

**POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN TURKEY**

**“CONSERVATISM; JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT  
PARTY”**

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İZMİR 2005

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

There has been a debate on the question that if the resurrection of Islam is a danger for modern Turkish community or not since born of the republic. There is a hidden truth that the fear of West for the resurrection of Islam has been established for centuries and this fear has been impressing relationship between European Union and Turkey. Turkey has been unique fact for the Islamic World and the scholars have observed Turkey for explaining the subjects of general social sciences about Islam. These subjects are conflicts between secularism and traditionalism, between educational and cultural improvements and Islamic facts. This essay tried to explain if there is a resurrection of Islam in Turkey or not and if there is a resurrection what are the supports of the Justice and Development Party after 1990s. In the second chapter the meaning of conservatism was explained. In the second chapter essay tried to explain the development of conservatism in Turkey briefly. Third chapter tried to explain the re-development of the conservatism in Turkey by explaining the progress of Justice and Development party. Finally conclusion tried to explain and answers the questions that were mentioned above.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE MEANING OF CONSERVATISM

The facts such as traditions which are not related with the religion obstacle the changes and improvements and makes people looking to changes suspiciously<sup>1</sup>. Unfortunately some people in the all communities look to changes and improvements suspiciously because they support the conservatism ideology. Abraham Lincoln asked what the conservatism was and answered that conservatism meant that admiring the past and opposing the changes.<sup>2</sup> Philip Agre<sup>3</sup> argues that conservatism is the domination of society by an aristocracy. According to Agre, "Conservatism is incompatible with democracy, prosperity, and civilization in general, it is a destructive system of inequality and prejudice that is founded on deception and has no place in the modern world."<sup>4</sup> Conservatism is founded on deception in every place and time. The deceptions of conservatism are mixed because culture of the this era is more democratic than the myths of the earlier times. According to me conservatism is being loyal to the traditions and the state. Conservatism is the gas form of the Turkish right side. It is for motivating people. According to Wikipedia<sup>5</sup>, the free encyclopedia there are different usages of the term conservatism.

1. **Classical conservatism** or *institutional conservatism* – This kind of conservatism opposes the quick change in governmental and societal institutions. This is an anti-ideological conservatism and explains the slow changes in the any of the particular

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<sup>1</sup> Aktan, Coşkun C., "Değişimin önündeki engeller"

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Agre, Philip, "What is conservatism and what is wrong with it?", <http://polaris.gseis.ucla.edu/pagre/>

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservatism>

forms of governments. As we can see this kind of conservatism in the European states that some people of the community of the European states oppose reforms. For them reforms must be slow and step by step.

2. **Ideological conservatism** or *right conservatism* – It stands against the anti-ideological classical conservatism and it is ideological. It is divided by three subideologies: *social conservatism*, *fiscal conservatism*, and *economic conservatism*. With these subideologies conservative ideology is being established in the most English-speaking countries: separately, these subideologies are incorporated into other political positions. In my opinion the most dangerous type of conservatism is the ideological conservatism because an uneducated person can be effected by this type of conservatism very easily.

3. **Neoconservatism** -- strictly a U.S. term -- refers to the views of a subclass of conservatives who support a more assertive foreign policy coupled with one or more other facets of *ideological conservatism*<sup>6</sup>. Neo-conservatives are called NEOCON's in today's world and threaten the world order because their policies as we have seen are guided by the outside of the United States and as it is the same with the whole of the conservatism idea that conservatism is very useful for motivating people and long ranged guided NEOCON's behaves according to forces that most of the world can't oppose.

When we want to define the place of conservatism according to individuals and the state, it is situated in the middle of them. According to classical conservatism there is

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

the importance of tradition and continuity. There is not a compulsion for an individual that he or she can be from the right to the center left political perspectives but this is not the same for the ideological conservatism because according to it a conservatist must be from the right side of the political perspective. For the popular ideas, liberals and conservative always oppose with each other. There are three important values of conservatism. These are the religion, state and the authority. For conservatism religion is a critical value because conservatism sees religion inevitable for the stability and the authority of the community. Religion comes from the word religare which means to tie with each other. Conservatism uses the term nation to redefine the religious community. Conservatism supports the shape of the government as a monarchic order that can carry a holly meaning.<sup>7</sup> State is the helping point of the authority and authority is the basic thing that which underlies both state and the religion.

