nationalist.

Turkey in the 1960s witnessed revolutionary socialist movements that tended to ignore the Kurdish Question suggesting that such demands as ethnic identity and cultural rights would be luxurious before the revolution was achieved.[172] In addition, after the revolution, all other problems would fade away spontaneously. However, such delays repeated many times by Turkish socialists never satisfied the Kurds. In 2000s' Turkey, the situation seems to have changed for the part of a Turkish socialist to a certain degree. A revolutionary socialist heatedly defends the rights of Kurds and make contributions to it in the political arena. What is interesting here is the new priority of the Turkish socialist in the year 2010. He prioritizes emancipating Kurds, Armenians and others whose rights were seized. For him, after this "revolutionary Marxist duty to oppressed peoples" is fulfilled, then his own emancipation can be achieved and imperialist powers lose their advantages, which paves the way for acting for the "interest of peoples":

> Here is another common point [between Turks, Kurds and other peoples]: If the freedom of a people has been seized on behalf of [Turkish ethnicity] me, for instance; in the past, freedom of the Armenians was seized, then, I am not free either. What was seized is my will. It is a Marxist and revolutionary duty to rise up against this seizure. If a Kurd has a problem, this problem has been so much mingled with my problems that I cannot be free unless getting rid of this oppressive regime that suppresses the Kurd because the bombs which are dropped on the mountains are dropped by my money and my labor, and my children are sent to mountains and martyred. This ongoing war has cost for all of us, Kurds and Turks; yet for whom? The international imperialist power is pleased with this problem because they will sell arms and they benefit from that. Hegemons somehow take advantage of this. Who does not

[172] Murat Belge, "68 ve Sonrasında Sol Hareket", *Toplum ve Bilim*, No: 41, (Spring 1988): 153-166.

> take any advantage? Peoples. Hence, if we stand against war, this means we act in favor of the interest of peoples.[173]
>
> (Nadir, Age: 55-shopkeeper)

In Esenyurt, the Turkish voters of the DTP pursued a more broadly-based political line compared to its Kurdish voters. Informants in both categories emphasized the oppression and deprivations that Kurds have been exposed to yet with a difference: Kurds prioritized it prominently whereas non-Kurds counted the Kurdish Question as *one* of the various obstacles before the democratization and development of Turkey. Kasım, the other non-Kurdish informant, who identified himself as *Terekeme*, which refers to a Caucasian Turkic ethnic group, defended the rights of Kurds as well as Nadir. Furthermore, he also supported the DTP's being a broadly-based party rather than a narrow-minded ethnically-based party. In addition, he clearly separated the DTP from the "parties of the order" and demanded it to be a "Party for Turkey" via the axis of labor. Therefore, what the non-Kurdish voters of the DTP in Esenyurt mean by the word "Party for Turkey" is a party that defends the rights of any group, not only Kurds and Turks, but also workers with class-based socialist concerns:

> The DTP can aim at the working class in Turkey; it can carry out activities that are not expected from the parties of the order. It has several flaws, but being a Party for Turkey should be the aim.The press should be used. Kurds saw this truth: It was quite difficult to obtain freedom of the Kurdish people without being backed up by the power of Turkey. However, they were in a dilemma. There is a difficulty in creating a sharp distinction between the

[173] Nadir (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 17 January 2010. *"Bir diğer ortak nokta ise birlikte yaşadığım bir halkın özgürlüğü heleki benim adıma gasbedilmiş ise; geçmişte de Ermenilerin özgürlüğü benim adıma gasbedilmiş ise ben de özgür değilim demektir. Gasp edilmiş olan benim irademdir. Bu gaspa karşı baş kaldırmak Marksist ve devrimci bir görevdir. Kürdün bir sorunu var ise o sorun benim sorunlarımla öyle iç içe geçmişki Kürdü baskı altında tutan baskıcı rejimi bertaraf etmeden ben özgür olamıyorum çünkü dağa taşa yağan bombalar benim paramla benim emeğimle yağdırılıyor benim çocuklarım dağlara gönderilip askerde şehit düşüyor. Süren bu savaşın ekonomik kaybi Kürdüyle Türküyle hepimize peki kimin için uluslararası emperyalist güç bu sorundan memnun çünkü silahları satacaklar ve bundan nemalanacaklar. Egemenler bir biçimde yararlanıyorlar . Yararlanamayanlar kim? Halklar. O halde savaşa karşı çıkar isek halkların çıkarına hareket etmiş oluruz."*

