

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION:
THE CASE OF THE TURKISH REPUBLICAN PEOPLE’S PARTY

A Master’s Thesis

by
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To My Mom

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Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyses the attitudes and behaviour of the Republican People’s Party towards European integration and Turkey’s European Union membership process. It aims to contribute to the literature by investigating the relation of social democratic parties vis-à-vis European integration. The main inquiry is how and under what conditions the Republican People’s Party as a social democratic party, shapes its position towards European integration. The study argues that the Republican People’s Party has been a historically a pro-European political party, however due to conditional situations, it has been a soft Eurosceptical party after 2002.

Key Words: The Republican People’s Party, European integration, social democratic parties

ÖZET

SOSYAL DEMOKRATİK PARTİLER VE AVRUPA ENTEGRASYONU: CUMHURİYET HALK PARTİSİ ÖRNEK ÇALIŞMASI

Türker, Gülce

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Bu tez, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin Avrupa entegrasyonuna ve Türkiye'nin Avrupa Birliği'ne üyelik sürecine bakışını ve davranışlarını analiz etmektedir. Sosyal demokrat partilerin Avrupa entegrasyonuna bakışlarını inceleyerek literatüre katkıda bulunmayı hedeflemektedir. Sosyal demokrat bir parti olarak Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin hangi koşullarda ve nasıl Avrupa entegrasyonuna bakışını şekillendirdiği araştırmanın temel odağını oluşturmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin tarihsel olarak Avrupa yanlısı bir parti olduğunu, fakat 2002 yılından sonra koşulsal durumlara bağlı olarak kısmi Avrupa kuşkucu bir parti olduğu fikrini savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, Avrupa entegrasyonu, Sosyal Demokrat Partiler

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ČSSD	The Czech Social Democratic Party
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EU	European Union
JDP	Justice and Development Party
MSZP	The Hungarian Socialist Party
NSC	National Security Council
PASOK	Panhellenic Socialist Movement
PES	Party of European Socialists
RPP	Republican People's Party
SDL	Democratic Left
SEA	Single European Act
SI	Socialist International
SLD	The Alliance of the Democratic Left
TPP	True Path Party

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The concept of social democracy has emerged as one of the most important political developments in the world after the Industrial Revolution. It evolved in the late 19th century and played an important role in the EU political arena in the 20th century. In the 1980s, with the spread of liberal economic practices, social democracy went through a regression. Globalisation politics and the dissolution of the Soviet Union led social democrat parties to an ideological search and led to the Third Way wave.

At the beginning of the 20th century, whilst social democratic parties were gaining momentum, the Turkish Republic was born from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. The Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi - RPP) found and ruled the Turkish Republic for twenty-seven years as a single party. After the transition to a multiparty system, in its opposition party years, the RPP went through a structural and ideological search. In 1970s, the RPP started to identify its ideology with social democracy practices and managed to become the ruling party again. The RPP was shut down by the 1980 military coup d'état and was allowed back into the political arena in 1992.

After World War II, six European states, headed by France and West Germany, formed the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951, with the

aim of restoring peace in Europe and achieving cooperation in their coal and steel fuelled economies. In 1958, with the Treaty of Rome, the European Economic Community (EEC) was formed to secure economic cooperation among its members. Over the years, the Community grew with new members and developed new practice areas. In 1986, the Single European Act (SEA) was signed. The SEA was the first major revision of the founding treaty. It created a momentum in the Community towards European integration. With the Treaty on European Union, which is also known as the Maastricht Treaty, in 1992, the official denomination has become the European Union (EU). The Maastricht Treaty is also seen as a turning point for European integration. With the Maastricht Treaty, a form of political union was established and economic integration was strengthened with the creation of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) (Treaty on European Union, 1992). All of these new institutional amendments fuelled intense debates about European integration and the future of the European Union after the end of the Cold War era.

According to Peter Mair (2008: 154), the extensive literature on the party politics and European integration is divided into three interrelated fields. The first group of scholars deals with the origins and development of transnational, more specifically Trans-European, party federations at the European level. A second group of scholars focuses on the shape and dynamic of the parties and the party system in the European Parliament. The third strand deals with the relationship between the EU and its effect on party programs, ideologies and competition at national level. They analyse the challenges and opportunities that political parties encounter through the European integration process (Mair, 2008: 154).

In this thesis, the main focus will be similar to the third category which is the complex relationship between the EU and political parties, mainly social democratic

parties. Social democratic parties have been influential on, and active players of, the European integration process. Social democrats, as one of the mainstream parties that formed the European Union, have been effective in EU integration by a being part of national governments, national parliaments, the European Parliament and the European Commission (Marks et al., 2006: 163).

Turkey has been trying to join the European Union since its first application in 1959. The RPP, as a social democratic party, has played an important role in Turkish political arena and has engaged with the EU as a ruling or an opposition party. Even though it is a subject of debate whether the RPP can be seen as a social democratic party or not, the RPP has defined itself as a social democratic party since the 1970s. According to the 2008 party programme:

At the 21th century, for a modern Turkey, the RPP is determined to start a renewal and change process with the faithful commitment to Atatürk's principles and reforms and adopting the basic values of social democracy...The RPP is a social democratic party which embraces and aims to implement universal values and policies of social democracy.

Moreover, the RPP has been a member of the Socialist International since 1977 and also an associate member of the Party of European Socialists (PES). In the literature, parties that are members of Socialist International are accepted as social democratic parties in spite of the differences in their party organisations, programmes and policies (Ladrech, 2000; Moschonas, 2002). For this reason, this thesis will deal with the RPP as a typical social democratic party.

Taking these three interrelated players in the political arena; social democratic parties, the EU and the RPP into account, this thesis tries to answer the question of how the RPP as a social democratic party relates to the process of European integration as well as the Turkish accession process. What are the factors that shape its attitude, and how do they change over time from 1992-2012? This

study attempts to demonstrate the policy change of the RPP as a social democratic party towards European integration and Turkey's accession process due to the domestic political considerations. This policy shift in the RPP can be observed between 1992 and 2012. In this thesis, it is hypothesized that due to its domestic political considerations, even though the RPP was a pro-European political party in the period from 1992 to 2002, it turned into a mildly Eurosceptic political party after 2002. Moreover, it is important to note that the Republican People's Party was regarded as a nationalist and anti-European political party under the leadership of Deniz Baykal who was the leader of the RPP from 1992 to 2010. After the leadership change in the RPP, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu became the new leader of the RPP and there is a consensus that the party has shifted back to a more social democratic stance.

The time period of this analysis has been limited between 1992, the year Cold War ended, which also coincides with the re-opening of the RPP after 1980 military coup d'état and 2012. The start of this analysis' time period is chosen the year of 1992 as it is the date of re-opening of the RPP and also the year of 1992 is chosen due to the lack of pre-1992 data to carry out a productive analysis. The end of this analysis' time period is the end of 2012 as the short and long term effects of the events in 2013 cannot be foreseen.

The analysis of the RPP between 1992 and 2012 will focus on its attitudes and behaviour towards European integration. By attitudes and behaviour, we mean "the bases and strength of (the) party's commitment to European integration (EU membership) rather than its mere presence or absence" (Batory, 2001: 21). Turkey's accession process and critical political events in the Turkish political arena will be analysed from the RPP's point of view. It is important to note that the events within this period will be detailed in a chronological order to demonstrate the policy change

of the RPP over time, except in few cases which are dealt with together in order to secure the integrity of the subject. Furthermore, in order to put forward the RPP's approach related to Turkey's accession process and critical political events, this thesis benefited from the speeches and statements of leading figures in the RPP. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to cover all the political events in Turkish political system between these years. However, the major political actions taken, especially those of the aiming alignment with the EU Copenhagen political criteria: stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, are analysed (Copenhagen European Council, 1993: 13).

In this thesis, the economic practices of social democratic parties will not be taken into consideration in relation to the EU. Instead, it will focus on the political aspects of Turkey's European accession process since these political aspects have played a more important role in this process over the last decade.

This thesis will be organised as follows. After this introduction chapter, the literature on the social democratic parties will be reviewed. The conceptualisation and evolution of social democratic parties through the history and the Third Way wave after the 1990s will be presented. The Third Way debate is reviewed because it also had some influence on the Turkish centre-left debates, including the Republican People's Party. Following the literature review on social democratic parties, the ideology of the RPP will be analysed through a social democratic lens. At the end of this chapter, an answer to the question of how social democratic parties behave towards vis-a-vis integration and the EU more generally will be offered by using the existing theories.

Following the second chapter, the RPP between 1992 and 2002 will be the major focus of analysis. Major developments in Turkey - EU relations such as the Custom Union and the Helsinki Summit will be looked at from the RPP's point of view. Major domestic political events in Turkey such as the closure of the Welfare Party and the 28 February process will also be taken into account.

The fourth chapter will focus on the years after the Justice and Development Party's (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi- JDP) ascendancy to power in 2002. The relationship between the EU and Turkey, a candidate member to EU during this period, will be reviewed. Similar to the third chapter, major domestic political developments in Turkey, such as the 27 April events or the headscarf controversy in universities will be examined.

The fifth chapter will compare and contrast these two periods: 1992-2002 and 2002-2012. The attitudes and behaviour of the RPP will be discussed through the existing theories in the literature related to social democrat parties' behaviour towards vis-a-vis integration and the EU more generally.

Finally, the thesis will conclude with the general evaluation of the main findings of the study.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES AND EU INTEGRATION

2.1 A Review of Social Democratic Parties

In this chapter, the main characteristics of social democratic parties will be discussed in order to develop a full understanding of the behaviour and attitudes of social democratic parties concerning European integration. Social democracy can be approached as an ideologically desired political platform that had a Marxist origin but underwent a revision and adopted liberal democracy and social justice as principles through its historical evolution.

Social democracy came into the political scene in the 19th century after the Industrial Revolution. It originated from the Marxist-Socialist ideology, which had been seen as a solution to the social problem that arose after the Industrial Revolution. However, social democracy got separated from its origins by objecting to proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and instead defended system change through parliamentary democracy. They defended “the ability of democratic processes to transform the nature of the economy and society” (Hickson, 2009: 218). Moreover, social democracy has developed upon classical liberalism values such as parliamentary pluralism and social democracy. Social democratic parties aimed at “building a societal coalition around the goal of enhancing social

welfare for all, while safeguarding the profitability of business and delivering economic growth” (Tsarouhas, 2009: 112).

The concrete conceptualisation of social democracy is difficult mainly because there is no consistent application and clear boundary for social democracy. It is accepted as a fact that social democracy has been subject to different usages and has shown structural differences within political parties in Western Europe. Social democracy can be used to refer to a number of different realities (Marlière, 1999: 1). Moreover, this term has been subject to revisions and changes over time (see for example, Clasen, 2002; Callaghan, 2003). Different ideological stances in the 19th and 20th century have been referred to as social democracy. After the Industrial Revolution, social democracy had been also used to describe the political movement to implement Marxism. At the beginning of the 20th century, it had become clear that “if the desired political outcome (dictatorship of the proletariat) was not going to come about because it was inevitable (as Marx, Engels, and many of their influential followers believed), then it would have to be achieved as a result of human action” (Berman, 2006: 14). Eduard Bernstein introduced a new interpretation to Marxist ideology and led the way to revisionism. Bernstein believed that the struggle for changing the capitalist system should not be violent but democratic and evolutionary (Berman, 2006: 14). The group, which adopted parliamentarism and democracy over violent means to change the system, had started to represent social democrats in the political arena.¹ However, economic crises in the 1970s led to a rise of neoliberalism

¹ Initially, political parties in Germany and Austria had confronted problems as they transformed themselves into a mass party from being a labor movement. These parties faced with the dilemma of whether they should continue their struggle for socialism through national, regional and local elections or continue their struggle outside parliament (Berman, 2006: 15). The 1959 Godesberg Program of Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) is accepted as a turning point as it shows a clear declaration of division of social democracy from Marxism. Political parties forewent some Marxist values and they adopted a stance that advocated a peaceful and evolutionary transition of the economy to socialism through progressive social reform of capitalism and mixed economy (Berman, 2006: 19).

in the Western world. Neoliberalism briefly can be described as an “political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2005: 2). State intervention to the market must be kept minimum as the state cannot have enough information to guess market signals and also powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (Harvey, 2005: 2). After the 1970s, neoliberal leaders such as Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in the USA became dominant in the political arena.

According to Robert Ladrech (2000: 38), since the end of the 1970s, many social democratic parties have faced with problems. Firstly, until the mid-1990s, social democratic parties with a few exceptions had been opposition parties. Secondly, these parties had demonstrated explicit moderation regarding their party programmes to secure electoral victory. Thirdly, renewed competition on the left with Green parties, environmental conditions such as deindustrialisation and the rise of globalisation restrained social democratic policies and their traditional sections’ support, namely trade unions. This caused erosion in working class voters. In Ladrech’s words, “The overall effect has been to render social democratic parties less distinct in crucial policy areas from their competitors to their right” (2000: 39).

All these factors resulted in the questioning of the political viability of social democracy. They led social democratic parties to new ideological interpretations and resulted in the birth of the Third Way.

2.1.1 Social Democracy and the Third Way

The Third Way as a theoretical debate on social democracy had been first

brought into the political arena by the Democratic Party in the USA to start a new beginning in politics, a “new progressivism.” The concept had been updated in 1997, with the victory of Labour Party in Britain under the leadership of Tony Blair after being in opposition for 18 years. In 1999 Tony Blair, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, declared, “The Third Way is not a new way between progressive and conservative politics. It is progressive politics distinguishing itself from conservatism of left or right” (Blair, 1999).

According to Tony Blair (1998), the “traditional” social democracy heavily depended on the instruments of the state to achieve its goal. Furthermore, this dependence on the instruments of states led the “traditional” social democracy to fail both practically and morally. In terms of practical, traditional social democracy was “too inflexible” and accordingly it became “ineffective at promoting growth and containing unemployment in a world of growing competition, external shocks and industrial and technological change” (Blair, 1998: 5). Morally, state limited the individual liberty in a way which was self-defeating in terms of the moral goals that social democrats set themselves (Blair, 1998: 5).

The founder of the Third Way debate is accepted as the British sociologist Anthony Giddens. According to Giddens (1998: 26), “traditional” social democracy forms have expired. The third way was designed as “an attempt to transcend both old style social democracy and neoliberalism.” Giddens defined the Third way as the “sparkling point for a new political framework of comparable importance and influence’ which Keynesianism on the one hand and free-market liberalism on the other had once had” (cited in Pautz, 2009: 130). Giddens emphasized the difference between the Third way and traditional left/right distinction. While the left mainly stressed the state and the right focused on the market, the Third Way necessitated to

go beyond both them and advocated the “new mixed economy” (Giddens, 1998: 70). Giddens promoted “synergy between public and private sectors, utilising the dynamism of markets but with the public interest in mind” (Giddens, 1998: 100).

Globalisation, end of welfare state, prestige loss of Marxism and important societal, economic and technological developments disturbed the “simple modernisation” and necessitated the transformation of social democracy. Traditional social democracy was incompatible with these new social conditions. Giddens (1998) defined this as the “reflexive modernisation” that maintains the social democratic values such as equality, social justice and freedom but make them compatible with new developments of globalisation and individualism (Giddens, 1998: 27-68). The Third way aimed to integrate the “traditional” with the “new” as a political project.

Therefore, some critiques were directed towards the Third way which was outlined by Giddens. The first group of scholars claimed that there is nothing new about the Third Way (see Ryan, 1999; Driver and Martell, 2000). Faux (1999) reviewed the Third Way as an “amorphous’ political project” (cited in Geyer, 2003:249). For Faux (1999), the Third Way ignores the problems that are produced by inequalities of wealth and power and so it is unable to confront the realities of the global era (cited in Giddens, 2000).