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<sup>7</sup> Bora, Tanıl "Türk Sağının üç hali", *Birikim Yayınları*, p:59.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSERVATISM IN TURKEY**

The development of Turkish republic was established with the escort of the conservatism.<sup>8</sup> Atatürk united the people in the Turkey in the independence war by motivating them to gain their freedom. After the end of the independence war Atatürk started to make improvements and reforms but this was very difficult because he had to stand against different kinds of people from different ideological groups. Atatürk wanted Turkey to catch the modern era. People started to make reforms in the west during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and they got also problems because they had to combine the reforms which destroyed the traditions, with the traditional values. This also effected the ottoman empire. The intelligentsias in the Ottoman empire produced an ideology that which redefined the Islamic tradition. When Atatürk started to make improvements, started to face with the that type redefined islamic tradition which always opposed the reforms. Atatürk sometimes used the independence courts and sometimes used soft motivation to establish the reforms. According to Mardin Republic is primarily the change of the values.<sup>9</sup> Regime of the Repuclic called the revolts as seperatists and related these revolts with the Kurdish community in the east and the Nakşibendi group. When religion started to show the unhappiness between people, it was called as destructive and reactionary. Government supported the conflict between the Republicans as modernists and Islam as reactionary, Ottoman and enemy

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>9</sup> Tapper, Richard "Çağdaş Türkiye'de İslam, Din, Siyaset ve Laik Devlet", *Sarmal Yayınevi*, 1993.

of the regime. Atatürk produced and redefined the religion for the republic but this was not enough for attracting the people from periphery. The ideology of Kemalism was not efficient to meet the needs of people to produce identity and organizing the rules of life.

Until 1950s conservatism was seen as the enemy of the regime and it was very difficult to support conservatism. As I mentioned above conservatism refers to traditionalism which opposes changes , in the early republic era people was seen as an enemy because the one who opposed the reforms was called the enemy of the state and regime and wanted regime to go past as a monarchic order. There were some people who supported conservatism before 1950s who were impressed by the romantic enlightenment and bergsonianism. Some of them were İsmayıl Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver, Peyami Safa and Remzi Oğuz Arık.<sup>10</sup> From the beginning of the multy party system to military coup which was established in 1980, The conflicts between RPP and DP( After JP) took the political life under their hegemony.RPP showed a more conservatist view than DP and JP because DP and JP were seen as reformists because they wanted to adopt the kapitalist rules of the West. During the beginning of the 1950s with the multy pary system there could be seen an resurrection of islam for example putting religion as a lesson in schools and gratuating the religion men. In the ends of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s Islam started to be seen as a subject of the political parties such as National order party and national salvation party. That era was also the beginning of the establishments of the dervish

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<sup>10</sup> Bora, Tanıl "Türk Sağının üç hali",*Birikim Yayınları*, p:59.

orders and sects. But these parties were not supported by the masses because most of the rightist people were supporting rightist centered parties.

Religion plays a dual role in the Turkish community. The first role of religion is to protect the benefits and interests of dominant powers in the underdeveloped regions. In the developed regions religion refers to a way of protesting for the people who were damaged by the rapid reforms. This dual role is structurally conservatism.

After the military coup in the 1980, we can see a new type of conservatism in the Homeland Party which started to rule in 1983 after the elections. According to Turgut Özal, the conservatism of the homeland party was not reactionary as the others thought.<sup>11</sup> They regard their traditional values and belief but they choose from them according the needs of the modern era. They supported conservatism as a revolutionary conservatism. They understood conservatism as it involves whole of the community, regarding the values of the Turkish Nation and by regarding these they take them as the characteristic properties of the nation. They argued that opposing the modernist view of newly developed conservatism is unfair because they all wanted to serve. They accepted multilateralist and participating policies as the values of the conservatism. According to them, without belief a community had to collapse because the freedom of belief was inevitably important and without belief insistences would damage the human kind. Their Conservatism was based on three freedoms and one of them is the freedom of religion. Turkey could only reach with their way of thinking about changes and conservatism. Conservatism was only path for modernizing. They argued that Conservatism was the only way for establishing the democracy. They are