> perceptions of legal and illegal organization because people are continuously manipulated. Kurds are described all the time as barbarians and terrorists in the media.[174]
>
> (Kasım, Age: 58-teacher)

Women

As mentioned earlier, the political participation of women grants a distinguishing property to the DTP among broadly-based parties of Turkey. Although the major political parties other than the DTP are regarded as broadly-based, they lack this property. It is the participation of women in political life. The existence of women, who constitute half of society, in party politics can be taken as an important variable showing the degree of being broadly-based. The DTP is a clear example including women in politics. This inclusive manner is not restricted to the 40 percent gender quota set for all posts and boards of the party organization. It also has a qualitative aspect. As a political party nourished most by the Kurdish movement, the DTP helped the traditional structures within the lives of Kurds to be transformed gradually. When I asked their idea about the participation of women and gender politics in the DTP, my male informants responded with an optimistic language emphasizing the betterment of women's situation in social and political life due to the transformatory effect of the party and the Kurdish movement on the socio-cultural and political structures that prevent women from participating in politics:

> There are extremely positive improvements. The more the Kurdish woman is politicized the more improvements occur. The place of woman is being shifted from the home to outside. This consciousness has started to be

[174] Kasım (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 17 January 2010. "*DTP, Türkiyedeki işçi kesimini hedef alabilir, düzen partilerinden beklenmeyen faaliyetleri yapabilir. Eksiklikler çok ama hedefi Türkiye partisi olmalı. Basın kullanılmalı. Kürtler şu gerçeği kavramış: Türkiyeli güçleri arkamıza almadan Kürt halkının özgürlüğüne ulaşmak oldukça güçtü , ancak önlerinde bir açmazları vardı. İllegal örgütlülük ile legal örgütlülük arasındaki algısal anlamda keskin bir ayrım yaratamamak gibi zorluk var. Çünkü insanlar sürekli manipule ediliyorlar. Sürekli medyada Kürtlerden barbar ve terörist olarak bahsediliyor.*"

> dominant: Women are half of society. The more this creates consciousness, the easier it becomes to include women in the political arena. We are living in a patriarchal society. That's why women's participation in [political] organization is at such a low level. The [DTP] party has big problems, too, but this doesn't emerge from the perspective of the party, it emerges from the life style of the society. However, the youth are more active. Young women are more active, but their weakness is their lack of experience.[175]
>
> (Kasım, Age: 58-teacher)

> The women who lost their children [PKK militants] at war [armed conflict between the army and the PKK]… We call them "Mothers of Peace" (*Barış Anneleri*). This is a platform that was established to contribute to democratic, peaceful solution to Turkey by the families that have lost their children in armed conflict. They have held continuously negotiations and consultations in Ankara and Diyarbakır for several years. That is to say, they take initiatives to bring peace as fast as it could come. You can see "Mothers of Peace" at the *taziye* [condolence for the PKK militants] visiting Bingöl, at the funeral of [murdered Turkish Armenian journalist] Hrant Dink; you can see them in front of the struggle of rights and freedom and a problem of a minority group in Turkey… Yet, substantially, they make contributions to the peaceful and democratic solution of the Kurdish struggle and similarly they carry out activities in our party.[176]
>
> (Mehmet Hanefi Kaya, Age: 44-Esenyurt district party official)

I often observed many traditionally dressed Kurdish women, some of whom were

*barış annesi*s as well as those younger ones without headscarves and wearing blue

---

[175]Kasım (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 17 January 2010. *"Son derece olumlu gelişmeler var. Kürt kadını siyasallaştıkça gelişmeler artıyor. Kadının yeri evin içi olmaktan çıkıyor. Şu bilinç egemen hale gelmeye başladı : Kadınlar toplumun yarısı! Bu bilinç haline geldikçe kadınları da siyasi alana katmak daha da kolay oluyor. Ciddi bir erkek egemen toplumda yaşıyoruz. Kadının örgütlenmeye katılması bu yüzden zaten son derece düşük. Partinin de ciddi sıkıntıları var ama bu partinin bakış açısından değil sosyal yapıdan toplumun yaşama biçiminden kaynaklanıyor. Ama gençlik daha aktif. Genç kadınlar daha aktif ama kendi içinde zaafı tecrübesiz olmaları."*