Furthermore, the Third way was criticized as it was “primarily a rationalisation for political compromise between left and right, in which the left moves closer to the right” (Giddens, 2000: 11). Stuart Hall (1998) claimed that “Blair project, in its overall analysis and key assumptions, is still essentially framed by and moving on terrain defined by neoliberalism” (Hall, 1998: 14). Levy (1999: 243) describes the Third way as “the fashionable alternative to neoliberalism, proving that efficiency, competitiveness, and employment need not be purchased at the expense of

equality and social cohesion.”

Overall, the Third way which was introduced by Giddens and materialized by Blair’s Labor Party has confronted many criticisms. Therefore, Giddens’ the Third Way has been both controversial and effective on social democratic parties.

2.1.2 The Core Values of Social Democracy

In spite of the theoretical difficulty in defining social democracy, the core values of social democracy are well defined. The main characteristics and universal values of social democracy have been born as a reaction to capitalism. The fundamental values of social democracy were originally rooted in the French Revolution, which are freedom, justice/equality and solidarity (Berman, 2006: 32). Over time, other values such as democracy, human rights, peace and social welfare are included to political parties’ programs as characteristics of social democracy. Social democracy at the normative level takes its bearings from core values and fundamental rights (Gombert, 2009: 11).

As one of the core values of social democracy, freedom means the possibility of self-determination.

Every person must have the opportunity to develop their capabilities and participate responsibly in society and politics. People can exercise their freedom only if they are secure in the knowledge that they enjoy adequate social protection” (SPD Hamburg Programme 2007: 15)

Furthermore, SPD, Germany's center-left Social Democratic Party, defines justice/equality as:

Justice is grounded on the equal dignity of every person. It is synonymous with equal freedom and equal opportunities, independent of background and gender. Therefore, justice means equal participation in education, work, social security, culture and democracy, as well as equal access to all public goods ” (SPD Hamburg Programme 2007: 15)

Lastly, the solidarity defines as follows:

Solidarity means mutual attachment, belonging and assistance. It is the readiness of people to stand up for each other and to help one another, between the strong and the vulnerable, between generations and between peoples (SPD Hamburg Programme 2007: 16)

Giddens, however argued that value systems of social democracy also had transformed. New values such as ecology, individuality, self-realisation, liberty and cultural identity indicate the progressiveness of social democracy instead of traditional social democratic values such as social justice, equality and solidarity (Pautz, 2009: 130).

2.2 The Republican People's Party As A Social Democratic Party

While social democracy had had repercussions in the late 19th and early 20th century in the West European states, it was not brought to agenda of political parties and embraced as an ideology till the 1970s in Turkey. After the 1970s, the RPP adopted social democratic practices to gain the votes of workers and peasants against the Workers Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi) and to present the RPP as an alternative to other political parties in the Turkish political arena (Ahmad, 1994: 260).

After the election of Bülent Ecevit as the Secretary General of the RPP, at first “left of centre”, then “democratic left” and finally social democracy became part of the internal RPP debate. After 1973, social democracy was incorporated in the bylaws and program of the RPP.

Unlike other social democratic parties in the Western world, the RPP did not originate from the struggle of working classes; it did so from the Turkish War of Independence. Because of special circumstance during its establishment as it was founded to achieve national unity to ensure Turkey's independence, the RPP

represented all social classes in Turkey. Its populist and nationalist nature has shaped the ideology of the RPP (Belge, 1988: 2200-2201). The transformation of the RPP has been parallel to the Turkey's transition to multiparty system. After the elections loss in the 1950s, the RPP went into a process of ideological search.

2.2.1 The RPP and the Social Democracy 1965 – 1980 Period

After the transition to the multiparty system, the RPP has started to define its ideological stance more closely to the social democracy. However, due to its separation from Western social democratic parties in its foundation and evolution, the ideology of the RPP has been subject to criticism from outside and also within the party.

2.2.1.1 The RPP as the Left of Centre

The term “left of centre” was first used in 1965 by İsmet İnönü. After the 1960's military coup d'état, the first election was held in 1961. However, political parties and coalitions did not manage to create political stability. The RPP entered the elections as a statist party by defending public investment and state intervention in the economy. The RPP's party program consisted of “tax equity, public operation of underground treasures, government intervention to the industrialisation process as much as private sector” (Turan, 2000: 55). İsmet İnönü, then the leader of the RPP, had stated that the RPP is a statist party and this led the party to adopt a left of centre economic policy approach. This introduced the “left of centre” concept to the Turkish political system.

At first, the “left of centre” concept received a negative reaction within the party. İnönü, with his statement, “To be left of centre is the natural role of our 40 year

old agenda. We will not give an inch from our principles” tried to prevent a possible shift to a more leftist positioning (Bila, 1999: 218). Moreover, the “left of centre” was used as an election slogan to gain votes from the working classes and intellectuals. However, Bülent Ecevit, as one of the architects of this approach, indicated that their search for an overarching party ideology would continue (Bila, 1999: 219). Ecevit stated that:

It will take time for classes to reach consciousness. This may happen quickly, or take long. However, we have to wait, more correctly, we have to work. When we look at our agenda using the measures of Western democracies, if our agenda is left of centre, then there is no turning back” (Bila, 1999: 219).

In a period which the RPP was debating its ideological orientation within the party, the criticism towards the RPP was related to that these policies and discourse were not sufficient to place the RPP as a left political party. A group of intellectuals that criticized the RPP wanted to concretize the limits of this discourse and also define in which point the centre of left starts (Özdemir, 1993: 163).

2.2.1.2 The RPP as Democratic Left

When Bülent Ecevit became the leader of the RPP, the rhetoric of the RPP evolved to a more leftist direction. The term “democratic left” started to be used instead of “centre of left.” Bülent Ecevit advocated that the state and the private sector as political and economic players should have equal power. According to Ecevit, the public sector should have the decisive power. In order to achieve this, the public sector needed to be strengthened economically. The public sector should become the third player. Gathering small savings of the public and turning them into big investments through unions, social security institutions and cooperative associations would form the public sector (Kışlalı, 1991: 126). However, Bülent

Ecevit emphasized that the term “democratic left” was consciously chosen instead of social democracy (Turan, 2000: 63). Ecevit’s choice of word resulted from the aim to distinguish the RPP from the leftist party Workers Party of Turkey as claiming that democratic left did not originate from Marxism as social democracy did. He stated that the RPP has equal distance from then the leftist party Workers Party of Turkey and the right wing party Justice Party (Adalet Partisi).

While Bülent Ecevit aimed to approach the party to the left ideology, the number of intellectuals which did not find this development sufficient also increased. They criticized the RPP that “democratic left” discourse was resulted from the aim to benefit from the internal dynamics which was the increasing tension between the leftist and rightist group and gaining the votes of the leftist group in Turkey. Moreover, the criticism towards the RPP was mainly based on that the RPP should be more courageous to embrace a leftist ideology (Bila, 1999: 285).

The RPP’s membership to Socialist International in 1977 also became a turning point for its search of party ideology. Although it received criticism, especially from the Justice Party, Bülent Ecevit continued to emphasize that the RPP is not a social democratic but a democratic left party. Ecevit stated that the RPP, as a democratic left party, it represented the working class and also peasants. According to Ecevit, representing peasants differentiated the ideology of the RPP from the social democratic parties (Bila, 1999: 287).

With the 1980’s coup d’état, the RPP was shut down by the military and it would not return to the political arena until 1992.

2.2.2 The RPP and the Social Democracy after 1992

The 1980 military coup d’état can be considered as one of the breaking points

in the Turkish political system. Military takeover mainly affected the leftist parties in Turkey as 1980 military coup d'état promoted the Islamization of political institutions which led the rise of Islamic political parties and the isolation of social democratic parties in Turkey (Yavuz, 1997: 64). Furthermore, in the 1980s, neoliberalism had a serious impact on world politics. In the same period, the Motherland Party, which adopted neoliberal policies, became the ruling party in Turkey. This also resulted in a regression of social democratic parties and socialist policies and led to debates on the future of social democratic parties in Turkey, similar to what was happening in the rest of the world. According to Fuat Keyman and Ziya Öniş (2007), the reasons behind the marginalisation of the RPP during the 1990s are multifaceted. The interim military government and national security based strategy after 1980's coup d'état led to a depoliticised society, which had a negative impact on social democratic parties. Furthermore, a major division on the left axis led to the fragmentation of social democratic votes. In this era, the most challenging competitor of the RPP was Bülent Ecevit's Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti). Most importantly, the RPP was moving away from social democratic practices (Keyman and Öniş, 2007: 215). In Keyman and Öniş words:

The reduction of social democratic politics into intra-party politics of the CHP and the failure of the party to respond effectively to strong societal demands for social justice caused both a growing detachment of Turkish social democracy from the society and increasing disenchantment of society towards the identity and ideology of the CHP. In this period, the social democratic way of doing politics was increasingly reduced to a contest over leadership and politics within the party. We have witnessed a decline in credibility of social democracy and its ability to present itself as a viable solution to the serious structural problems of the Turkish society.

The RPP returned to the political arena in 1992. At the RPP's Twenty Fifth Congress, it was decided to use the previous name and emblem of the party and Deniz Baykal was elected as the President of the RPP. With its return, the RPP also

underwent a transformation. In 1994, the RPP adopted “New Left, New RPP” as its slogan. The objective of the RPP (1994: 28), as described in its agenda can be summarized as follows:

The RPP aims for a Turkey, with a starting point of dynamic ideals of equality, freedom, and economic development, bringing the nation together through ethical and human dimensions in to politics, a Turkey, which unites its people through love of the people, solidarity, justice, and rationalism. The RPP aims to start a new period in Turkey’s political history, creating new syntheses of past and the future, individual and the society, efficiency and equality, pluralism and solidarity, freedom and accountability. By creating a new Turkey model, the RPP carries the responsibility to take Turkey to these new destinations.

With its agenda, the RPP (1994) developed new policies which included the acceptance of different cultures, economic productivity and efficiency, transformation to an information society, increasing the quality of life, fair income distribution, increasing the educational level and protection of women, children and consumers. In 1994, the RPP’s membership to the Socialist International has also been renewed (CHP Tarihi, 2013: 24).

After its return to the political arena, the RPP made some amendments to its bylaws. It started defining itself as “a democratic leftist party, besides its commitment to Atatürk’s six principles; republicanism, populism, nationalism, secularism, etatism and revolutionism, is committed to the universal values of social democracy that are freedom, equality, solidarity, peace, respect for labour, rule of law, balanced growth, welfare, the protection of nature and environment, pluralistic democracy and respect for human rights” (RPP Programme, 1994). The party presented itself as an advocator of the values of social democracy; while still defining itself as a democratic left party.

Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu became the president of the RPP in 2010. After this leadership change, amendments were done to the RPP’s bylaws in 2012. The party

repeated its commitment to universal values of social democracy, with additional emphasis on areas such as gender equality, seeing the state as a means to serve the people, providing freedom and welfare to the people (RPP Bylaws, 2012).

2.2.3 The RPP and the Socialist International

The relationship between the Socialist International and the RPP has been unstable. The RPP has been a full member of the Socialist International since 1977. After it was shut down by the military coup d'état, the RPP renewed its membership to Socialist International in 1994. During Deniz Baykal's leadership period of the RPP, the RPP's relationship with the Socialist International has varied. Deniz Baykal was elected as the vice president of the Socialist International in 2003 and stayed in this position until 2008. By 2008, the Socialist International (SI) highly criticised the RPP for its attitudes towards the AKP's closure case and this created an intense crisis between the SI and the RPP (Baykal, 2008a). The SI made a public announcement that they will monitor the RPP on its commitment to the principles of democracy. Furthermore, the suspension of the RPP from the SI was mentioned. Deniz Baykal, in response, in an interview, stated that the RPP could leave the SI (Baykal, 2008a). Deniz Baykal and the RPP did not attend the XXIII Congress of the Socialist International, which took place in Athens in 2008, to boycott the criticism towards the party. The party also left its role from the SI management.

The relationship with the SI has changed in a positive direction during Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's leadership period. In 2012, Kılıçdaroğlu was elected as the vice president of the SI. This election is important to note the improvement in the relationship between the RPP and SI, and also the RPP's desire to build a European social democratic identity for itself. By doing this, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu attempted to

construct a democratic left in Turkey and obtain the support of its Western counterparts (Uysal, 2011: 134). Moreover, Socialist International welcomed the positive steps taken by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu to develop better relations between the RPP and the SI (Cıngı, 2011: 157).

2.3 Social Democratic Parties and European Integration

There is a comprehensive literature by different scholars regarding parties' negative attitudes, actions and decision-making processes, surrounding the European Union and European integration. This research will focus on the attitudes and behaviour of social democratic parties towards European integration and the EU generally. The social democratic parties' attitudes concerning the EU are generally analysed as part of the literature related to party positions towards European integration. Therefore, in this thesis, social democratic parties' behaviour and attitudes will be deduced from the existing theories, which examine the conditions that determine parties' positions on the issue of European integration.

After the 1980s and throughout the 1990s and the 2000s, social democratic parties in Europe have adopted a pro-European stance (Hooghe et al., 2002; Marlière, 2001 Featherstone, 1988; Gaffney, 1996). However, this cannot be generalised for all European Union history. For example, when it was founded, the Greek socialist party Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) was opposed to the EEC, due to its nationalist, anti-American and anti-capitalist approach. PASOK was elected as a ruling party in 1981 and after this; it gradually adopted a more pro-European stance. In its second term in the office, PASOK agreed to the signing of the SEA, accepted the Maastricht Treaty and enthusiastically supported the acceptance of Greece into EMU (Moschonas, 2001: 12-14).

The literature on political parties' attitudes towards European integration and the EU questions whether the political party positioning is driven by ideology or strategic consideration. Conti (2003: 19) illustrates this positioning as "the kind of approach parties have to the European issue, more specifically it is locked in the ideological background of a party therefore it is principled; or whether it is pragmatic/dependent on the context and therefore contingent." The theoretical distinction of whether political parties are driven by ideology or strategic consideration about European integration is also applicable for understanding the motives of social democratic parties related to the EU.

Marks et al. (2002) explain the attitudes of political parties towards European integration with Lipset and Rokkan's cleavage theory. According to the cleavage theory, political parties are shaped by a series of historical conflicts about the state, religion and class (Marks and Wilson, 2000: 434). These conflicts created distinct and solid identities, social institutions and patterns of political contestations, which explain national variations within the political system. Political parties have their own "bounded rationality" that frame their actions and attitudes in the face of new challenges or uncertainties (Marks and Wilson, 2000: 434). In other words, "political cleavages give rise to ideological commitments or "prisms" through which political parties respond to new issues, including European integration" (Marks et al., 2002: 585). In this context, Marks et al. (2002) argue that attitudes and behaviour of political parties through European integration are shaped by historical predispositions rooted in the basic cleavages that structure the political competition in the political system (Marks and Wilson, 2000: 434). "European integration is assimilated into

pre-existing ideologies of party leaders, activists and constituencies that reflect long standing commitments on fundamental domestic issues” (Marks and Wilson, 2000: 433).

Marks and Wilson (2000: 436) approach the European integration question by dividing the issue into two components as economic integration and political integration. They claim that this dual character of European integration creates tensions for political parties, especially for social democratic parties. With increasing international competition at EU level, economic integration puts pressure on social democratic parties as it increases economic inequality and the substitutability of labour across countries. However, political integration offers a solution to this issue by creating a capacity for regulation at the EU level to compensate for the loss of national economic autonomy (Marks and Wilson, 2000: 437).

Marks et al. define class cleavage of social democratic parties as “moderate left position on state regulation of markets, welfare and economic equality” (2002: 587). They expect social democratic parties to be moderately in favour of economic integration as integration provides growth, yet be critical as pro-market integration also limits government regulation. Furthermore, these parties are expected to be strongly in favour of political integration because it enables the capacity for regulation at EU level. Overall, through a series of expert surveys, Marks et al. indicate that social democratic parties are moderately in favour of European integration (Marks et al., 2002: 587). The level of support for integration increases over time. The average support of social democratic parties on European integration was 6.3 in 1999; it was 5.5 in 1984 (on a scale of 1 to 7) (Hooghe et al., 2002: 975).