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<sup>11</sup> Taşar, Mustafa, "Milliyetçilik, Muhafazakarlık ve demokrasi", Parti içi eğitim toplantısı, *Bilkent otel 27 Mart 2000*.

conservatists but were open for changes in time. The basic rules of their conservatism are mentioned below:

- Individualism was the primary fact.
- They were soft
- Regarded the other beliefs and groups.
- Democratic
- Aimed to mitigate the conflicts between the sects.
- Their progress was not only Turkey, for the whole Islamic World.
- Liberal and Liberalistic
- Primarily regarded the development of the human soul.
- They didn't want externalize the west

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE RE-DEVELOPMENT OF CONSERVATISM AFTER 1990s**

#### **(JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY AS A CONSERVATIVE DEMOCRATIC PARTY)**

Most of the members of the Justice and development Part who rules Turkey nowadays were the members of Virtue Party(Fazilet Partisi).<sup>12</sup> Necmettin Erbakan dominated the Virtue Party. Because of the political ban, he did not join the party. There were conflicts between the old Islamist friends of Erbakan and the reformist group, which includes R.T. Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül in the Virtue Party. R.T Erdoğan and his friends left the islamist line and forced party to democratization. They didn't manage to do that. After the closing of the virtue party by the constitutional court, they established Justice and Development Party with mass support. In November 2002, JDP entered the first election of its political history and became the strongest party of Turkey. After the November 2002 elections, West wanted to know and understand the JDP.<sup>13</sup> West needed quick answers. German, British, Amerikan and French Press used a combination of two words to name JDP. The first one was Muslim, Islamist or Islamic. The second word was moderate-temperate or democrat. So we have got moderate islamist or muslim democrat. Tayip Erdoğan add the term of conservative democrat to that arguement for the name of their ideology and political perspective. It is very interesting that Erdoğan didn't use the word of

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<sup>12</sup> Seufert, Gunther "AKP muhafazakar İslam yada İslamcı bir partimi?",*Konrad Adenuer Vakfı Türkiye Temsilciliği 2002*, <http://www.konrad.org.tr/index.php>.

<sup>13</sup> Çakır, Ruşen "AKP muhafazakar İslam yada İslamcı bir partimi?",*Konrad Adenuer Vakfı Türkiye Temsilciliği 2002*, <http://www.konrad.org.tr/index.php>.

reformist in the post-november 2002 era. As i told that JDP was established by the reformist members of the virtue party Tayyip Erdoğan didn't use the word reformist and told that everybody must forget the past because they established a new party from the zero level.<sup>14</sup> He used the term of conservative democate. By saying conservative he regarded religion and ignored the meaning of the term in the political science. JDP tried to leave its past behind.

World congratulated Turkey because an identity of a party is being discussed within Turkey but there is a debate about if the identity of Justice and development party as a conservative democratic party is suitable for it or not. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan explained that a significant part of the Turkish society want to adopt a concept of modernity that does not reject tradition, a belief of universalism that accepts localism, an understanding of rationalism that does not disregard the spiritual meaning of life, and a choice for change that is not fundamentalist; in a meeting<sup>15</sup> which was made in the USA. According to him the concept of conservative democracy is in fact an answer to this desire of the Turkish people. The conservative democracy was developed on the basis of general conservatism and it underlines the social and cultural traditions of Turkish people. Erdoğan told that new type of conservatism aimed to combine the traditions and values of the Turkish people with the universal standarts of

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip, " CONSERVATIVE DEMOCRACY AND THE GLOBALISATION OF FREEDOM " ,*Speech Delivered By Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan At The American Enterprise Institute*(29 JANUARY 2004), <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/PrintPageE2.asp>

political conservatism. They are open for change but the change must be evolutionary, gradual and based on transformation in its natural course. They argued that they try to preserve the values but this doesn't mean that prevention changes. They want to make improvements and changes without losing the self-consciousness.