[176] Mehmet Hanefi Kaya, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 26 December 2009."*Savaşta diyelim çatışmada çocuklarını kaybeden anneler, onları biz bir taraftan 'Barış Anneleri' adı altında… Bunlar Türkiye'nin demokratik barışçıl çözümünde katkı sunmak amacıyla bu tip çatışmada savaşta çocuğunu kaybeden ailelerin- genelde annelerin oluşturduğu bir platformdur bu. Yıllardır kah Ankara'da kah Diyarbakır'da kah bölgede bunlar sürekli olarak istişarelerini, müzakerelerini sürdürürler; yani barışın bir an önce gelmesi için çeşitli temaslarda girişimlerde bulunurlar. Yani 'Barış Anneleri' bir bakarsınız Bingöl'deki bir taziye'de bir bakarsınız Hrant Dink'in cenaze töreninde en önde, bir bakarsınız hak ve özgürlükler mücadelesi yürüten bir başka diyelim Türkiye'deki bir azınlığın sorunu gündeme geldiği zaman en önde (…) ama özünde de Kürt mücadelesinin barışçıl ve demokratik çözümüne katkısını sunar, aynı şekilde partimiz içerisinde çalışmalarını sürdürürler.*"

jeans visiting the party to attend the meetings. As far as I inferred, their education level was quite low with a few exceptions of high school graduates or university students. Several of them could freely have contact with others including men. Yet, many of them still only visited the district headquarters and chatted in small groups. Therefore, the picture of female voters of the DTP in my mind is something in between traditional and modern, self-confident and shy, free to act and suppressed by the male relatives. Although the party officials and male voters stated that their [Kurdish] grassroots are very successful and ambitious in opening wide room for the participation of women in political life, this would not be a thorough description of the situation. Berivan, a young woman aged 18, who actively takes part in the youth commission of the party, considered the gender problem as the most important problem of Turkey. She stated that "In Esenyurt, it is still too hard for our woman comrades to join us. They are obstructed. There are still patterns to be passed beyond."[177] As I asked how it would be possible that many traditional women could join demonstrations and conferences held by the party, she gave a comparative response with regard to the entire picture of women in Turkey: "Those who are beaten most terribly by the system are women. Indeed, the pressure on women is much greater in Turks; it is smaller in the DTP."[178] Berivan's concerns about the strict patriarchal structure of the society were also relevant for Fatih's statement: "It is women who hold our party upright. We bring our sisters, mothers and our wives into politics so that they will learn about society and equality."[179] Men, namely

[177] Berivan (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 27 December 2009. "*Esenyurt'ta kadın arkadaşlarımızın bize katılması hala çok güç, engellemelerle karşılaşılır henüz daha aşılmayan kalıplar var.*"

[178] Berivan (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 27 December 2009. "*Sistemin darbesini en çok alan kadınlardır. Aslında, Türklerde daha güçlü bir kadın baskısı var ama bu DTP'de daha zayıf.*"

[179] Fatih (pseudonym), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 January 2010.

husbands, fathers or brothers, are the main obstacle before or catalyst for woman's integration into political life as it is clear from the expression *'we bring'* my male informant uses. According to Çağlayan, this adoption of Kurdish women to the public realm is only possible by purifying the women from their sexuality, which is seen dangerous and/or dirty, and sending them into the *dava* [the Kurdish cause] after this purification.[180]

This situation in the DTP grassroots shows that the integration process of the Kurdish woman to political life encountered a similar fate as that of the Turkish woman in the sense that Turkish woman was not liberated with the modernist Republic, but only emancipated.[181] They voted, chose with their free will and became nominees to rule; yet, this time they were forced to act within the limits their "male hosts" drew for them. The DTP women were similar to that in that they were politicized in the course of Kurdish nationalist movement and their language and the language that defines them were inevitably bound by the "victimization of Kurdish woman." However, it should not be ignored that the political participation of the DTP women despite being instrumentalized "for the sake of the Kurdish cause" in some respects, helped these women to give their shape to the direction of the political agenda of the party towards a broader space that deals with other aspects of life which also interest women.[182]

"*Partimizi ayakta tutan kadınlardır. Eşlerimizi bacılarımızı analarımızı da siyasete getiriyoruz mücadelemize katıyoruz eşitliği ve toplumu bilmeleri için.*"

[180] Handan Çağlayan, *Analar, Yoldaşlar, Tanrıçalar: Kürt Kadın Hareketinde Kadınlar ve Kadın Kimliğinin Oluşumu*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p.195.