Marks and Wilson (2000: 443) put forward a hypothesis for explaining attitudinal differences between different social democratic parties. According to this

hypothesis, social democratic parties' attitudes towards economic integration depend on their goals achievement at a national level. If they manage to develop sustainable social democracy at national level, they will oppose EU economic integration. However, if social democracy is weak or not sustainable, social democratic parties will support further integration as a means to implement social democratic policies at the European level.

Marks and Wilson (2000) state that European integration becomes irreversible at a point, so social democratic parties adopt a pro-European stance and cannot object to the Single Market. Social democracy has been weakened economically, politically and socially at the national level. Economically, the internationalisation of capital and goods and the decline of traditional manufacturing; politically the intensification of employer demands for labour market flexibility; and socially the heterogeneity of the workforce and labour unions resulted in the decline of social democracy practices at national level (Marks and Wilson, 2000: 447). Furthermore, social democratic parties have started to view the EU as a political arena in which they can realize their goals. The EU exercises authoritative power in a range of policy areas such as environmental policy, social policy and cohesion policy. These policy areas are all relevant to social democratic practices. Overall, social democratic parties have started to favour further integration to realize their goals at EU level (Marks and Wilson, 2000: 447).

Hooghe et al. (2002) also deal with the influence of left/right party positioning on the party's stance on European integration. They state that extreme Left and extreme Right political parties adopt Euroscepticism, while mainstream parties, Social Democratic, Christian Democratic, Liberal and Conservative parties generally support the EU (2002: 968). Hooghe et al. (2002) argue that the left/right

contestation shapes parties' position only on certain European policies such as redistribution and regulating capitalism. Centre left parties support cohesion policy, social policy, environmental regulation and an upgrade in European Parliament powers. Centre right parties, on the other hand, support market integration but oppose European regulation (Hooghe et al., 2002: 971-972). In this context, social democratic parties are expected to be more pro-integrationist as regulated capitalism has become part of the European agenda; they perceive the EU as a means to achieve social democratic goals in a liberal world economy (2002: 974).

Kopecky and Mudde (2002: 299) deal with party positions on European integration by differentiating between *diffuse* and *specific* support for European integration. By diffuse support, they mean the "support for the general ideas of European integration that underline the EU", while specific support means "the support for the general practice of European integration" (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002: 300).

Kopecky and Mudde (2002) define two dimensions of support for EU integration. The first dimension, which indicates the support for the ideas of integration, distinguishes Europhiles from Europhobes. Europhiles support the core ideas of European integration, whether political or economic. Jean Monnet, who believes in both political and economic core values of the EU, is a clear example of Europhiles. Margaret Thatcher is also acknowledged as a Europhile, as she supported European integration on economic terms, such as removing barriers on trade and other economic activities. Europhobes do not support the ideas underlying the EU. They can be nationalist, socialist or isolationist, or merely not support the EU integration as they find the core idea of the EU illogical. For example, the thirteen west European parties which signed Building a New Europe in 1999 were accepted

as a clear example of Europhobes by Kopecky and Mudde (2002) as they offered an alternative way for European integration. These parties call for a “social and ecological Europe, a democratic Europe and Europe of solidarity and of peace (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002: 301). These parties formed the Confederated Faction of the United European Left/Nordic Green Left in the European Parliament.

The second dimension, “the support to the general practice of the European integration”, distinguishes EU-optimists from EU-pessimists. EU-optimists accept the EU as it is and see it as it is progressing in the right direction. They can criticize some policies of the EU, but are still satisfied with its overall progress. However, EU-pessimists do not support the current form of the EU, or they are pessimistic about the future of the EU. This does not mean, however, that they oppose EU membership (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002: 302).

	Europhile	Europhobe
EU-optimists	Euroenthusiasts	Europragmatists
EU-pessimists	Eurosceptics	Eurorejects

These four ideal-categories of the party positions on European issue can be detached by the two dimensions above (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002: 302).

First of all, there is Euroenthusiasts, which combines Europhile and EU-optimist positions on European integration. Euroenthusiasts support the ideas of European integration and are optimistic about the direction of the EU. Secondly, Europhiles and EU-pessimists compose the Eurosceptics. Overall, they support the ideas of European integration but are pessimistic about the present and/or the future of the EU. Eurorejects are formed by Europhobes and EU-pessimists. They do not support the underlying ideas of European integration and also the EU itself (Kopecky

and Mudde, 2002: 302). Finally, there is the Europragmatist category, which combines Europhobes and EU-optimists. They do not support the general ideas of the EU, but do not necessarily oppose them. In the end, they support the EU itself. This group can involve political parties without clear political orientations or parties, which support the EU for pragmatic reasons (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002: 303).

According to their typology, social democratic parties in the Czech Republic (The Czech Social Democratic Party-ČSSD), Hungary (The Hungarian Socialist Party-MSZP), Poland (The Alliance of the Democratic Left- SLD) and Slovakia (Democratic Left SDL') are Europhiles (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002: 316). It is important to note that Europhiles, as stated above, support the core ideas of European integration whether political or economic. Kopecky and Mudde (2002) define those political parties, which support one dimension of core values of European integration, as Europhiles. All of these social democratic parties are optimistic about the direction of integration but criticise some policies of the EU. Kopecky and Mudde emphasise the importance of ideology in determining party positions' on European integration. According to them, ideology plays the main role in support for or opposition to European integration. Social democratic parties are both in favour of the general ideas of European integration and the general practice of European integration (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002: 319).

Similarly, Agnes Batory (2001) argues that ideology is an important factor to explain parties' attitudes concerning Europe. Ideology solely is insufficient to explain parties' orientations, cannot be accepted as the only explanatory factor but can be a starting point. It is stated that some ideological positions are more inclined to adopt a more anti-European stance or vice versa. Batory (2001: 10) states that ideology proved to be strongly linked to party attitudes to the EU in terms of social democratic

party of Hungary (MSZP), as it adopts a pro-European stance. According to Batory (2001: 21), ideology alone does not determine a party's attitude towards accepting or rejecting EU membership, but it is recognised that ideology plays an important role in the accession process and shapes the nature of integration at a political and/or an economic level. In Agnos' words (2001: 19):

There are detectable differences in party attitudes that ideological variation explains, ranging from the strongest EU-commitment characterising the cosmopolitan-market-oriented parties to a markedly sceptical, if not hostile, attitude to EU membership at the 'bottom' of the national-social protectionist quadrant, with rather more ambiguous positions in between. This correspondence alone necessitates taking party identities and ideologies into account.

Party positions towards European integration have been dealt within the Euroscepticism literature in detail. Euroscepticism as defined in Taggart's words is as follows: "Euroscepticism expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration" (1998: 366). Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008: 6) offer a distinction between two types of Euroscepticism: Hard and Soft. Social democratic parties' attitudes concerning European integration can also be deduced from this comprehensive analysis.

While hard Euroscepticism is in outright opposition to the entire concept of European political and economic integration, soft Euroscepticism is used to define "contingent or qualified" opposition. Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008: 7) define party-based Hard Euroscepticism as:

Hard Euroscepticism is where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived.

There are two types of Hard Euroscepticism in political parties. In one instance, the party can be a single-issue anti-EU party whose *raison d'être* is to oppose the EU. These parties can mobilise their electorate based on their opposition to the EU. On the other hand, a political party can stress the difference in its position against the EU's proposition, in a way that stresses the capitalist, socialist, neoliberal or bureaucratic nature of the EU based on the party's ideological position which may be communist, conservative, socialist or populist. Typically, these parties either question the terms of their country's EU membership or express conditional support which is so unattainable that it can be equated to outright opposition. (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008: 7).

Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008: 8) define party-based Soft Euroscepticism as follows:

Soft Euroscepticism is where there is not a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that 'national interest' is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory.

Soft Eurosceptic political parties develop the rhetoric of contestation over European integration. Soft Eurosceptic parties show a real scepticism towards the direction and development of European integration. It is important to note that Taggart and Szczerbiak make the assumption that European integration is an inevitable trajectory. This process is accepted as the status quo. Soft Eurosceptical political parties challenge this status quo. A political party can support the current form of the EU, but oppose further integration or the implications of further integration. Taggart and Szczerbiak (2008: 8) still classify these parties as Soft Eurosceptical.

Whilst Taggart and Szczerbiak provide clear definitions of Soft and Hard Euroscepticism, in reality, these are “poles on a spectrum with some parties moving between them” (2008: 8). They argue that the nature of a political party’s manifestation of Euroscepticism is an indication of their position. Political parties can adopt Hard Euroscepticism to resist against a sort of “enemy” to their ideology. This can be capitalism for communism, socialism for conservatism, bureaucracy for populism, supranationalism for nationals, or neoliberalism for socialism. However, Soft Eurosceptical political parties show opposition when the EU runs policies which are opposed to the identity, principle and policy of their party. (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008: 8)

Robert Harmsen and Menno Spiering (2004) follow Katz and Mair’s concept of cartel party to understand party positioning on European integration. According to Katz and Mair (1995), the cartel party is newly formed in Western Europe political system. The cartel party is different from a catchall party, which is rooted in civil society and a mass party, which undertakes the role of broker between civil society and state. The cartel party itself acts as an agent of the state. Governmental political party has the power to form a cartel, which excludes its rivals. A governmental political party can direct government funding to increase its power, for example with media-based campaigns. Euroscepticism, in the light of the cartel party concept, can be understood as a “form of anti-establishment”. Euroscepticism forms the anti-system discourse of political parties located in the periphery. According to Harmsen and Spiering (2004), peripheral parties adopt Euroscepticism with ideological or strategic considerations in order to react to the cartel or mainstream pro-integrationist parties. Euroscepticism is accepted as one of the differentiators between protest parties from cartel parties (Harmsen and Spiering, 2004: 32).

Similarly, Taggart states that protest parties are more likely to adopt Euroscepticism while mainstream parties generally support European integration. According to Taggart, protest parties embrace Euroscepticism “as an ideological appendage to a more general systemic critique” (Taggart, 1998: 372). Taggart states that expressing anti-European statements may have high political costs for political parties, which may currently or potentially be in government since they are most likely to be dealing with the accession process. These political parties express Euroscepticism only as a faction and not a unitary whole.

According to the mainstream/cartel party approach, social democratic parties support European integration as they have the potential to exercise government responsibility. European integration, as an on-going process is accepted as the status quo. Therefore, the political parties who are against the status quo embrace Euroscepticism (Taggart, 1998: 366). Mainstream parties are expected to retain the process of integration. Social democratic parties, as part of a government or having a potential to be in government, support European integration and the EU more generally. However, in social democratic parties, Euroscepticism can be expressed in factions.

On the other hand, Nick Sitter (2002) argues that mainstream political parties can also adopt Euroscepticism. It is argued that Euroscepticism in political parties is affected by the competition in their political system. Mainstream political parties can exploit Euroscepticism for tactical and strategic reasons when in opposition for any reason. Nick Sitter explains this by defining Euroscepticism as a “politics of opposition” (2002: 5). Sitter (2002) argues that Euroscepticism is driven by party competition and as such requires developing a dynamic perspective. Political parties’ strategies depend on contextual situation, which include both opportunities and

challenges at that point in time. In the meantime, the whole issue of European integration provides significant challenges for political parties and changes in parties' attitudes towards European integration, which are explained in this dynamic modelling of Euroscepticism (Sitter, 2002: 5).

According to "Euroscepticism as the politics of opposition" model, even a mainstream catchall or cartel party can adopt a softer Eurosceptical position when it is in the opposition. This opposition can be stronger when the country in question is divided over the issue of European integration. As a party comes closer to government power, its orientation is expected to be more supportive of the European Union (Sitter, 2002: 23).

As a conclusion, in the existing literature different approaches exist to explain why and under what conditions political parties, including social democratic parties, adopt a certain position towards the EU. Extensive research demonstrates that, ideological commitments and strategic considerations impact on parties' positioning on the European issue. Social democratic parties have adopted a more pro-European stance since the 1980s. In the light of these existing theories, the attitudes and behaviour of the Republican People's Party towards European integration and the EU will be analysed in more detail over the next two chapters.

CHAPTER III

THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE’S PARTY FROM 1992 TO 2002

After its closure by the military interim government, the Republican People’s Party returned to the Turkish political arena in 1992 under the leadership of Deniz Baykal. However, during the years between 1992 and 2002 it did not gain a significant success in electoral terms. After its re-opening, the RPP competed firstly in local elections which were held in 1994, receiving only 4.6% of the total votes (Supreme Board of Elections, 1994). The total votes of three leftist parties in Turkey, the Republican People’s Party, the Social Democratic Populist Party (Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti-SHP) and the Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti-DSP) could only reach to 25% of the total votes in the local elections. This led to merge of the RPP with the leftist Social Democratic Populist Party. Deniz Baykal showed an intensive effort for the realization of the merger (Gökçeoğlu, 1995). Similarly, the RPP deputies also highly supported this process. Subsequently, in the general elections of 1995, the rate of the RPP’s vote had reached 10.71% (Supreme Board of Elections, 1995). The RPP took part in the 52th Government from 30 October 1995 to 6 March 1996. In the 1999 election, the RPP could not pass the election threshold by receiving only 8.71% of the votes and stayed out of the Parliament until 2002 (Supreme Board of Elections, 1999). Owing to the RPP’s “constant” opposition status, the RPP has not yet negotiated with the EU directly

except during its membership in the coalition from 1995 to 1996. However, as an opposition party and as one of the most important political parties in the Turkish political arena, it has still played an active role in Turkey's EU relations. Moreover, it is important to note that in this period the European Union approached more supportably to the RPP (Koç and Çakır, 1997).

In this chapter, the RPP's relations with the EU from 1992 to 2002 will be analysed. The analysis will take into account major political events in the Turkish political system and the RPP's responses to these events.

3.1 Customs Union

In 1963, Turkey applied to the EEC for an Association and with the Ankara Agreement it became an Associate member of the EEC. With the Ankara Agreement both sides were committed to a series of steps to establish a Customs Union. The Ankara Agreement contained a three-step process to create a Customs Union, which would eventually lead to full membership of Turkey into the EEC. Turkey's Association status with the EEC was broadened with the Additional Protocol in 1970. The Customs Union between Turkey and the EEC was finalised in 1995 (Müftüler Baç, 2005: 4), covering especially the trade of manufactured goods. As part of this agreement, Turkey was obliged to align with certain EU policies in areas such as technical regulation of products, competition, and Intellectual Property Laws. The Customs Union helped to increase the trade volume between Turkey and the EU. In 1996, Turkey's imports from the EU were estimated 23 billion dollar and export to the EU was 11, 5 billion dollar (Utkulu and Seymen, 2004: 15). Today, the EU constitutes Turkey's number one import and export partner. While in 2008, Turkey's import from the EU was 46 billion Euro, Turkey's export to the EU was 54, 4 billion

Euro. In 2012, Turkey's import from the EU increased to 47, 7 billion Euro and Turkey's export to the EU reached 75 billion Euro (European Commission, 2013).

The Customs Union was signed by the two-party coalition of the time, the True Path Party and the Republican People's Party. Deniz Baykal, the leader of the RPP and then Minister of Foreign Affairs played a significant role in the process of negotiating and signing the Agreement. The Customs Union Agreement is accepted as a success of Deniz Baykal (Doğan 2005; Kaleağası 2008). Deniz Baykal, in his role as Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time, made this statement:

From now on Turkey's workers, craftsmen and industrialists will not produce for 60 million Turkey, but also for 400 million Europe... Turkey's place in Europe has been recognised. This is Turkish people's achievement. Sadly, I observe the political exploitation of the Customs Union. This victory does not belong to one particular political party but belongs to the Turkish public (Barlas, 2005).