According to Muhsin Öztürk<sup>16</sup> when we try to understand the term conservatism in Turkey it is understood that the real conservative parties are the leftist parties as they are reactionary and the rightist parties within the multi party system support reforms such as JDP. The members who left their traditional values and have conservative ideas establish JDP. As we know that JDP established many reforms that could have been seen as miracles for the Turkish history and this is the reason what people talk about. The debates centered on the subject that if JDP is a conservative party or reformist party. There is a book with the preface of the Recep Tayyip Erdoğan<sup>17</sup>. This book's name is The Conservative Democracy. Dr.Yalçın Akdoğan wrote this book. In that book, it was tried to explain the political line of JDP and the ideology of it. When we look at its preface it can be accepted that preface of this book is the official paper of the JDP. Akdoğan tried to explain the traditional-liberalist line of the JDP. Akdoğan argued that Conservatism regards the ideal world but refuses the engineering of the community(Toplum Mühendisliği). Emre Kongar asked that if we understood this book as an official paper of JDP there were many questions about this argument. First of all can the expansion of religion schools(İmam hatip okulları) into

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<sup>16</sup> Öztürk, Muhsin "Muhafazakar mı? Reformist mi?", <http://www.aksyon.com.tr/index.php>

<sup>17</sup> Kongar,Emre "AKP,Toplumsal Muhafazakar mı?Toplumsal Mühendismi?", <http://www.kongar.org/>

the national educational system be the part of a engineering of the community? Can paying the educational costs of the poor people and directing them to the ideals of themselves be the part of a engineering of the community? With the new constitutional rules can the controlling the Universities and being the dominant in the national education system be the part of a engineering of the community? Does the engineering of the community mean only organizing the policy? The oppositions of the JDP are based on not to trust the government because they think that JDP uses the capabilities of democracy to established a totalitarian community. According to Emre Kongar<sup>18</sup> Government is going to destroy itself by increasing the suspiciousness about its policy by making such developments. In spite of the debates over JDP, the best explanation for the ideology of JDP is conservative democate.<sup>19</sup> There are different kinds of members who came from different groups of ideology but ‘The conservative Democracy’ includes all of them. The conservatism which is dominant in the party is the kind of conservatism that regards the traditional, human and religious values not a status quo. The democratic part of their ideology came from the usage of the capabilities of the democracy because members need more than the outside of the party. Democracy is used by them to make their ideas and goals come true so JDP must lead Turkey with democracy. There different kinds of groups in the party but these groups are not the groups that we got used to. There are no group leaders and members who threaten to go out from the party.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Karaaliođlu, Mustafa, "AKP'nin ikinci iktidar dönemi" *Defne Sarısoy*, <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com.tr/news>

Osman Özbek argues that JDP took off the shirt of the national view but it is still searching for another form. The conservative democrats ideology is used to hide the real plans of JDP.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Özbek, Osman "Dost Kuşatmasındaki Türkiye" *Ümit Yayıncılık*, Mart 2004.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

From the beginning of the republic there has been a debate between traditionalists and modernists. Atatürk tried to prevent the reactionaries and tried to make Turkey a modern country. In the powerful times of the Ottoman Empire, religion was not a governmental style. When Ottoman started to lose its power rulers tried to unite members of the country with religion. Ottoman Empire used religion to collect army with the term Jihad but this did not prevent the collapse of the empire. Atatürk used nationalism as the one who accepts itself a Turk he is Turk, to unite the people in the independence war. When he observed the last times of the Ottoman Empire he saw that religion and traditionalism was the opposition to modernization. Religion was combined with government and religious people ruled The Ottoman Empire although they did not have the capability to make it. Atatürk understood that the only way for modernization was preventing the combination of religion and government so he divided them and established secularism. Traditionalists opposed Atatürk but they did not show a real opposition to Atatürk. With the beginning of the multi party system traditionalists started to participate in politics. Religion was started to use for political purposes and traditionalists joined this movement. In Turkey, it is impossible to distinguish traditionalists and religion because both of them have mutual gains with each other.