[181] Yeşim Arat, "From Emancipation to Liberation: The Changing Role of Women in Turkey's Public Realm", *Journal of International Affairs*, 54 (1), Fall 2000, p.107.

[182] Çağlayan, *Analar, Yoldaşlar, Tanrıçalar: Kürt Kadın Hareketinde Kadınlar ve Kadın Kimliğinin Oluşumu*, (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p.227. "*Bu kimlik [Kürt kadını kimliği] onlara sınırlar çizse ve uymaları gereken kurallar koysa da, kadınlar söz konusu kimlik aracılığıyla kamusal alana çıkma, değer kazanma ya da serbest hareket edebilme gibi olanaklara kavuşmuşlar. Kürt kadını*

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The initial motive that pushed me toward this work was my curiosity about the DTP's so-called problem of not being a "Party for Turkey." Now that I have clear insight into the party regarding its official voice with regard to debates for the budget of the Turkish state and its party By-laws, I can say that it cannot be labeled sharply as not being a "Party for Turkey." Confining the DTP to this end may cause us to see the picture blurred. It does not want to be a mere "Party for Turkey," it seeks more than that. It holds great potential to be a "Party for Turkey" in certain fields from "gender" to "socialist concerns." Thus it may seem odd to locate the DTP in the same category as a conventional "Party for Turkey" and when we take into consideration the *party's message to the voter* as the main determinant for axis of ethnicity for political parties, the DTP does not appear to be an ethnic party. In this regard, it stands as a *broadly-based* party with a multi-issue agenda which is manifest in rival and cooperative forces and dynamics surviving within different spheres of its existence.

With a general snapshot of the DTP's being a "Party for Turkey," we witness an uncertain picture: Though originally motivated by "ethnic victimization," the

---

kimliğinin yeni toplumsal ve politik deneyimlerin kapısını araladığı anlaşılıyor. Bu deneyimler, kadınları güçlendirmiş de. Nitekim kadınların yaşam anlatıları, Kürt hareketine katılarak yaşadıkları deneyimlerin, özalgılarını ve özgüvenlerini güçlendirdiğini gösteriyordu. Öte yandan katılımlarının etkisi kendileriyle sınırlı kalmamış. Kadınların aktif ve kitlesel katılımı, hareketin toplumsal cinsiyet kurgusunu da etkilemiş. Kadınlar hareketin politik taleplerine kadınlara ilişkin talepler eklemeye başlamışlar."

grassroots supporters of the party do not reject being part of the "society of Turkey." The DTP people are open to the idea that their party should be a Party for Turkey only if it does so *as* Kurd. Therefore, despite not as ambitiously as party elites, the grassroots supporters still appreciate the patriotic/national sphere by not opposing a peaceful coexistence in the same country with non-Kurds. This idea can be summarized best as "Turkey-fication instead Turkification" and seems to be the biggest common value shared by both the elites and grassroots supporters.

The socialist sphere stands as another common ground between the elites and the grassroots supporters. Since the DTP voters mostly come from the lower classes, their demands for economic well-being and social equality are inevitably voiced by the officials too. And these everyday life conditions make a concrete basis on which voters support the party.

The perception of the eco-feminist sphere should be analyzed after deconstructing the title "eco-feminist." Although ecologist and feminist claims are made equally-weighed by the party By-laws, neither the elites nor the grassroot supporters give remarkable importance to ecological concerns. If we exclude the officials, none of the informants gave any importance to this issue as much as it exists in the By-laws. As for the other half of this sphere, namely feminist concerns, the party elites and grassroots prove to be consistent in that they all gave importance to the "victimization of woman" and supported gender equality. Given the institutionalization of the 40 per cent gender quota in the DTP offices, one can claim that "broadly-based" property of the DTP is obviously manifest in its feminist sphere of existence.

Finally, the perception of law and universal values particularly human rights that can be best described as the core values of the Global-Universal Sphere is

another common ground shared by the elites and voters of the DTP equally. Because both to be a politician within the pro-Kurdish tradition and to be an ordinary Kurdish individual in many ways come to mean deprivation and violation of rights. On the grounds that the individual holds the Kurdish identity as the expression of his/her self. In this regard, both have difficulties to express themselves. Thus, human rights values justified and further legitimized by the norms of universal/international law and accelerated in the course of the globalization process constitute the broadest and deepest platform where the people of the pro-Kurdish legal tradition can guarantee their rights and therefore lives.