The RPP supported the Customs Union Agreement which would increase the economic relations between Turkey and the EU. Even Deniz Baykal played a major role in this Agreement; he attributed the success of the Agreement to all parties and Turkish public. This indicated the pro-European attitude of the RPP at this time.

3.2 The Amsterdam Summit and the Agenda 2000

After the European Council meeting in Amsterdam during 16 and 17 June 1997, the EU arranged a contact meeting with the applicant states in 27 June 1997. To be invited, for the first time alongside the CEEC applicants was symbolically important for Turkey. However, subsequently, the EU informed Turkey that its applicant country status was not transferred to a candidate member (Kar, 2003: 112).

Following the Amsterdam Summit, the European Commission released what is known as Agenda 2000, which included a direction for the strategy of the future

enlargement plans of the EU. In the report, the Commission envisaged the inclusion of the CEECs, Cyprus and Malta to the enlargement process and proposed to start negotiations with Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, and Slovenia in 1998. The Union set requirements to monitor these countries by regular reports to evaluate their political and economic positions and their harmonisation efforts (European Commission, 1997).

The Agenda 2000 did also include Turkey's participation in enlargement. However, Turkey was not included in the list of countries with which the negotiations would be opened; similarly the report did not include a pre-accession strategy for Turkey. In the report (1997), relating to Turkey, the European Commission proposed that:

The EU should continue to support Turkey's efforts to resolve its problems and to forge closer links with the EU. The Association Agreement and the customs union provide the foundations for building an increasingly close political and economic relationship which should evolve in parallel with the democratization process inside Turkey, progress towards lasting good-neighbourly relations towards Greece and the achievement of a just and lasting settlement in Cyprus.

At this period of time, the RPP supported the government policies concerning the EU. Prior to the Amsterdam Summit, the RPP became a member of the Socialist International and the party leader Deniz Baykal visited the social democratic parties' leaders in Barcelona, Amsterdam, Bonn, Malmo, Tanja and Salonika showing Turkey's willingness to be part of the EU. Deniz Baykal aimed at convincing social democrat parties' leaders related to Turkey's EU approach. In these visits, Deniz Baykal attended European Socialists' Congress in Malmö and also attended the European Parliament Backs MED Forum in Amsterdam (Oral, 1997). During the visits, Baykal stated that Turkey's membership to the EU would resolve the Cyprus

problem and also the other problems. If Turkey would be a member of the EU, problems would be settled within the EU (Koç and Çakır, 2007).

3.3 The Luxembourg Summit

The European Council met in Luxembourg on 12 and 13 December 1997. It is fair to argue that the Luxembourg Summit was one of the turning points in the relationship between Turkey and the EU. In the Luxembourg Summit, the EU took the decision to launch the accession process with ten CEECs and Cyprus and Malta. However, similar to the Amsterdam Summit, Turkey's status remained merely as an applicant country and did not progress to a candidate country status. Again, the European Council did not provide a pre-accession strategy for Turkey like similar to that of other applicant countries. The Council agreed on developing a strategy to prepare Turkey for accession, as shown in the Presidency Conclusion (1997):

The Council confirms Turkey's eligibility for accession to the European Union. Turkey will be judged on the basis of the same criteria as the other applicant States. While the political and economic conditions allowing accession negotiations to be envisaged are not satisfied, the European Council considers that it is nevertheless important for a strategy to be drawn up to prepare Turkey for accession by bringing it closer to the European Union in every field.

At the same time, the European Council linked Turkey's accession status to certain criteria, especially those relating to protection of minorities, stable relations with Greece and settlement of the Cyprus problem (Luxembourg European Council, 1997).

The European Council recalls that strengthening Turkey's links with the European Union also depends on that country's pursuit of the political and economic reforms on which it has embarked, including the alignment of human rights standards and practices on those in force in the European Union; respect for and protection of minorities; the establishment of satisfactory and stable relations between Greece and Turkey; the settlement of disputes, in particular by legal process, including the International Court of Justice; and support for negotiations under the aegis of the UN on a political

settlement in Cyprus on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

After the Luxembourg Summit, Turkish authorities announced that they would be freezing relations with the EU. The then Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz stated that if the EU would not change its attitudes towards Turkey within 6 months, Turkey would consider withdrawing its application for full membership (Müftüler Baç, 1998: 242).

In the Luxembourg Summit, the European Council decided to organize a European Conference in order to bring the Member States of the EU and EU applicant countries that addressed CEECs, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, together. Turkey was invited to this Conference, however it declined the invitations. The Turkish government assessed the Council's approach as being discriminatory and they emphasized the contrast between the pre-accession strategy devised for other candidates and the 'European strategy' for Turkey which consisted simply of a set of ideas whose financing remained uncertain (Erdoğan, 2003: 45).

Before the European Conference on 12 March 1998, the Commission released the "European Strategy" for Turkey. The strategy included four topics which were Adhesion Cooperation, National Programme, Adaptation Schedule and Control System to the EU Programmes. This report emphasized the importance of preparing Turkey for membership (Karluk, 1999: 781).

The Republican People's Party had been supportive of the government before and after the Luxembourg Summit. It has been argued that, before the Summit, Mesut Yılmaz asked the help of Deniz Baykal to convince the social democrats in the EU. Deniz Baykal accepted this request and conducted a series of meeting to gain the support of social democratic leaders (Özkök, 1997a). Similarly, despite the unfavourable outcome of the Luxembourg Summit, Deniz Baykal maintained his

moderate approach towards the EU. He even stated: “We should accept our relations with the EU as a marathon. We should not be hopeless as a result of negative developments. We do not have that right. Integration with the West is our main policy. We should proceed with passion” (Türenç, 1997).

Even after the Luxembourg Summit as the decision was not favourable for Turkey, the RPP continued its optimistic stance towards Turkey’s EU accession process. Concerning the Luxembourg Summit, the RPP criticized the EU for the decision to launch accession negotiations with Cyprus but kept Turkey’s status as an applicant country. The RPP supported the government’s policies related to the EU both before and after the Summit.

3.4 28 February Process

The 28 February Process was the process which started with the decisions taken at the National Security Council against “reactionism” and led to the resignation of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan ending his coalition government. This process has been labelled as a “postmodern coup” (Çağlar, 2012: 21).

The Welfare Party gained an electoral success in both 1994 local and 1995 parliamentary elections and formed a coalition party with the True Path Party. This alarmed the military as it was the first time in Turkey that an Islamist party received more votes than its secular parties (Duman and Tsarouhas, 2006: 412). In the National Security Council on the 28th of February, the Turkish Armed Forces warned the government to take necessary measures against the rising reactionary behaviour. Also, the government warned and threatened “sanctions” if the government did not take the necessary measures. The military raised the tension and called on civil society to support them. It was assessed as a strategy to stress that the

military was not planning to take control of the government, but forced the government to follow the National Security Council's decisions (Howe, 2000: 140). The difference of 28 February military interventions from previous coup d'états was that, it was not realized through direct intervention. "The military organized itself in civil society through civilian forces or "Unarmed Forces" that consisted of judicial organs, bureaucracy, universities, trade unions, trade associations and, most importantly the media" (Çağlar, 2012: 29).

During the 28 February Process, the RPP supported the military's intervention in politics. The RPP leader Deniz Baykal stated that "after this declaration, the government cannot continue its presence as it is foreseen in the Constitution". Also, the RPP pressured the government to accept the demands of the Turkish Armed Forces. Even during this process, the RPP went as far as describing the Turkish Armed Forces as a "non-governmental organization" (Koru, 2012).

The intervention of military to the politics was not criticized by the RPP. Therefore, it can be argued that the process started with National Security Council on 28 February and led to the resignation of the government explicitly supported by the RPP. This support indicated the importance of the protection of secularism over the democracy for the RPP.

3.5 The ban of the Welfare Party

Following the process of the 28 February military memorandum, the Welfare Party was banned by the Constitutional Court for violating the secularism principle in the constitution on 16 January 1998. The leader of Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), Necmettin Erdoğan and 5 other representatives were banned from the political arena for 5 years. Party member's actions against secularism, accusations made against the

founders of Turkey and the contentious headscarf policies were accepted as the key reasons for the ban (Morris, 1998).

The RPP Leader Deniz Baykal made the following statement in relation to the decision taken by the Constitutional Court to ban the Welfare Party (Özkök, 1997b):

I prefer to defeat the Welfare Party in the elections. I campaigned against the Welfare Party. I am planning to accomplish this campaign by persuading the public and I believe that this is possible... Turkey is a constitutional state and of course the law will take priority. However, this is a separate situation. I work to defuse the Welfare Party with the support of the public. I find it disrespectful to the law that saying this party should be closed or not the closed. We do not have a right to claim that this party should be closed. However, if this party committed to constitutional crime, we do not have a right to claim that this.

Even though, the RPP supported the 28 February Process which the Welfare Party was forced to resign, the RPP criticized the ban of the Welfare Party by the Constitutional Court. Deniz Baykal stressed the importance of defeating the Welfare Party in the elections rather than its closure by the Constitutional Court as it is the case in the democratic countries.

3.6 The Cardiff Summit and the First Progress Report

The Cardiff Summit was held on 15 and 16 June 1998. Turkey's status was reviewed under the Enlargement chapter in the Presidency Conclusions after the Summit. In comparison to the Luxembourg Summit, some (albeit partial) progress was achieved in the Cardiff Summit. The most significant decision relating to Turkey was that, as is done with other candidate countries, the European Commission became responsible to monitor the political and economic situation in Turkey and inform the Council through regular reports about the progress of it (Kar, 2003: 113-114). However, the Cardiff Summit did not amend any of the criteria that were delivered in the Luxembourg Summit.

According to decisions taken at the Cardiff Summit, the first Progress Report on Turkey was released on 13 October 1998. The report did not paint a positive picture of Turkey's situation due to the unstable political situation. In the report, the European Commission expressed their concerns for the ban of the Welfare Party as it would create uncertainty for "the implications of democratic pluralism and freedom of expression" (European Commission, 1998: 10). Furthermore, the European Commission recommended to reduce the role of the National Security Council to an advisory one, to change the composition of the State Security Courts to more civilian members and also to lift the state of emergency in the Southeast Anatolia (Duman and Tsarouhas, 2006: 416). The European Commission also criticized Turkey for human rights violations such as torture, disappearances and extra-judicial executions (European Commission, 1998: 15).

3.7 1999 General Elections

In the 1999 general elections, the Democratic Left Party led by Bülent Ecevit gained most of the votes as a result of its popularity in capturing PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. It was followed by the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi). The Republican People's Party failed to pass the election threshold and stayed out of Parliament. Deniz Baykal was highly criticized by both the RPP's grassroots and the general public for the RPP's poor performance in the elections (Hürriyet Daily News, 1999). After the failure of the RPP, Deniz Baykal quit his role as leader and Altan Öymen was elected as new leader. Baykal's decision to resign was accepted as the right thing to do (Ekşi, 1999). However, after five months, Deniz Baykal once more became the leader of the RPP.

3.8 The capture of Abdullah Öcalan and his sentencing to the death penalty

The founder and leader of the terrorist organization PKK, Abdullah Öcalan was arrested in Kenya and was delivered to Turkey on 15 February 1999. Abdullah Öcalan was sentenced to the death penalty under the Article of the Turkish Penal Code which related to the formation of an armed terrorist organization. In accordance with the harmonization code of the European Union, Öcalan's sentence was converted from death penalty to a life sentence.

Altan Öymen, the leader of the RPP, opposed to Öcalan's death penalty sentence. According to Öymen (1999):

Öcalan has committed major crimes. In this context, it is normal to be sentenced to the severest punishment. However, should the severest punishment in Turkey be death penalty or life sentence? It should be discussed. We, as the RPP, from the beginning, support the abolishment of the death penalty as it is the case in Europe and democratic countries.

The RPP adopted an attitude against the decision to sentence Abdullah Öcalan to death penalty. However, it was mainly resulted from the RPP's historical opposition to the death penalty. The RPP as a social democratic party was opposed to the execution of death penalty in Turkey.

3.9 The Helsinki Summit

In the Helsinki Summit in 1999, the Presidents and Prime Ministers of the member states confirmed the candidate status of Turkey. Turkey was accepted as a candidate country for full membership to the European Union. In Article 12 of the Presidency Conclusions (1999) it is stated that:

The European Council welcomes recent positive developments in Turkey as noted in the Commission's progress report, as well as its intention to continue its reforms towards complying with the Copenhagen criteria. Turkey is a candidate State destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate States.

Furthermore, in the Presidency Conclusions (1999), it was decided that the pre-accession strategy that will be applicable for Turkey to realize necessary reforms would be similar to that of the other candidate countries. Also, the importance of fulfilling the political criteria for accession, specifically with reference to human rights and the resolving of the Cyprus problem were emphasized in the Presidency Conclusions (1999). It was also decided that Turkey should prepare and present a National Programme for the Adoption of the EU Acquis. In this manner, Turkey would benefit from financial assistance for pre-accession (Helsinki European Council, 1999).

At the time when the European Council recognized Turkey as a candidate for full membership, the RPP was dealing with its internal problems resulting from its defeat in the 1999 general elections. Altan Öymen, the leader of the RPP stated that with the Helsinki decisions, Turkey-EU relations reached a more positive level. Öymen claimed that, if in the Helsinki Summit Turkey was not accepted as a candidate country, Turkey-EU relations would get deadlocked (Oral, 2000). During this period, the RPP continued its support towards the Turkey's EU accession process.

3.10 The Nice Summit

The next European Council met in Nice on 7, 8, 9 December 2000. The Presidency Conclusions of the Nice Summit did not give Turkey candidacy chances for at least 10 years. In the structural reforms that were decided in the Nice Summit, the estimations were built on 27 members, 15 member countries of that time and 12 candidate countries. It was a clear manifestation that Turkey would not be accepted as a member state for the following 10 years (Kar, 2003: 113).

The Nice Summit also set in motion a new and different strategy for enlargement, one based mainly on political priorities instead of technical considerations. In the Presidency Conclusions (2000), it is stated that “The European Council reaffirms the historic significance of the European Union enlargement process and the political priority which it attaches to the success of that process.” In this statement, the European Council emphasized the importance the fulfilment of political criteria on the road to membership.

3.11 The ban of the Virtue Party

The Welfare Party which was banned by that Constitutional Court in 1998 was succeeded by the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi), established in the same year. However, the Virtue Party was banned in June 2001 for violating the secularism-related articles of the Constitutions.

Deniz Baykal (2001a), the leader of the RPP stated that it’s very worrisome to ban a political party with the judicial decision in the constitutional state. Baykal (2001a) stated that:

I wish there had not been such an event. Four political parties in this line were banned. Turkey’s attitude in the face of this event showed that this line is no longer a huge concern in terms of the threatening the democratic system and public is not in a panic in the face of this movement. Political parties in Turkey’s democratic system are at a point where they can deal with political threats to the foundations of the constitution.

The Republican People’s Party was critical towards the Constitutional Court’s decision to ban the Virtue Party from politics. The criticism that directed by the RPP was mainly based on that party closure is opposed the rule of democracy as political parties are the essential parts of the democratic systems.

3.12 The Accession Partnership Document

On 8 March 2001, the EU released the Accession Partnership Document to state that Turkey would pursue in transition from candidate country to accession process. It was a procedural practice which was also implemented with the other candidate countries. The Accession Partnership Document (2001) was a unilateral document, to provide a roadmap to the candidate country to build its own national programme.

Deniz Baykal reacted furiously to the inclusion of unacceptable articles in the Accession Partnership Document. Baykal (2001b) criticized the government for acting with “lack of success and ability.” Baykal (2001b) was highly critical towards the article that foresees a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem in the short term. For Baykal (2001c), it was unacceptable to put the Cyprus problem as an obstacle to the Turkey’s membership.