With the beginning of the 90s in Turkey, There have been great conflicts between religion oriented parties and modernists. Fortunately, army protected the

movements of the religion oriented parties. On June 1, 1997 Gen. İlhan Kılıç, secretary-general of the National Security Council (MGK), made the following statement: "The Turkish state is a republic; its political regime is democracy. The state is a unitary state. The republic is built upon a nation and not a religious community. These constitute the gist of the contract between the noble Turkish nation and the Turkish republican state. We are obliged to act in terms of this contract." Six years earlier, the then chief of general staff, Gen. Doğan Güreş, too had expressed a similar view: "I report to the political authority; but this post [the office of the chief of general staff] was granted to me by the people when the latter approved the 1982 Constitution."<sup>21</sup> They all had a notion of state that Army of the Turkish republic plays a role as a guardian of the principles of the Republic such as secularism, cultural nationalism.

In Turkey Islamists and Muslims have a great problem to identify their identity. The term islamist and religious not a good term for the muslims. The term religious cannot be the name of only the muslims. This term can be adopted to catholics and orthodoxs.<sup>22</sup> To classify a kind of political ideology as muslim is not right and also dangerous. To use conservatism can be the solution for that problem because within conservatism it includes religion and reaching the standarts of the modern world. With the 28<sup>th</sup> February religion became an dangerous political purpose for the political parties that can lead them to closure. Conservatism was adopted to religion in Turkey as in the other countries. Catholic groups participate in politics as conservative in some

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<sup>21</sup> Heper, Metin "İslam, Nationalism and the Military" <http://www.turkishdailynews.com/1999osce/osce4.htm#o40>

<sup>22</sup> Yayla, Prof. Atilla, "İslamcılık, Müslümanlık ve muhafazakarlık", *Liberal Düşünce Topluluğu*, [www.liberal-dt.org.tr](http://www.liberal-dt.org.tr).

of the countries. Conservatism has mostly the same properties with the religion in political science. Religion opposes the changes and so does the conservatism but in our age change is inevitable for the countries which want to reach the modern age. Globalization is the concept of our times and it is almost a huge change for the nature of the states and people. According to Immanuel Wallerstein today's world doesn't need conservative parties.<sup>23</sup> State has controlled the constitutional progress minimum and while making this it has adopted the traditional values according to family and religion for two centuries in the world. Conservatism effected the people and states socially and politically as an ideology more than economical issues and this usage disturbed the people and the world order. When the voting rights became universal, conservatism did not follow the way of centralization and tried to make a mass support including the strong populist bases of the religious people. In today's world, freedom was expanded and this makes the fall of the ideologies. There is nothing important more than capitalism and the modernity.

According to me JDP uses conservatism to name their Islamic identity. Democratic revolutions have two points of view on the behalf of me. First developments are necessary for modernity and JDP established these modernities very well, this is unbelievable for Turkey. On the other side they used democratic revolutions to establish their own system, own kadro into the government. Erdoğan once said that the minarets were their weapons and muslims were the soldiers of their movement after 5 years he explained that he changed his ideas. This kind of change is a radical change and i don't believe that this can be true. Accessing the European

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<sup>23</sup> Wallerstein, Immanuel "Muhafazakar partilerin ikilemi", *Yorum no:8 15 Ocak 1999*, <http://fbc.binghamton.edu/commentr.htm>.

Union is just being used for the kind of freedom that they wanted to organize their movement from party progress to the government. They just want to decrease the power of army for being guardian of Republic. Unfortunately, they managed to do that. When we compare the role of the today's army with yesterday's army there are huge differences and this differences decrease the regime of the Turkish Republic. Their educational development, economical development and cultural development are just the beginning of their movement. They easily hide their goals and aims from the west and also from the Turkish community. USA knows the real face of JDP but JDP works, as they wanted. In their Great Middle Eastern Project JDP plays a crucial role. USA shows JDP and Turkey with their moderate Islamism(that They called us) as an example to the middle eastern countries because they can control Turkey easily with JDP and want to adopt this system to the other countries. These successful days(that all media supported JDP for accessing European Union and revolutions) will pass and JDP will show its real face to the world and Turkish community but this will be very late to return.

## CHAPTER 6

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