This thesis sought to understand whether the DTP, the Democratic Society Party, the last ring of the chain of pro-Kurdish legal political parties in the first decade of the twenty first century, evolved into what is called a "Party for Turkey" *(Türkiye Partisi)*, which means it broadened its scope of political activity to those issues other than the Kurdish question with regard to the acts and thoughts of the political elites and the expectations and activities of the grassroots organization and voters. In this regard, apart from the textual analysis of the official documents of the party, the study built on interviews with both party officials and voters in the Esenyurt district of Istanbul. Given the findings of this research, this thesis argued that there is a difference between how the party's grassroots and elites perceive the party.

Grassroots supporters perceived the DTP as an ethnic party though not opposing its concerns with the other problems of Turkey apart from the Kurdish Question. In other words, they simply prioritized their ethnic problem. On the other hand, the chairpersons and officials of the party strongly supported its being a "Party for Turkey" in harmony with its founding documents and attempts made by its

parliamentary group. However, this project of becoming a “Party for Turkey” with a non-ethnic, broadly-based perspective still included the struggle for the recognition of the identity and rights of Kurds. The emphasis on this struggle helped the party to maintain its ties with a grassroots who prioritize ethnic identity. The elites also firmly defended the identity and rights of Kurds yet with a difference in discourse. While the people emphasized the parallelism between these rights and the “Kurdish cause,” the elites used a language of “constitutional patriotism” and “peaceful coexistence in a democratic country.” Although their discursive prioritization differed, the elites did not move the party towards a new role without the consent of the grassroots, they rather helped the stance of the grassroots evolve towards a more broadly-based perspective.

The project of the DTP becoming a ‘Party for Turkey’ is not only a process intrinsic to the DTP. This process is severely constrained by larger factors and dynamics which have to do with the citizenship and political regime of Turkey. This citizenship and political regime rely on a conceptualization of citizenship which is intricately linked to a notion of Turkish ethnicity and poses severe legal and institutional barriers for a political party which struggles for the recognition of the identity and rights of Kurds. At the time of fieldwork, these constraints concretely manifested themselves as the DTP was banned. Many members are still in custody in addition to those who are politically banned.

These legal and political barriers constitute a cleavage among both the party leaders and grassroots between those who believe that there is hope for the transformation of Turkey’s political regime which can then allow DTP to become a ‘Party for Turkey’ and those who are pessimistic about the possibility of such a

democratic transformation. The latter group believes more in keeping the ethnic line of the party.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Interviewees

DTP Officials

Ahmet Türk, Age: 68-DTP co-chair, Mardin deputy (currently politically banned), interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 18 April 2010.

Sebahat Tuncel, Age: 35-Istanbul deputy (currently BDP MP), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 March 2010.

Sırrı Sakık, Age: 53-Muş deputy (currently BDP MP), interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 18 April 2010.

Çiğdem Kılıçgün Uçar, Age: 32-DTP Istanbul Organization co-chair (currently BDP co-chair), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 16 March 2010.

Mustafa Avcı, Age: 54-DTP Istanbul Organization co-chair (currently BDP co-chair), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 16 March 2010.

DTP Grassroots Organization in Esenyurt

İlkay Özkan Kartal, Age: 22-Esenyurt district organization co-chair (currently BDP co-chair), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 December 2009.

Metin Sanin, Age: 45-Esenyurt district organization co-chair (currently BDP co-chair), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 January 2010.

Mehmet Hanefi Kaya, Age: 44-Esenyurt district organization official (currently BDP official), interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 26 December 2009.

Voters and Active Members of the DTP in Esenyurt

Kurds

Ahmet Yılmaz, Age: 58-baker/former party official, Hometown: Ardahan, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 12 January 2010.

Azad (pseudonym), Age: 24-construction worker, Hometown: Erzurum, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 27 December 2009.

Berivan (pseudonym), Age: 18-student, Hometown: Şırnak, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 27 December 2009.

Emin (pseudonym), Age: 27-textile worker, Hometown: Muş, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 January 2010.

Fatih (pseudonym), Age: 28-construction worker, Hometown: Van, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 13 January 2010.

Gozé (pseudonym), Age: 52-housewife, Hometown: Muş, focus-group interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 21 January 2010.