Moreover, the Accession Partnership Document (2001c) recommended the peaceful settlement of the any border disputes. Deniz Baykal (2001b) was also critical towards this article. He stated that “the Accession Strategy Partnership also included Aegean dispute. We are in a position that much worse than the Helsinki Summit. In the road to become member, it is not fair to stipulate the better relations with Greece. The Accession Partnership Document can harm the relations between Turkey and the EU.”

At this time, the RPP become more critical towards the EU. This criticism has increased especially when the Cyprus and Aegean Islands disputes were raised by the EU. As these problems put as an obstacle to the Turkey’s membership, the RPP increased the volume of its criticism towards the EU.

3.13 The National Programme for the Adoption of the EU Acquis

In the light of the Accession Partnership Document, the National Programme for the Adoption of the EU Acquis was released on 24 March 2001. In the National Programme for the Adoption of the EU Acquis (2001), the abolition of the death penalty would be considered in the medium term. Furthermore, the decision to review the structure and the function of the National Security Council was involved in the National Programme. Moreover, intended constitutional amendments in order to fulfil the political aspect of the Copenhagen criteria were indicated in the National Programme. However, the National Programme for the Adoption of the EU Acquis was assessed as an “unconvincing document” as it showed a little commitment to “reforms regarding minority rights and fundamental freedoms (Ulusoy, 2007: 474).

The National Programme was highly critical for the RPP. The Deputy Secretary General of the RPP, Algan Hacaloğlu (2001) criticized the National Programme for not meeting “the needs of democracy, the peace and tolerance demands of the public and the expectations towards liberation and pluralistic democracy.” Hacaloğlu (2001) accused the government of compromising democracy and social peace. Hacaloğlu (2001) stressed the RPP’s unquestioning support only if positive steps are taken. Moreover, Hacaloğlu (2001) demanded the determination of the government on the issues such as pluralistic democracy, political ethics, fighting against corruption and a democratic, secular and social law state.

3.14 Constitutional Amendments

In the Helsinki Summit, the EU stated that the accession negotiations with Turkey would start based on its process to fulfil the Copenhagen political criteria. Turkey started to realize the necessary political reforms by the end of 2001. Müftüler

Baç (2005) attaches this delay on two reasons. Firstly, the economic crisis in 2000 affected the political situation in Turkey. Secondly, the government consisted of a divided coalition consisting of Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti), the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi) and the Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi). A division between these parties was apparent and necessitated a long bargaining process to achieve agreement between the coalition partners (Müftüler Baç, 2005: 22).

The first constitutional reform package was passed on 3 October 2001 making important amendments to 34 articles of the 1982 Constitution. These amendments were realized in line with the Accession Partnership's quest for short-term measures to strengthen legal guarantees for a range of human rights (Ulusoy, 2007: 474). Significant amendments were made relating to potential closure of political parties and also the electoral law. This first package was complemented with the new Civil Code. The new Civil Code which was adopted in 2001, aimed to provide gender equality in marriage. In the new Civil Code, the women's right on family property was provided for (Müftüler Baç, 2005: 23). Furthermore, Article 118 of the Constitution was changed as "the Council of Ministers shall evaluate instead of give priority consideration to the decisions of the NSC" parties (Duman and Tsarouhas, 2006: 416).

Three other constitutional reforms packages were passed in February, March and August of 2002. Among them, the most important reform package was adopted on 2 August 2002. In this reform package, the most significant reform was the abolishment of death penalty in peacetime. Similarly, the Anti-Terror Law was revised, allowing for broadcasting in languages other than Turkish (Özbudun, 2007: 184). The package also opened the road for the retrial of all cases that the European

Court of Human Rights found to be in violation of the European Convention of Human Rights. The constitutional reform package which was adopted in August 2002 was accepted as a major step in the road to accomplish the Copenhagen political criteria (Müftüler Baç, 2005: 23-24).

In general, the RPP has expressed a supportive attitude towards the constitutional reforms. However, it criticized the scope of these reforms. In relation to the first constitutional reform package, Baykal (2001d) stated that “The main problem is the parliamentary immunity.” Baykal (2001e) claims that the amendments on the closure case against political parties would not carry into practice and also the amendments on electoral law do not provide enough guarantees.

In an interview, Deniz Baykal expressed the party’s attitudes towards the abolishment of the death penalty. In Deniz Baykal’s (2002a) words,

We do not see death penalty as a punishment. In the opposite, we consider death penalty as a giving up from punishment. In modern penal code, the death penalty quickly disappearing and it will disappear completely.... The death penalty should be abolished. This is our general attitude... I consider this issue not within the frame of the EU, but consider it for Turkey.

The Constitutional amendments were welcomed by the RPP even though, at this time, the RPP was outside Parliament. Specifically, the RPP supported the controversial article that covered the abolishment of the death penalty. These amendments were crucial on the road to EU membership and the RPP gave its full support for these amendments.

CHAPTER IV

THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE’S PARTY FROM 2002 TO 2012

The 2002 general elections was a turning point in the Turkish political history. Since 1987, it was the first time a single party government was formed. Parliament now consisted of only two political parties after 48 years. The Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi-AKP) secured almost two-thirds of the parliamentary seats with 34.2% of the votes. The Republican People’s Party was the second party in the parliament with 19.3% of the votes. Other major political players during the 1990s such as Democratic Left Party, Motherland Party, True Path Party and Nationalist Movement Party could not pass the election threshold to be represented in parliament (Supreme Board of Elections, 2002).

Since 2002, the Republican People’s Party has kept its status as a main opposition party and stayed in Parliament after the 2007 and 2011 general elections. After Deniz Baykal’s resignation due to a personal video scandal on May 2010, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu was elected as the new leader of the RPP on 22 May 2010.

Starting from AKP’s first single party government on 2002, the RPP’s attitudes towards European integration and the EU took a dramatic turn. It is argued that the RPP adopts a more Eurosceptical position, while the AKP is perceived as a pro-European political party.

In this chapter, the RPP's attitudes on Turkey-EU relations from 2002 to 2012 will be analysed. Subsequently, major political events relating to the Copenhagen criteria will be analysed.

4.1 Constitutional Reform Packages

After the general elections on 3 November 2002, the AKP government passed major political reforms for harmonisation process with the EU. According to Müftüler Baç (2005: 25), the AKP was very lucky in inheriting reforms, which were originally designed by the previous government. These reforms were realized to satisfy the political criteria that were mainly related to the protection of human rights and the democratization in Turkey (Duman and Tsarouhas, 2006: 416).

The fourth reform package was adopted on 3 December and the fifth package was adopted on 4 December 2002. These two reform packages operationalised the amendments that were planned by the previous government. The most significant one among these was the retrial of all cases decided by the State Security Courts.

On May 2003, the sixth constitutional reform package was adopted. In this package, the abolishment of the death penalty was operationalised. Turkey signed Protocol 13 to the European Court of Human Rights abolishing the death penalty in all circumstances, including wartime. Previous death penalties were converted to life imprisonment (Özbudun, 2007: 186). With this sixth constitutional reform package, Article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law was repealed, which marked a significant progress in Turkey's accession as this article was once used to sentence a journalist for a "crime against the indivisible unity of the Turkish Republic" (Müftüler Baç, 2005: 26).

The seventh constitutional package was adopted on July 2003 to revise the National Security Council (NSC). The civilian members of the National Security Council were increased from five to nine. The NSC meetings were reduced from once a month to once in two months (Duman and Tsarouhas, 2006: 417). The Secretary General of the NSC was agreed to be a civilian, not a military official (Ulusoy, 2007: 475).

The eight constitutional package consisted of ten amendments to constitutions. Constitutional security was given to the freedom of press. This reform package also recognised the priority of supranational treaties over domestic law. Most importantly, it abolished the State Security Courts. The Chief of Staff's representative from the Higher Education Board (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu-YOK) was removed with this package (Özbudun, 2007: 195).

On 24 June 2004, the ninth constitutional package changed Article 46 of the Penal Code. The death penalty was removed from the Turkish Constitution. This package also took the NSC's Secretary General Representative out of the Radio and Television Supreme Council (Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu-RTUK), thereby decreasing its control over Turkish broadcasting (Müftüler Baç, 2005: 27).

A new Turkish Penal Code was adopted in 2004. It revised laws about violence against women and children and changed the penalties for various offences, including increased sentences for 'honour crimes'. The constitutional amendment underlined equality between the sexes by stating that "women and men have equal rights. The State is obliged to put this equality into effect" (Özbudun, 2007: 187). AKP also desired to include a penalty for adultery, as this received negative reaction, the proposal was taken back (Müftüler Baç, 2005: 28).

In general, these constitutional reform packages were supported by the RPP. However, on certain issues, the RPP criticised the AKP's government to make use of "the excuse of EU harmonisation to redefine the secularism principle and bolster the domination of a religious way of life over Turkish society" (Gülmez, 2008: 425). The RPP claimed that the AKP tried to pass legislation not related to the harmonisation process. The RPP leader Deniz Baykal stated that it was the RPP's reaction that made the AKP gave up from its proposal to open small mosques in the apartments (Gülmez, 2008: 426). Similarly, the AKP pulled back its proposal to criminalise adultery after the RPP's reaction (Gülmez, 2008: 426; Müftüler Baç, 2005: 28).

In this period, even though the RPP supported the necessary constitutional amendments related to the harmonisation process with the EU, it started to call attention to the importance of secularism in Turkey and asserted that the AKP engaged with the non-secular practices.

4.2 The Copenhagen Summit

At the Copenhagen Summit on 2002, the European Commission Regular Report stated that the European Council will open accession negotiations with Turkey at the 2004 European Council meeting, if Turkey fulfils the political aspects of the Copenhagen criteria. In Article 19 of the Presidency Conclusions (2002):

The Union encourages Turkey to pursue energetically its reform process. If the European Council in December 2004, on the basis of a report and a recommendation from the Commission, decides that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria, the European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey without delay.

In the Presidency Conclusions of the Copenhagen Summit (2002), the European Council also urged Turkey to resolve the Cyprus dispute by 28 February

2003 on the basis of the Annan Plan. The European Council emphasised that it strongly preferred a united Cyprus before the accession of Cyprus to the EU.

The RPP has been a supporter of Turkey's accession process. Before the Copenhagen Summit, Deniz Baykal, as the leader of the RPP, visited other social democratic parties' leaders including EU Term President the Prime Minister of Denmark Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the Prime Minister of Britain Tony Blair and the Prime Minister of Greece Costas Simitis to gain their support for a date to open negotiations (Sevinç, 2002).

After the Copenhagen Summit, Deniz Baykal (2002b) evaluated that it would be unjust if Cyprus became a full member of the EU. Deniz Baykal stated that government and opposition parties in Turkey should work together for Turkey's membership to the EU. The RPP supported the government for this aim and wanted to work closely with them. With the Copenhagen Summit, Cyprus was no longer a criteria for Turkey's accession and that was pleasing for Turkey (Baykal, 2002b).

However, during this process, the RPP started to criticise the AKP's policies on the Cyprus issue. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yaşar Yakış emphasised the importance of the 28 February as a deadline for settlement. He stated that if a settlement was not reached at that time, the EU could start to perceive the Turkish Armed Forces in Cyprus as an occupying force. Deniz Baykal (2002c) harshly criticised Yaşar Yakış. For Deniz Baykal (2002c), it was unacceptable that Foreign Minister of Turkey made such statement. Baykal considered this statement as a very unfortunate statement. According to Baykal (2002c), Turkish Armed Forces' presence on Cyprus was legal and based on international law. It was not fair to demonstrate Turkish Armed Forces as an occupying force.

4.3 2003 Regular Report

In the 2003 Regular Report, the European Commission stated that Turkey does not precisely fulfil the Copenhagen Criteria. On the Strategy Paper for continuing enlargement (2003), the resolution of the Cyprus problem was mandated for Turkey's membership for the first time. It stated that "The absence of a settlement could become a serious obstacle to Turkey's EU aspirations" (European Commission, 2003: 16).

For Deniz Baykal (2003a), the Cyprus problem being used as an obstacle for Turkey's EU membership was unacceptable. He criticised that the EU did not give a date for opening negotiations as promised in the Copenhagen Summit. For him, the Cyprus issue and Turkey's EU membership should be evaluated separately (Baykal, 2003b).

4.4 The Annan Plan and Cyprus Issue

The Annan Plan was developed by the United Nations in order to settle the Cyprus problem. In the Annan Plan, it was suggested to unite Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots under the "United Republic of Cyprus." It suggested a bi-zonal federation of a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot constituent states (Sözen and Özersay, 2007: 130). This plan was considered as a "carefully balanced plan based on mutual compromises" (Çarkoğlu and Sözen, 2004: 122). The proposed federation composed of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot constituent states and it would be responsible to a presidential council and a bicameral parliament (Asmussen, 2004: 4). The half of parliament would consist of Turkish Cypriots and other half of the parliament would consist of Greek Cypriots in order to prevent the domination of any community. The competencies at the federal level would be limited to international

affairs, the EU and to the protection of state integrity (Asmussen, 2004: 4).

During the negotiations of the Annan Plan, the EU gave active support. The EU offered economic incentives to Turkish Cypriots for their approval of the Plan. The AKP government in Turkey and the pro-European Cypriot politician Mehmet Ali Talat managed to receive support for the plan in Turkey and Northern Cyprus respectively (Gülmez and Gülmez, 2008: 22). On the 2004 Progress Report, it was stated that, “Turkey supported the Annan Plan on a comprehensive solution of the Cyprus problem and the subsequent referendum which took place on the island” (European Commission, 2004). On the other hand, the conservative leader of Greek Cypriots, Tasas Papadopoulos did not support the Plan.

The referendum was held on 24 April 2004. The majority of Greek Cypriots voted against the Annan Plan (75.38% votes against the Plan), while Turkish Cypriots voted for the Plan (64.91% votes for the Plan) (Gülmez and Gülmez, 2008:16). Soon after the referendum, Cyprus became a member of the EU.

Generally, the RPP strongly criticised the AKP’s compliance with the EU on the Cyprus issue. For Deniz Baykal, accepting the resolution of the Cyprus problem as a precondition to Turkey’s EU membership would require the recognition of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey. The RPP criticized the AKP for changing long-standing foreign policy principles of Turkey by being submissive to the EU on the Cyprus problem (Celep, 2011: 429).

According to Baykal, the Annan Plan was both disadvantageous for TRNC and Turkey. It would “challenge the status quo of bizonality at the expense of the Turkish Cypriot community” (Gülmez, 2007: 130). The Annan Plan accepted that “the Cypriot state would be a Greek Cypriot state confining Turkish Cypriots to a minority” (Gülmez, 2007: 130). Deniz Baykal claimed that the RPP supported a

settlement but that should not be against the interests of Turkey and TRNC.

The Greek Cypriots' rejection of the Annan Plan at the referendum was seen by the RPP as an opportunity for the international recognition of the TRNC. From the RPP's point of view, "the results showed that it was the Greek Cypriots who were the real obstacle against the solution" (Gülmez, 2007: 133). Baykal criticised the government for recognizing the Greek Cypriots instead of working for the recognition of the Turkish Cypriots.

With the 2004 Enlargement, the EU welcomed Cyprus alongside 9 other member states, which are Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and Malta. In terms of territory, number of states and populations, it was the single largest enlargement of the Union.

When the Cyprus issue was raised by the EU, the RPP adopted a nationalist discourse. Similar to the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit or 2003 Regular Report prepared by the European Commission, the RPP strongly opposed the Annan Plan.

4.5 The Brussels Summit and the Opening of the Negotiations

The Brussels Summit was held on 16, 17 December 2004. At the Summit, the Council, based on the European Commission's 2004 Progress Report, stated that Turkey sufficiently fulfilled the political aspects of the Copenhagen criteria and it decided to open accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005. This was stated on the Article 17 of Presidency Conclusions (2004):

The European Council recalled its previous conclusions regarding Turkey, in which, at Helsinki, it agreed that Turkey was *a candidate State destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate States* and, subsequently, concluded that, if it were to decide at its December 2004 meeting, *on the basis of a report and recommendation from the Commission, that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria, the*

European Union will open accession negotiations with Turkey without delay.

However, in the Summit, it is stressed that Turkey could not be a member of the EU before 2014. “Accession negotiations yet to be opened with candidates whose accession could have substantial financial consequences can only be concluded after the establishment of the Financial Framework for the period from 2014 together with possible consequential financial reforms” (Brussels European Council, 2004). This statement in the Presidency Conclusion: “These negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which cannot be guaranteed beforehand” (Brussels European Council, 2004) also led to serious discussions. It has stated that even though, the ultimate aim was full membership, it would not guarantee the timing and modality of membership (Uğur, 2010: 968). In Turkey, it created an anxiety that if negotiations got deadlock, alternative solutions can be implied such as “privileged membership” (Aybet, 2006: 530). It is not clear what privileged membership would cover, however, what privileged membership would not cover can be deducted from the statements of the EU politicians. According to the statement of Angela Merkel, Germany’s Chancellor, privileged membership would not cover structural and regional funds, the common agricultural policy and the free movement of workers, but it would envisage an “establishing a common economic zone and structures of political cooperation” (İçener, 2007: 425). It has been argued that privileged membership would only offer minor changes to the status quo.

Furthermore, in the Presidency Conclusions, Turkey’s decision to sign the Protocol regarding the adaptation of Ankara Agreement that takes account of the accession of the ten new members was welcomed by the European Council. Cyprus was one of the ten members included (Brussels European Council, 2004).

The RPP approached sceptically the conclusion of the Brussels Summit and the decision to open negotiations with Turkey. The RPP's scepticism was caused by the suspicion that Turkey would not be treated equally as the other candidate states. Deniz Baykal (2004) stated that negotiations should start without any concessions. The recognition of Cyprus and also blocking the free movement of persons were unacceptable. He claimed that the EU was forcing Turkey to give more concessions about its national interests. He said that 3 October 2005 was a deadline for Turkey to recognise Cyprus, it was not a date to start negotiations (Baykal, 2004). Similarly, Enver Öktem (2004), the Parliamentarian of the RPP claimed that at the Brussels Summit, the EU forced Turkey to accept that it invaded North Cyprus and recognise the Republic of Cyprus. For Öktem, Turkey was forced to accept and resolve issues like the Armenian Genocide, the Kurdish problem and the Aegean Island problems for its EU membership (Öktem, 2004).

The RPP explicitly opposed the conclusions of the Brussels Summit. Even it supported the decision to open negotiations with Turkey; the party criticized the EU for putting Cyprus and other foreign policy issues as obstacles to Turkey's EU accession process. Accordingly, the RPP followed a nationalist policy towards the conclusions of the Brussels Summit.

4.6 2007 Presidency Elections and 27 April E-Memorandum

The Presidential Elections was the most debated issue in 2007 and the military once again interfered in the Turkish politics. As Ahmet Necdet Sezer's presidential term was about to end, a new president would be elected by the AKP who had the majority in Parliament. This caused anxiety among the military. On 12 April, the Army Chief of Staff stated, "I hope a president will be chosen who is

sincerely dedicated to the core values of the Republic, the unitary structure of the state, and the secular and democratic state” (Büyükanıt, 2007).

A retired Chief Prosecutor of the Supreme Court, Sabih Kanadoğlu stated that for presidential elections, the parliamentary assembly must have a quorum of 367. However the AKP did not hold 367 seats at the parliament. As the other parties would not take part in the session, the presidential elections should not be held (Ural, 2012: 728). Meanwhile, a republican rally was organized against “the threat to secularism.”

On 27 April 2007, at the first round of the presidential elections, 361 parliamentarians voted and presidential candidate Abdullah Gül received 357 votes. Since the quorum of 367 was not reached at this first round, the process moved to a second round. On the same day, the main opposition party, RPP, knowing that 367 members of the parliament were not present at the first round, applied to the Constitutional Court to annul the session (Radikal, 2007).

On the same day, the General Staff released a statement on its website that expressed its concerns related to Presidential elections and emphasised that the Turkish Armed Forces are the absolute defender of secularism. The statement published on Turkish Armed Forces’ website was as follows (Ural, 2012: 729).

It has been observed that there is a part of society that is in an ongoing struggle to undermine the core values of the Turkish Republic, secularism being at the forefront, and those activities have increased in the recent period...In recent days, the outstanding problem in the Presidential elections has been the discussion of secularism. This situation is observed by the Turkish Armed Forces with concern. It should not be forgotten that the Turkish Armed Forces is not neutral in these discussions and is the absolute defender of secularism.

On 1 May 2007, the Constitutional Court stated that it was determined that the necessary quorum of members of Parliament was 367.

The government decided to go to early elections in response to the e-memorandum given by the Turkish Armed Forces. The general elections were held on 22 July 2007. The results showed an increasing support for the AKP. The AKP received 46.6% of the votes, while the RPP received 20, 8% and the MHP received 14,2%. There also were 26 independent parliamentarians elected (Supreme Board of Elections, 2007). As a result, once more the AKP formed a single party government with an increased number of seats in the parliament. On 28 August 2007, the third round of presidential election was held and with the support of MHP, resulted in the election of Abdullah Gül as President.

During the presidential elections, the RPP criticised the government for not having a candidate that is acceptable by all political parties. The RPP was also against Abdullah Gül because his wife wears a headscarf (Polat, 2009: 137). The RPP boycotted the parliamentary election's session and took the issue to the Constitutional Court (Ural, 2012: 729).

About the e-memorandum published in Turkish Armed Forces' websites, the Spokesman of the RPP, Mustafa Özyürek (2007) stated that it should be seen as a memorandum and the government should do what is necessary. Onur Öymen (2007), the Vice President of the RPP stated, "General Staff's findings are not different than our findings. We are in total agreement. No one can despise the ones who say, "How happy is he who says I'm a Turk" and we consider who despises this phrase as an enemy. We do not surrender Turkey to the enemies of Atatürk." Deniz Baykal (2007a) stated that he hoped that after the e-memorandum, the situation would change. Baykal (2007a) stated that "the public did not protect the government which is intervened. Our public does not protect the ones who conflict with government bodies. In this situation, there is no victimhood, but imposition instead."

Related to the presidential elections and 27 April e-memorandum, the RPP acted its historical role as a defender of secularism, even it would damage the democratization process of Turkey.

4.7 Headscarf Controversy

The headscarf ban came into force with the 1982 Constitution. This Constitution stated, “The clothing and appearances of personnel working at public institutions; the rule that female civil servants' head must be uncovered” (1982 Constitution). This law was extended in 1997 to all universities. On 7 February 2008, the Turkish Parliament adopted an amendment, which allowed women wearing headscarf in all universities. The bill on lifting the headscarf ban in universities was taken to the Constitutional Court to annul by the RPP. The RPP applied to the Constitutional Court as the bill violated Article 2 of the Constitution, which is related to secularism principles in Turkey. On 5 June 2008, the Constitutional Court annulled the amendment as it was judged to be against the founding principles of the constitution.

The RPP was very pleased with the court’s decision to annul the amendment. Deniz Baykal (2008b) said, “The ruling means that constitutional amendments could be analysed in essence, not just procedurally, if it threatens to violate nonamendable articles of the constitution.” Vice President of the RPP Onur Öymen (2008a) made a similar statement. Öymen said, “The verdict spelled the end for such amendments. From now on, no one will be able to attempt to change the constitution.”

Similar to the presidential elections, the RPP put secularism as a priority and objected to the decision to lift the ban of headscarf in universities.

4.8 The Closure Case against the AKP

After the proposal to lift the headscarf ban in universities, the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals, Abdullah Yalcinkaya opened a closure case against the AKP. The indictment was accepted by the Constitutional Court and it started hearing the closure case against the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). The prosecutor had asked for 71 politicians to be banned from politics for five years, including Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President Abdullah Gül, and former Parliament Speaker Bülent Arınç (Kösebalaban, 2008: 2).

The closure case instantly came in the spotlight both at a local and global level. Öniş (2009) explained this reaction with four interrelated concerns. First of all, the AKP presented itself as the most liberal and moderate face of Islamist politics in the Muslim world. Secondly, the closure of the AKP would become the biggest obstacle against Turkey's full membership to the EU immediately. Thirdly, the closure of the AKP would damage Turkey economically and contribute to further political polarisation. And lastly, this situation would prevent to a potential solution to the Kurdish problem (Öniş, 2009: 34-35). At the end of the hearings, the Constitutional Court gave a financial penalty and issued a serious warning but did not shut down the party or ban any politicians from politics. The justification of the decision, as published in the Official Gazette, was that "the AKP has become a focal point for anti-secular activities (Düzgit, 2008: 26). The speeches of the party officials constituted the evidence for the non-secular activities. This was a political case and inevitably led to a politically motivated decision. It has been argued that the logic behind the decision to impose financial penalty rather than the closure of the party, was the political reforms which were undertaken by the AKP to "achieve alignment with the EU which demonstrated once again the significance of the EU for the

survival of the party in the Turkish political system” (Düzgit, 2008: 27). Furthermore, the decision was reached less than four months and it was the shortest time in any party closure case in Turkey. It is suggested that both domestic and international concerns were taken into account by the Constitutional Court (Düzgit, 2008: 27).

Generally, the RPP expressed its concerns about the closure case against the AKP. However, the party emphasized the importance of being respectful to the judicial process. Deniz Baykal (2008c) stated that “closure case is very worrisome in terms of democracy, but lawyers do what they have to do.” The Vice President of the RPP, Onur Öymen (2008b) argued that the RPP respected the judicial process and there also were similar cases in the West. For Öymen, the closure of a political party does not go against democracy. Öymen (2008b) said:

It is said that it is the people’s will that can shut down a political party but in no democracy the public does that... Of course we don’t want closure of political parties...but all parties should abide by the Constitution. Everyone should respect the decision to be taken by the top court.

The General Vice President of the RPP, Mustafa Özyürek (2008) said “We do not defend party closures. However, if party committed a crime according to laws, the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals should do what is necessary. The AKP’s statements and behaviour contradict with the Republican values.”

The RPP supported the closure case against the AKP, even it criticized the ban of the Welfare Party and the Virtue Party from politics in the 1990s. The change in the policies of the RPP regarding the party closures was twofold. Firstly, it was resulted from its historical commitment to secularism as party claimed that the AKP engaged with non-secular activities. Secondly, it was resulted from the failure of the RPP against the AKP in the elections.

4.9 The Amendments on Article 301

Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code was very much debated at both the national and international level. Article 301 was an amended version of article 159 of the former Turkish Penal Code in 1926 (Algan, 2008: 2237). The new Turkish Penal Code was adopted on 25-26 September 2004 and came into effect on 1 June 2005. Article 301 stated the following (Algan, 2008: 2238):

1. A person who publicly denigrates Turkishness, the Republic or the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of six months to three years.
2. A person who publicly denigrates the Government of the Republic of Turkey, the judicial bodies of the State, the military or security organizations, shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of six months to two years.
3. When a Turkish citizen in another country commits the crime of denigrating Turkishness, the penalty to be imposed shall be increased by one third.
4. Expressions of thought intended to criticise shall not constitute a crime.

A number of authors and journalists have been subject to criminal investigations based on Article 301. This list of authors and journalists includes Nobel Laureate Orhan Pamuk, Hrant Dink, Perihan Mağden, Elif Şafak, and even Joost Lagendijk, chairman of the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee. The government was obliged to revise the article due to harsh critiques. The new Article 301 came into force on 8 May 2008 (Algan, 2008: 2239-2240). The new article 301 stated:

1. A person who publicly denigrates the Turkish Nation, the State of the Republic of Turkey, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the Government of the Republic of

Turkey or the judicial bodies of the State, shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment for a term of six months to two years.

2. A person who publicly denigrates the military or security structures shall be punishable according to the first paragraph.

3. Expressions of thought intended to criticise shall not constitute a crime.

In the new Article 301 the terms “Turkishness” and “Republic” have been replaced by the terms “Turkish Nation” and “State of the Republic of Turkey.” It also reduced the maximum imprisonment term and stated, “Any prosecution under the law shall be subject to approval of the Minister of Justice” (Algan, 2008:2241).

The Republican People’s Party was strongly opposed to the amendment of this article. Even, it is argued that the most vocal opposition to the proposed abolition of Article 301 originated from the RPP (Öniş, 2007: 257). Deniz Baykal (2007b) stated, “The prime minister is looking for an accomplice to the shameful act of making insulting the Turkish identity in Turkey free. He almost expects us to apologize for being Turkish. We will not apologize.” He claimed that the attempt to amend Article 301 is not caused by a real problem and it is not a problem of democracy or freedom of expression. Baykal (2007c) criticised the government to amend this article because of the EU pressure. Baykal said, “Our stance is obvious. Laws should not be changed due to pressure, this disturbs us” (Zibak, 2008). An RPP parliamentarian and former member of Justice Commission of Turkish Parliament, Orhan Erasla, said: “301 is not wrong. It should not change. It is not only a need, it is also a necessity. If we want to remain as a nation and state, it should remain” (White, 2007:132).

The RPP opposed the amendment of Article 301 because of the EU pressure. For Deniz Baykal, this amendment did not bring new interpretation to the freedom of

thoughts, however it was resulted from “external pressure and imposition” (Baykal, 2008d). However, it is argued that the strong opposition of the RPP to amend Article 301 attached to its increasing nationalist policies (Öniş, 2007: 257).

4.10 The Democratic Initiative Process

The Democratic Initiative Process was started by the AKP in order to increase the democratisation level in Turkey and mainly to settle the Kurdish problem. The Democratic Initiative Process was first named as Kurdish Initiative and then the project turned into a “national unity project” (Çandar, 2009: 13). The Initiative Process was not related to the constitutional reforms but the government started a series of talks with Kurdish and Turkish political and civil-society groups. (Abramowitz and Barkey, 2009: 122).

The Interior Minister, Beşir Atalay, announced the Democratic Initiative Process. He (2009) said, “of course there will be a change in the government's Kurdish policy and a new package extending democratic rights and improving freedoms of Kurds will follow.” Even though the government took concrete steps, the Process could not continue because of internal politics.

The RPP did not support the Democratic Initiative Process. Deniz Baykal (2013) said, “They want to realise the scenario in Turkey which had been realised in the Middle East. It is not acceptable to drag the country into a process which caused ethnic disintegration.” The RPP claimed that this process will lead the country to the risk of an ethnic-based disintegration and segregation while the AKP believed that this process would strengthen social unity and cohesion” (Keyman, 2010: 93).

The RPP did not consider the Democratic Initiative Process as a democratization movement. The opposition of the RPP was resulted from the fear of

disintegration. According to the RPP, the initiative would weaken the foundation of the secular constitutional regime and its territorial integrity (Keyman, 2010: 93).

4.11 The Ergenekon Case

The Ergenekon Case refers to the structure, also known as the “Ergenekon Terrorist Organisation” which is accused of planning a coup (Öztürk and Subaşı, 2008). The indictment charged suspects with “membership in an armed terrorist organization,” “attempting to overthrow the government of the Turkish Republic by use of violence and coercion,” “inciting people to armed rebellion against the government of the Turkish Republic,” “encouraging the military to insubordination” and “inciting people to hatred and enmity” (Aydınlı, 2011: 233). Ergenekon defined as an organization that planned a coup against the AKP’s government and an attack on the State Council in 2006. Moreover, it has argued that that organization was connected with other illegal organizations and acted as an “inner state” (Aydınlı, 2011: 233).

The RPP was strongly opposed to the Ergenekon Case. In 2009, Deniz Baykal criticised the mass arrests and described the legal process as “a coup d’état, it is the AKP’s coup d’état and what is worse is it is the prosecution’s coup d’état” (Baykal, 2009). Deniz Baykal (2009) said: “In the indictment, it is written that the organisation was active till the 1960s. If it was, who founded it, who governed it? Is it an organisation against the AKP? It looks like that. But according to the indictment, this organisation existed when AKP wasn’t founded. Then, who was the target?” Baykal also stated that they do not accept this case as a serious and solid case.