Makbule (pseudonym), Age: 33-housewife, Hometown: Erzurum, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 December 2009.

Mele Abdurrahman İlkhan, Age: 38-religious practicer, Hometown: Siirt, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 December 2009.

Mele Hacı Ata Aktürk, Age: 56-retired religious practicer, Hometown: Mardin, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 December 2009.

Selahaddin (pseudonym), Age: 50-worker, Hometown: Ardahan, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 16 December 2009.

Said (pseudonym), Age: 51-construction worker, Hometown: Muş, focus-group interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 21 January 2010.

Ziné (pseudonym), Age: 32-housewife, Hometown: Muş, focus-group interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 21 January 2010.

Non-Kurds

Nadir (pseudonym), Age: 55-shopkeeper, Hometown: Ardahan, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 17 January 2010.

Kasım (pseudonym), Age: 58-teacher, Hometown: Kars, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 17 January 2010.

Primary Internet Sources

DTP By-laws (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi Tüzüğü*). Available [online]: "http://www.sosyalistforum.org/dtp/6268-demokratik-toplum-partisi-tuzugu.html" [27 December 2008].

DTP's Democratic Autonomy Project (*DTP Demokratik Özerklik Projesi).* Available [online]: "http://rastibini.blogspot.com/2008/11/dtps-democratic-autonomy-project-part.html" [08 April 2010].

Turkish Grand National Assembly Planning and Budgetary Commission 2008 Fiscal Year Budget Act Draft Debates (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi 2008 Mali Yılı Plan ve Bütçe Komisyonu Bütçe Kanunu Tasarısı Tartışmaları*). Available [online]: "http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/butce/2008_komisyon_gundem.htm" [04 January 2009].

Other Internet Sources

DTP MPs' Personal Information. Available [online]: "http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekillerimiz_sd.sonuc?donem=23&adi=&soyadi=&il=&parti=DTP&kelime=" [04 March 2010].

News titled, "Türkiye'nin Gündeminden Düşmeyen Parti." Available [online]: "http://www.kurdshow.com/turkiye-nin-gundeminden-dusmeyen-parti-dtp.html" [26 February 2010].

Official web site of Turkish Institution for Statistics and reports on 2008 Census Data. Available [online]: "http://www.tuik.gov.tr/IcerikGetir.do?istab_id=139" [04 March 2010].

Official web site of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. Available [online]: "http://www.ibb.gov.tr/trTR/Pages/Haber.aspx?NewsID=15773" [04 March 2010].

Results for the 2009 Local Elections in Esenyurt. Available [online]: "http://secim.haberler.com/2009/sonuc.asp?il=esenyurt" [05March 2010].

Books and Articles

Aktar, Ayhan. *Varlık Vergisi ve Türkleştirme Politikaları*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000.

Akyol, Mustafa. *The Origin of Turkey's Kurdish Question: An Outcome of The Breakdown of The Ottoman Ancien Regime*. Master's Thesis, Boğaziçi University, the Ataturk Institute for Modern Turkish History, 2006.

Arat, Yeşim. "From Emancipation to Liberation: The Changing Role of Women in Turkey's Public Realm." *Journal of International Affairs* 54, no. 1, (Fall 2000.)

Aydın, Suavi. "Azınlık Kavramına İçeriden Bakmak." In *Türkiye'de Çoğunluk ve Azınlık Politikaları: AB Sürecinde Yurttaşlık Tartışmaları*. Edited by Ayhan Kaya ve Turgut Tarhanlı, Istanbul: TESEV, 2005.

Barkey, Henry J. "The People's Democracy Party (HADEP): The Travails of a Legal Kurdish Party in Turkey." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 18, no. 1 (1998): 129-138.

Barkey, Henri J. and Graham E. Fuller. *Turkey's Kurdish Question*. Foreword by Morton Abramowitz. Boulder, New York and Oxford: Rowman and Littefield Publisher, 1998.

Bates, Robert. "Ethnic Competition and Modernization in Contemporary Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 6, no. 4 (1974): 457-483.

Belge, Murat. "68 ve Sonrasında Sol Hareket." *Toplum ve Bilim*, no: 41, (Spring 1988): 153-166.

Bernard, Harvey Russell. "Unstructured and Semistructured Interviewing." In *Social Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 2000.