After the leadership change in the RPP, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu has continued the RPP's policy for the Ergenekon Case. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu explicitly expressed his support for the Ergenekon's defendants. Mehmet Haberal who is founder and the former rector of Başkent University in Ankara, Mustafa Balbay, journalist and writer, and Sinan Aygün, the former president of Ankara Chamber of Commerce were elected as parliamentarians of the RPP. Since two of the Ergenekon trial's defendants, Mehmet Haberal and Mustafa Balbay, were put behind bars after the election, the RPP boycotted Parliament for a short period of time (Eşkinat, 2012).

4.12 The Balyoz Case

The Balyoz (Sledgehammer) was a coup plan which was allegedly prepared by the First Army Command against the AKP government in 2003. Similar to the Ergenekon case, defendants were accused of carrying out operations that would create right conditions for staging a military coup (Gürsoy, 2012: 194). The Balyoz Case started in 2010 and reached to a decision in 2012. The case was taken to the appeal by the defendants.

The RPP highly criticised the judicial process during the Balyoz Case. After the court verdict sentenced 330 retired and serving soldiers to imprisonment from 13 to 20 years, the RPP's Deputy Chair and Spokesperson Haluk Koç (2012) stated that they consider "The court verdict as not a legal, but a political verdict." Koç (2012) also said, "The CHP is openly against coups, coup attempts and attempts to take guardianship of democracy, and it will continue to stand against these things. However, in the Balyoz case the right to a fair trial had been violated. Can there be a democracy where the right to a fair trial does not exist?"

4.13 Constitutional Referendum

In 2010, The AKP government planned to adopt a series of constitutional amendments due to the EU harmonization process. However, the amendments did not achieve the required two-thirds of majority of the votes to immediately implement the changes. However, they did receive a majority of 330, which was sufficient to present the amendments to the electorate in a referendum. A Constitutional Referendum was held on 12 September 2010. 58% of the votes cast were in favour of constitutional amendments and 42% were against it.

One of the most debated articles in the constitutional amendments was that it led the way to try military officers who commit crimes against the state such as preparing coup d'état plans. The Parliament will choose some of the members of the Constitutional Court. The number of Constitutional Court members will be increased. Parliament will appoint three members while the president will appoint 14 members. The Constitutional Court will obtain a more democratic structure, consisting of two parts and functioning as a general assembly (Ciddi, 2011).

The Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK) members will increase from 7 to 22. Members will no longer be elected only by the Supreme Court of Appeals and the Council of State. A total number of 11 representative judges will be appointed to the board out of a total of 13,000 (Ciddi, 2011).

It is important to note that the EU was supporting the constitutional reform package even if it was not as comprehensive or liberal as they wanted (Katcher, 2010). The European Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fuele considered referendum as “a step in the right direction” therefore stated that other reforms related to freedom of expression and freedom of religion has to be realized (EU Business, 2010).

At first the RPP suggested separating the reforms regarding the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Council of Judges and Prosecutors and the new arrangements for party closures from the rest of the items in the reform packages. After the AKP did not accept the RPP's proposal, the RPP did not support the constitutional reform packages. Deniz Baykal stated that the AKP tries to realise its ambitions related to the legal system with this reform package. His major concern was that the AKP would increase its control over the judicial system and the high courts' judges (Celep, 2011: 430).

During the referendum process, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu became the new leader of the RPP and continued the party's policies against the reform packages. After the referendum, Kılıçdaroğlu (2010a) stated that they respected the results of the referendum and are also pleased with 42% of no votes.

4.14 2011 General Elections

The 2011 general elections were held on 12 June and the AKP received a majority of the votes. It gained 326 seats with 49,95% of the votes. The RPP, under the leadership of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, received 25,94% of the votes and 135 seats in Parliament. It was followed by the MHP which received 12,98% of votes and 53 seats. 36 independent parliamentarians were also elected (Supreme Board of Elections, 2011). As a result of 2011 elections, the AKP formed its third single party government.

CHAPTER V

THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Turkey's relations with the European Union have always been a subject of political debate in Turkey. Since its first application for EU membership in 1959, the political actors in Turkey developed their own stances towards Turkey's EU membership. Since its founding in 1924, the Republican People's Party as an important actor in the Turkish political arena, has been a pro-European party, be it in government or as an opposition party. However, on certain issues, especially those concerning the national interests, the RPP's approach to the EU became mildly sceptical. In terms of national interests, it is regarded as a "slippery concept" which is used to describe as well as prescribe foreign policy (Nye Jr., 1999: 22). According to the RPP's party programme (2008: 123), the RPP pursued a peaceful foreign policy that aims to protect Turkey's national political, economic and security interests, to continue the independence and sovereignty, and the indivisible unity of the nation and to increase the effectiveness and the international prestige of Turkey.

The origins of the RPP's attitudes towards the EU can be found in its ideological orientation. The ideology of the RPP has been rooted in the founder father of modern Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal's principles. The six principles, which are republicanism, populism, nationalism, secularism, etatism and revolutionism constitute the basis of the RPP's ideology, Kemalism (RPP Bylaws,

2012). Even after the 1960s, when the RPP adopted some social democratic principles, the commitment of the party to Kemalism's cornerstones still remained dominant in its ideological practices.

The RPP's approach towards the West and the EU can be defined as "friend-enemy." There is a paradoxical situation in RPP's attitudes and actions in this area resulting from its ideology, Kemalism. On the one hand, the Westernisation of Turkey was identified as the one of most important and crucial objectives for modern Turkey; on the other hand, both economic and political independence of Turkey from the Western states was valued (Ayata and Ayata, 2007: 214). Kemalist ideology was both pro-European and anti-imperialist (Celep, 2011: 423). The fear that the West would damage the territorial integrity, independence and national sovereignty of Turkey has mainly resulted from the "Sevres complex" (Uslu, 2008: 76).²

The RPP's complex relations with the EU can also be analysed through its origins and its role in the founding of the modern Turkish state. According to one perspective, Turkey was not born from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. It was "made" by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and its followers (Ahmad, 1993). In the modernisation process during the early years of the Turkish Republic, the main aim was to reach the level of 'modern civilisations'. The aim was to create a Turkey that could compete with the Western states (Keyman and Öniş, 2007: 214). In this context, the creation of the Turkish Republic was followed by a series of reforms. Through this period, the RPP had become the primary carrier of this state-centric

² After the World War I, the Ottoman Territory was divided up within the victorious states in which considered as homeland by Turks. Eastern Thrace and the area around İzmir were given to Greece, France and Italy were allocated "sphere of influence" and then they occupied southern Anatolia. Moreover, the Sevres Treaty envisaged an Armenian state in the northeast (Uslu, 2008: 76). The Sevres Syndrome reflects the inherited fear of "being encircled by enemies attempting the destruction of the Turkish state" (Jung, 2003).

modernisation and top-down attempt to create an economically advanced and culturally secular nation (Keyman and Öniş, 2007: 214).

It is important to recognise the extent of the RPP's commitment to a secular Turkish state. Secularism has been the most important and consistent cornerstone of CHP ideology (Ayata and Ayata, 2007: 217). The RPP implemented reforms in the newly founded Turkey, included major secularisation reforms, such as; the abolition of the caliphate, and the secularisation of education, law and government. These reforms separated religion from politics. As Turkey started its transition to a multiparty system, religion started to play a more significant role in Turkish politics. The RPP perceived the rising influence of religion as a threat to a secular regime. The RPP positioned itself as the "defender of secularism" in Turkey (Ayata and Ayata, 2007; Keyman and Öniş, 2007; Baran, 2008; Bahar, 2007).

The RPP recognised EU membership as a means of achieving the ultimate goal of the Atatürk reform program which is Westernization (Uslu, 2008: 75). With its historical pro-European attitudes and these motivations, the RPP played an important role in Turkey-EU relations. For example, the Ankara Agreement was signed by the RPP government in 1963. Even when further developments in Turkey-EU relations had taken place during the right wing governments or military interim governments (Celep, 2011: 424) the RPP continued to be a supporter of improving relations between Turkey and the EU. The RPP was shut down after the 1982 coup d'état and was re-formed only in 1992. During this new period, the RPP continued its supportive approach towards Turkey's EU membership. However, after 2002, when AKP formed a single-party government, the RPP started to adopt a more of an anti-European attitude than before.

The RPP's attitudes towards and relationship with the EU can be analysed from two perspectives; on the one hand, as an opposition party, looking at RPP's approach towards the governments' EU policy, on the other hand, RPP's own approach towards the EU. At the same time, the interaction of these two approaches can be observed in the RPP's EU discourse.

5.1 The Republican People's Party Approach to the EU from 1992 to 2002

The Turkish political atmosphere in early 1990s can be described as chaotic. This period was marked by different coalition governments and an unstable economic environment. The RPP was out of government for most of this period, except for a short spell between 30 October 1995 and 6 March 1996. However, in this period, even though it was critical towards the EU on certain policies, the RPP maintained its historical approach and adopted a pro-European stance.

The Custom Union Agreement was signed between Turkey and the EU in 1995. At this time, the RPP was a coalition partner with the centre rightist True Path Party. The success of the signing of the Custom Union Agreement was attributed to Foreign Minister and also the leader of the RPP, Deniz Baykal (Doğan 2005; Kaleağası 2008). With the exception of this period, the RPP was not a government party, yet it continued to support the Turkey's membership and aimed to realize Turkey's membership to the EU. Deniz Baykal visited the social democratic leaders in the EU before both the Amsterdam Summit and the Luxembourg Summit in order to gain their support to change Turkey's applicant status to candidate state (Oral, 1997; Özkök, 1997a). Also, it supported the attitudes of the government after the Luxembourg Summit in which Cyprus was declared as a candidate member country while Turkey's status remained as an applicant country. After the Luxembourg

Summit, the government unilaterally froze the relations with the EU. The RPP as a pro-European political party defended Turkey's accession to the EU. The decision to keep out Turkey from the EU while Cyprus became a candidate member state was unacceptable for the RPP. Similarly, after the Helsinki Summit when Turkey was declared as a candidate member country, the RPP announced its contentment with the outcome (Oral, 1997). After the declaration of Turkey as a member, the RPP supported the reforms that were adopted in order to meet the political requirements of the Copenhagen criteria even though it was outside of parliament as result of 1999 election (Baykal, 2001c; Baykal 2002b).

However, in parallel, the RPP was also critical of both the EU and reigning government's policies on the EU during this period. For example, prior to the Helsinki summit, the RPP criticized the EU's decision to announce Cyprus as a candidate country, while Turkey remained with an applicant country status. Similarly, the RPP was highly critical of the Helsinki Summit Accession Partnership Document released by the EU. For example, having the settlement of the Cyprus problem as one of the conditions for Turkey's candidacy was found to be unacceptable by the RPP. The RPP accused both the government due to their "lack of success and ability" and also the EU on the same issue (Baykal, 2001b). Furthermore, the RPP was against the EU's document containing an article which requested better relations with Greece as one of the accession criteria. The EU pressure to resolve the Aegean dispute and develop better relations with Greece was the main source of disturbance for the RPP. On this issue, the RPP criticized the government for not objecting the preconditions put by the EU. The RPP opposed the EU interference to Turkey's foreign policy. In terms of Cyprus and the Aegean Islands disputes and the EU pressure on these issues, the RPP mainly followed a nationalist policy.

With regards to the National Programme for the Adoption of the EU Acquis, the RPP was critical towards the government in not meeting the needs of the public in terms of pluralistic democracy, tolerance, and peace. During this period, whilst the RPP renewed its support for Turkey's EU accession (Hacaloğlu, 2001), they adopted a manner not against Turkey's membership, but against governmental policies on the EU. It was mainly resulted from the electoral concerns.

The RPP also showed its support during the Constitutional reform packages which were adopted during 2001 and 2002, a period when the RPP was outside of the government due to its failure to pass the election threshold in the 1999 general elections. Whilst supportive of the reform packages, the RPP was critical towards the content of some packages, especially amendment items relating to the closure of political parties and the electoral law (Baykal, 2001c). Similarly, the RPP was highly critical of the government in the debates relating to the lowering of the election threshold (Baykal, 2001d). It is important to note it here that, today the RPP actively campaigns to lower the election threshold. Though, in that period, the RPP opposed the attempt to lower 10 percent election threshold. At that period, the RPP advocated the election threshold to procure stability by preventing "the translation of fragmentation of the votes among different parties into the parliament" (Sayari, 2007: 205). On this issue, the policy choice of the RPP was shaped by its electoral concerns.

In the period between 1992 and 2002, the RPP continued its commitment to the secularism. During the period which started with the 28 February resolutions of the Turkish Military Forces, the RPP supported the military's (in)direct intervention in politics (Koru, 2012). The RPP argued that the Welfare Party should accept the terms that the military offered. Unconditionally, the RPP supported both the military intervention and the military itself. According to Hatem Ete (2012), the RPP adopted

a political orientation which internalized the priorities of the 28 February political process. From 1992, the RPP abandoned its traditional position which separated the RPP from the center-right political parties and the RPP positioned itself against the rising party of the center, the Welfare Party. On the other hand, according to Fuat Keyman (2012), the RPP supported the coup to protect the secular system of Turkey. It is argued that it was this support of the 28 February Process that cost the RPP a position outside Parliament in the next election (Keyman, 2012).

In the period 1992 to 2002, the RPP took a stance in principle that was against the closure cases against political parties. During this period, first, the Welfare Party and then the Virtue Party were banned by the Constitutional Court for violating the secularism principle of the constitution. The party closures were harshly criticized by the EU and raised serious concerns relating to democratic pluralism and the freedom of expression in Turkey (Morris, 1998). Both the closure of Welfare Party in 1999 and the Virtue Party in 2001 were also criticized by the RPP (Özkök, 1997b; Baykal, 2001a). After the decision to ban the Welfare Party, the RPP leader Deniz Baykal stated that “whilst they respect the outcome, they preferred to defeat the Welfare Party in the elections.” Similarly, after the closure of Virtue Party, Deniz Baykal (2001a) also stated that “it’s very worrisome to ban a political party with the judicial decision in a constitutional state.” The RPP objected the closure of both the Welfare Party and the Virtue Party at this period on the basis that the closure of political parties would damage the democratization process of Turkey.

With regards to the abolishment of the death penalty, the RPP adopted a supportive attitude. After the capture of the terrorist organization PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan, the RPP demonstrated a clear attitude against the death penalty (Öymen, 1999). Similarly, during the debates relating to the abolishment of the death

penalty in the constitutional reform packages, the RPP supported the government policies (Baykal, 2002b). The abolishment of the death penalty was also a necessary condition for Turkey's EU membership (Başlevent et al., 2005: 554). The RPP adopted an attitude that was parallel with the EU.

It is evident that, during the period which started with the reopening of the RPP in 1992, the party adopted a predominantly pro-European attitude. In general, it supported governmental policies relating to the EU and the democratisation process of Turkey. The main opposition area of the RPP was the EU's attitudes relating to Cyprus. In parallel, the RPP preserved its stance as a secular party and with this reasoning it supported the military's intervention into politics. However, on issues such as the banning of political parties and the abolishment of the death penalty, the RPP defended the democratic values of Turkey.

5.2 The Republican People's Party Approach to the EU from 2002 to 2012

In 2002, the AKP received 34.2% percent of total votes in general elections forming a single-party government in Parliament. During this election, the RPP received 19.3% percent of the votes, leaving other major political parties out of the parliament. It is suggested that, the result of the 2002 elections was like an "earthquake" for Turkish politics (Keyman & Öniş, 2007; Başlevent et al., 2005). Following the 2002 elections, the RPP adopted a relatively more sceptical attitude towards the European Union than before (Celep, 2011: 424).