Bozarslan, Hamit. "Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey: From Tacit Contract to Rebellion (1919-1925)." In *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*, edited by Abbas Vali. Costa Mesa, Calif: Mazda Publishers, 2003.

Bozarslan, Hamit. "Kürd Milliyetçiliği ve Kürd Hareketi (1898–2000)." In *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasal Düşünce*: *Milliyetçilik (Nationalism)* 4, 841–870.

Breton, Albert. "The Economics of Nationalism." *Journal of Political Economy*, 72, no. 4 (1964): 376-386.

Bruinessen, Martin van. *Agha, Shaikh and State: the Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*. London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1992.

Bruinessen, Martin van. “The Kurds in Turkey.” In *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism versus Nation-Building States: Collected Essays*. Edited by Martin van Bruinessen, Istanbul: the Isis Press, 2000.

Chandra, Kanchan. *Why Ethnic Parties Succeed: Patronage and Ethnic Head Counts in India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasası*). Ankara: Emek, 2008.

Çağlayan, Handan. *Analar, Yoldaşlar, Tanrıçalar: Kürt Kadın Hareketinde Kadınlar ve Kadın Kimliğinin Oluşumu*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007.

Çelik, Ayşe Betül .“I Miss My Village!: Forced Kurdish Migrants in Istanbul and Their Representation in Association.” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 32, Spring 2005.

Değirmenci, Aslan. *Kürt Sorununda Yeni Dönem*. Istanbul: Vadi Yayınları, 2009.

Demir, Eyüp. *Öteki Kürtler: Bir Geleneğin Anatomisi ve 29 Mart Seçimleri*. Ankara: Orion, 2009.

Demir, Eyüp. *Yasal Kürtler*. Istanbul: Tevn Yayınları, 2005.

Demokratik Toplum Partisi’nin Kürt Sorununa İlişkin Demokratik Çözüm Projesi, Projeya Çareseriya Demokratîk A Têkildarî Pirsgirêka Kurd Ya Partiya Civaka Demokratîk, DTP - Democratic Society Party’s Project of Democratic Solution to the Kurdish Question. Demokratik Toplum Partisi Genel Merkezi. Istanbul: Gün Matbaacılık, 2008.

Dickinson, Emily. *Selected Poems*. New York: Dover Publications, 1990.

Duverger, Maurice. *Political Parties; Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*. Translated by Barbara and Robert North, London: University Paperback, 1964.

Epstein, Leon B. *Political Parties in Western Democracies*. New York: Praeger, 1967.

Erdoğmuş, Abdulbaki and Mehmet Bekaroğlu (eds.). *Mahzun Mezopotamya: PKK ve Kürt Ulusalcılığının İnşası*. Istanbul: Elips Kitap, 2008.

Ergil, Doğu. *Doğu Sorunu; Teşhisler ve Tespitle; Özel Araştırma Raporu*. Stratejik Araştırmalar Dizisi 1, TOBB, 1995.

“Forced Evictions and Destruction of Villages in Turkish Kurdistan.” *Middle East Report* (April-June, 1996).

Gunter, Michael M. “The Continuing Kurdish Problem in Turkey after Öcalan’s Capture.” *Third World Quarterly,* 21 (2000): 849-869.

Gunther, Richard and Larry Diamond (eds.). *Political Parties and Democracy.* Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Günday, Metin. *İdare Hukuku* (Administrative Law). Ankara: İmaj Yayınevi, 2002.

Güney, Aylin. 'The People's Democracy Party.' *Turkish Studies* 3, no.1 (2002): 122-137.

Gürbey, Gülistan. "Peaceful Settlement of Turkey's Kurdish Conflict through Autonomy?" In *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey: Obstacles and Chances for Peace and Democracy*. Edited by F. İbrahim and Gülistan Gürbey, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004.

Hacettepe Üniversitesi Nüfus Etütleri Enstitüsü, *Türkiye Göç ve Yerinden Olmuş Nüfus Araştırması*. Ankara: Aralık 2006.

Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Anderson. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London: Routlegde, 2007.

Hardin, Russell. *One for All: The Logic of Group Conflict*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Hechter, Michael. "Group Formation and the Cultural Division of Labor." *American Journal of Sociology* 84, no. 2 (1978): 293-318.

Heywood, Andrew. *Politics*. London: Macmillan, 1997.

Horowitz, Donald L. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Janda, Kenneth. *A Conceptual Framework for the Comparative Analysis of Political Parties*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1970.

Kaye, Harvey J. *The British Marxist Historians: An Introductory Analysis*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

Keating, Michael and John McGarry. "Introduction" In *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*. Edited by Michael Keating and John McGarry. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Key, V.O. *Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups*. New York: Crowell, 1956.

Kirişçi, Kemal and Gareth Winrow. *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-State Ethnic Conflict*. London: Frank Cass, 1997.

Kurban, Dilek et al. *Türkiye'de Ülke İçinde Yerinden Edilme Sorunu: Tespitler ve Çözüm Önerileri*. Istanbul: TESEV Yayınları, 2005.

Kymlica, Will. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

Kymlica, Will and Wayne Norman (eds.). *Citizenship in Diverse Societies*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Lipset, Seymour Martin. "Political Cleavages in 'Developed' and 'Emerging' Polities" In *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Systems*. Edited by Erik Allardt and Yrjö Littunen, Helsinki: Academic Bookstore, 1964.

Lipset, Seymour Martin and Stein Rokkan (eds.). *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*. New York, London: Free Press, 1967.

Marcus, Alice. *Blood and Belief, the PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence*. New York: New York University Press, 2007.

"*DTP Sofya Modeli İstedi*" (DTP asked for the Sofia Model) , *Milliyet daily*, 9 November 2007.

Neumann, Sigmund. *Modern Political Parties*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956.

O'Reilly, Karen. *Ethnographic Methods*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Riggs, F. W. *Administrative Reform and Political Responsiveness: A Theory of Dynamic Balancing*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1970.

Sartori, Giovanni. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Ölmez, A.Osman. *Türkiye Siyasetinde DEP Depremi: 'Legal Kürt Mücadelesi'*. Ankara: Doruk Yayınları, 1995.

Özcan, Ali Kemal. *Turkey's Kurds; A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.

Panebianco, Angelo. *Political Parties: Organization and Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Republic of Turkey, *T.C. Resmi Gazete*, no. 27432, 14 December 2009.

Romano, David. *The Kurdish Nationalist Movements; Opportunity, Mobilization, and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Laden, Anthony Simon and David Owen (eds). *Multiculturalism and Political Theory*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Şahin, Bahar. “Türkiye’nin AB Uyum Süreci Bağlamında Kürt Sorunu: Açılımlar ve Sınırlar.” In *Türkiye’de Çoğunluk ve Azınlık Politikaları: AB Sürecinde Yurttaşlık Tartışmaları*. Edited by Ayhan Kaya and Turgut Tarhanlı. Istanbul: TESEV, 2005.

Tan, Altan. *Kürt Sorunu*. Istanbul: Timaş, 2009.

Taylor, Charles et al. *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1994.

Touraine, Alain. *The Post-Industrial Society: Tomorrow’s Social History: Classes, Conflicts, and Culture in the Programmed Society*. Translated by Leonard F. X. Mayhew, New York: Random House, 1971.

Touraine, Alain. *Le Retour de l’Acteur: Essai de Sociologie* (The Return of the Actor: Essays on Sociology). Paris: Fayard, 2002.

Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, Doğu ve Güneydoğu Anadolu’da Boşaltılan Yerleşim Birimleri Nedeniyle Göç Eden Yurttaşlarımızın Sorunlarının Araştırılarak Alınması Gereken Tedbirlerin Tespit Edilmesi Amacıyla Kurulan Meclis Araştırma Komisyonu Raporu, Tutanak Dergisi 53, Dönem 20, 1998**.**

Vali, Abbas (ed.). *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*. California: Mazda Publishers, 2003.

Wadie, Jwaideh. *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi, Kökenleri ve Gelişimi*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007.

Watts, Nicole F. “Activists in Office: Pro-Kurdish Contentious Politics in Turkey.” *Ethnopolitics* 5, no. 2 (Jun, 2006): 125-144.

Watts, Nicole F. “Allies and Enemies: Pro-Kurdish Parties in Turkish Politics (1990-1994).” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31, no. 4 (November 1999): 631-656.

Yeğen, Mesut. *The Turkish State Discourse and the Exclusion of Kurdish Identity, Turkey: Identity, Democracy, Politics*. London: Frank Cass: 1998.

Yıldız, Kerim. *The Kurds in Turkey: EU Accession and Human Rights*. London: Arbor, MI: Pluto Press in association with Kurdish Human Rights Project, 2005.