After the 2002 elections, the AKP government continued to adopt constitutional reform packages which were crucial for Turkey's EU membership. The significant outcome of these reforms was reducing the role of the military in politics. These reforms increased civilian membership of the National Security Council and

abolished the State Security Courts. Furthermore, the New Turkish Penal Code was adopted, death penalty was abolished and Article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law was amended (Müftüler Baç, 2005: 22-25). In general, the RPP was supportive of these constitutional reform packages. However, at the same time, the RPP started to criticize the government in acting in a way that damages the secular system of the Turkish Republic and using the EU's reforms to realize their own goal of imposing a more religious way of life on the Turkish society (Gülmez, 2008: 425).

Whilst it supported the Copenhagen Summit process and the government's actions surrounding it, the RPP became more critical of the EU and the government in relation to their handling of the Cyprus problem (Baykal, 2002c). For the RPP it was unacceptable to put Cyprus problem to be used as an obstacle for Turkey's membership. These criticisms became more severe before and after the referendum in Cyprus, which was held in accordance with the Annan Plan. The attitude of the RPP during this period can be seen as an "aggressive struggling to preserve the status quo" (Gülmez, 2007: 127). The RPP's criticisms were on three main firstly. First, the party was against linking the Cyprus problem to Turkey's EU membership status. For the RPP, the EU eventually would pressure Turkey to recognize Greek Cyprus (Gülmez, 2007: 130). Secondly, it was against the content of the Annan Plan as for the RPP, Annan Plan would create a Cypriot state which contains Turkish minority and this would damage the bizonality of the island. Thirdly, the criticism was directed to the AKP's own Cyprus policy. Baykal accused government to shift from the stable Cyprus policy of Turkey for Turkey's EU membership (Gülmez, 2007: 131). In terms of Turkey's stable Cyprus policy, it was emphasized the protection of the interests of Turkish Cypriots. The RPP was against the Annan Plan that the AKP government damage the interests of Turkish Cypriots for the sake of entering the EU

(Gülmez, 2007: 131). Before the referendum, the RPP decided not to take sides in government. Similarly, after the referendum, as it was rejected by the Southern Cypriots, the RPP declared its satisfaction with the outcome (Gülmez, 2007: 133).

Cyprus became a member of the EU in 2004 enlargement following the Brussels Summit. Following this, the government signed the Protocol regarding the adaptation of Ankara Agreement, taking account of the accession of the ten new Member including Cyprus. The RPP harshly criticized the government for signing the Protocol (Baykal, 2005). According to the RPP, by signing the Protocol, the government pledged to recognize Greek Cyprus as an EU member.

In this instance, in relation to the Cyprus problem, the RPP was critical towards both the government and the EU. However, the RPP's Cyprus policy reflected "continuity with the past" (Gülmez, 2007: 135). The RPP under the Deniz Baykal leadership had continued the previous policy of the party with a harder tone. The RPP under İsmet İnönü leadership reacted London and Zurich Treaties similar way to the RPP's reaction to Annan Plan (Gülmez, 2007: 135). London and Zurich Treaties with the Treaty of Guarantee were designated Great Britain, Greece, and Turkey as guarantors of the island (Eralp and Beriker, 2005: 178). The RPP under İsmet İnönü leadership rejected these treaties that these treaties would undermine the rights of the Turkish Cypriots (Gülmez, 2007: 130). Related to the Annan Plan, the RPP preserved its historical stance towards the Cyprus problem.

In relation to the Brussels Summit, the RPP was critical towards the EU. The main concern of the RPP was that Turkey would not be evaluated on the same basis with other candidate countries. The RPP was sceptical of the EU's decision to undertake open-ended negotiations with Turkey, as it was stated in the Presidency Conclusions: "These negotiations are an open-ended process, the outcome of which

cannot be guaranteed beforehand” (Baykal, 2004). On this issue, Deniz Baykal compares Turkey-EU relations with that of a couple getting engaged, as an engagement does not fully guarantee a marriage (Baykal, 2004). Moreover, in the Brussels Summit, in terms of the free movement for persons which implied the free movement of Turks, it was stated that “long transitional periods, derogations, specific arrangements or permanent safeguard clauses can be considered for the free movement of persons” (Brussels European Council, 2004). It was considered as a signal that Turkey would confront with problems regarding the right for the free movement of workers and the RPP harshly objected this article. According to the RPP, this was a founding principle of the EU and this limitation would lead Turkey in a different way from EU membership (Baykal, 2004). In its objection, the RPP reflected the fear of that Turkey would not access the EU as a member, but would be considered as a second-rank member.

The RPP explicitly raised concerns over the opening negotiations between Turkey and the EU. On this issue, the RPP directed its criticism towards the EU. Even as the party continued its principled support for Turkey to be a member of the EU, it started to object to the conditions such as the Cyprus problem and the Aegean Island dispute that had been put forward by the EU and the policies of the EU. For the RPP, the EU treated Turkey differently from other candidate members, and the conditions were unacceptable.

Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code was one of the most controversial issues in both the domestic and the EU agenda. The EU strongly urged Turkey to amend its laws on curbing free expression, in particular Article 301 of its penal code (McConalogue, 2006). According to a report from the Commission to the European Parliament and European Council: "It is necessary to ensure freedom of expression

without delay by repealing or amending Article 301 of the Penal Code and by overall bringing the legislation into line with European standards" (European Commission, 2006). For Europeans, Article 301 was seen as a violation of the Copenhagen Criteria related to "the human rights and respect for and protection of minorities" (White, 2007: 134). However, the RPP has continued to support Article and harshly criticized any attempts to abolish this article. For the RPP, this article is necessary to protect the Turkish identity and it also criticized the government of becoming subservient to the EU (Çetin, 2007). The RPP opposed the EU pressure on this issue and also the party objected any change that would damage the Turkish identity. Concerning the amendment of Article 301, the RPP adopted a nationalist approach. During this period, the RPP criticized political reforms which were supported by the EU and realized to harmonize Turkish law to EU *acquis*. The RPP ran a campaign against the constitutional referendum which included amendments of Turkish law in order to harmonize them with the EU laws. The reforms were seen by the RPP as the domination of the AKP over the legal system (Celep, 2011: 430).

The European Union accession process has reshaped the "domestic opportunity structure by reducing the role of the civilian–military bureaucracy and empowering the political elites and societal actors" (Polat, 2009: 135). The EU-induced developments led to the demilitarization which reflects a mere diminishing of the military's role in public decision making (Duman and Tsarouhas, 2006: 406). Under the AKP government, important steps were taken to reduce the role of military in Turkish politics. However, the RPP continued to support the role of the military in politics. The process which started with the Presidency elections was maintained with the e-memorandum, further demonstrating the RPP's support for a form of military intervention. During the presidency election process, the RPP had

undertaken a negative campaign and emphasised that the “regime was under threat.” The RPP opposed the election of Abdullah Gül as a President was based on the fact that Gül’s wife wore a headscarf. Furthermore, the RPP had strictly opposed lifting the ban that prevented women from wearing headscarves in universities.

It is seen that, during this period, the RPP continued its position as a “defender of secularism in Turkey” (Ayata and Ayata, 2007; Keyman and Öniş, 2007; Baran, 2008; Bahar, 2007). At this time, the RPP aimed at protecting the secular state of Turkey even it cost to damage the democracy in Turkey.

Related to party closures, the RPP has changed its position over time. In the Welfare and Virtue party cases, the RPP set its position as against these closure cases. However, on the AKP closure case, the RPP explicitly supported this process. RPP even weighed in on the argument that party closures was not against the democracy. Similar to 27 April e-memorandum, the RPP supported the case against the AKP due to its commitment to secularism. RPP positioned the AKP as a party which aimed at decreasing the importance of secularism in Turkey. Once more, the RPP supported the case against the AKP to protect secularism in Turkey even it gave harm to democratization process of Turkey. Moreover, the electoral concerns played an important role in the RPP’s stance towards the closure case against the AKP.

In 2009, the AKP government launched a “democratic initiative” process to deal with the so called Kurdish, Alevi, and Roma “questions”, and other minority issues. The RPP argued that this process would lead Turkey to disintegration and segregation (Keyman, 2010: 93). During the process which is known as the “Democratic Initiative or Kurdish Initiative”, the government allowed the return of eight PKK militants to Turkey. The RPP accused the government of giving in to terrorism and allowing it to “propagate terrorism” (Kurban, 2013: 4). For Fuat

Keyman, the RPP's strong objection to the process created ambiguity and surprise, as in the 1990s, the RPP was the only political party to defend the possibility of solving the Kurdish problem, not with military intervention, but through democratic means (Keyman, 2010: 93). Keyman also attributes the RPP's opposition to the Democratic Initiative to the electoral concerns. If the AKP government became successful to solve the most difficult problem in Turkey, this would be a major success of the AKP and the AKP government would easily win the 2011 elections (Keyman, 2010: 98).

5.3 Theoretical Implication of the Republican People's Party Approach to the EU

During the period between 1992 and 2002 the RPP adopted a pro-European attitude. However, after 2002, as the Justice and Development Party formed a single party government, the RPP's attitudes towards the European Union became more critical than before. In order to analyse the RPP's attitude towards the EU, it is important to understand the cleavages in the Turkish political system.

Lipset and Rokkan (1967) argue that particular social cleavages such as "centre-periphery", "secular-religious" and "bourgeois-proletariat" cleavages shape European political parties. Through these cleavages, political parties determine their stances on European integration. Şerif Mardin (1973) applies this cleavage perspective to political parties in Turkey. According to Mardin, in the Turkish political system, political parties are ranked along centre-periphery cleavage. The left-right axis of the political parties in Turkey can be derived from Şerif's centre-periphery cleavage based perspective. In this context, on centre-periphery cleavage, the RPP represented "the centre" which consists of "urban, relatively wealthy and well educated people who promote a secular, modern and Western lifestyle" (Celep, 2011: 426). On the other hand, the RPP's competitors represented "the periphery"

which includes people that live mostly in rural areas and have traditional, religious and conservative lifestyle. According to Mardin, “the main line of demarcation underlying the Turkish political system has been a perennial conflict between a centralized, cohesive and heavily secularist state elite confronted by a culturally heterogeneous periphery with strong religious overtones” (Öniş, 2007: 249).

In the Turkish political system, the centre-periphery cleavage can be also attributed to the existing secular–religious divide in Turkey (Celep, 2011: 426). In the Turkish system, the left political parties primarily pay tribute to secularism whereas the right political parties are committed to religious, conservative and nationalist values (Özbudun, 2006a: 135). The degree of religiosity is the main difference between the value systems of these two sides (Celep, 2011: 426).

According to Öniş, centre-right parties manage to make use of “anti-state or anti-establishment” statements to gain electoral support, and are also seen as being “society centred” political parties. On the other hand, centre left parties continue their links with the state and seem more elitist and more detached from society (Öniş, 2007: 249). In the post 2002 Turkish politics, the AKP was viewed as the party of the periphery or the society whereas; the RPP was seen as a party of the state.

It is important to note that political parties in Turkey do not position themselves on socio economic issues, which reflect the standard left-right cleavage in Western political parties. Marks et al. (2002: 587) defined the class cleavage of social democratic parties as “moderate left position on state regulation of markets, welfare and economic equality.” However, in Turkey, political parties position themselves mainly on centre-periphery cleavages, which can also be seen as a secular-religious cleavage.

Centre-periphery, left-right or secular-religious cleavage in Turkish politics

also shaped the political parties' attitudes towards the European Union and Turkey's EU accession process. Historically, the secular side argued in favour of the adaptation of European type of life in order to carry forward the Westernization of Turkey. Turkey should not only adopt science, technology, and economic development of the West, but also the social and political culture of the West. On the other hand, the religious side distinguished between Western material and moral culture. As Turkey adopted Western material culture including economic development and science, it should be avoiding the Western moral culture which implies a change in values, beliefs and lifestyles. These pro-Islamist groups adopted an ideology named the "National View" and defended traditional morality, family values, establishing closer ties with Muslim countries, heavy industrialisation, and religious education (Celep, 2011: 427). Pro-Islamist groups strongly opposed the Turkey's EU membership and also claimed that EU also does not accept Turkey as a member because of cultural differences. Both the Welfare Party and the Virtue Party were pro-Islamist political parties and adopted the National View. The Welfare Party announced their opposition to Turkey's EU membership as if Turkey became a member, Turkey would turn into a province of Israel (Atacan, 2005: 188).

After 2002, the traditional sides of this cleavage have started to change. The AKP became a single party government in 2002 and "the nature and context of the debate on Turkey-EU relations changed" (Celep, 2011: 427). The AKP and the Felicity Party was founded following the closure of the Welfare and the Virtue Party. The AKP as a revisionist political party broke its ties with its past (Çarkoğlu, 2007: 505). In the early days, the leader of the AKP, Tayyip Erdoğan defined his party as a "conservative democratic", stating that the party had no religious agenda (Celep, 2011: 427). Moreover, the AKP embraced Turkey's membership to the EU which

was a point of difference from political parties in a similar ideological line. As the AKP adopted a pro-European stance and took necessary steps and passed necessary reforms on the way to the EU, the RPP started to embrace a Eurosceptic attitude towards the EU. The RPP adopted a reactive attitude to the AKP's EU agenda and AKP-EU relations. This reactive attitude naturally shaped the RPP's discourse.

The RPP until 2002 had adopted a pro-European attitude and worked to develop better relations with the EU and Turkey. It was basically a continuity of the RPP's commitment to "reach Turkey to the level of modern civilizations." The RPP's support for European integration was the natural consequences of its ideological orientations. However, during the period from 1992 to 2002, the RPP also criticized EU policies. Similarly, this also reflected the ideological paradox of the RPP which was that Turkey should be westernized, but at the same time should be independent both economically and politically from the West.

It can be said that after 2002, the RPP has adopted a soft Eurosceptical attitude towards the European Union. The RPP's position on European integration cannot be described as hard Eurosceptical as taking a hard Eurosceptical stance would mean that the RPP opposes Turkey's membership to the EU which would be a contradiction with its political commitment. However, this was not the case for the RPP. On the RPP's party program, it is stated that "the RPP has supported the Turkey's EU membership from the beginning. Turkey's bid for full membership of the EU is a societal change project which is the natural extension of the Atatürk's modernization reform and vision of modernization." Similarly, according to research conducted by Seçkin Gülmez from November 2005 to May 2006 amongst RPP parliamentarians, 97 out of 102 answered the question, 'Whether Turkey should become an EU member?', as should or definitely should (Gülmez, 2008: 432).

In the literature, the dramatic change in the RPP's position concerning the EU is explained by its ideological U-turn. The RPP has always been committed to secularism and Republican values. However, before 2002, according to public opinion surveys, the electorates who traditionally votes for the RPP not only supported the RPP for its commitment to secularism, but also voted for it as they perceive the party as a pro-European and pro-democratization and reform oriented political party (Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu, 2007). However, after 2002, the party seems to have adopted a nationalistic view towards the EU. It is even claimed that the RPP has become indistinguishable from the Turkey's major ultranationalist party, the MHP. Öniş (2009: 22) argued that after 2002, the RPP has established itself as one of the strongest elements of the defensive nationalist bloc. For Öniş (2007: 257) the party is clearly trying to extend its electoral base by capitalizing on the rising nationalist and Euro-sceptic mood in the country." The RPP as a centre-left political party does not show any enthusiasm for the democratization process as it was demonstrated in the case of the amendment of Article 301. The RPP started to make use of fear campaigns and defended secularism, even if this was at the cost of democratic values, as was the case with the e-memorandum in 2007.

It is fair to argue that on certain issues, the RPP and the MHP share a "virtually indistinguishable nationalist agenda" and became the key players in the anti-reform bloc in terms of the European Union (Patton, 2007: 346). The reactions of the both the RPP and the MHP were in similar line to the Annan Plan related to the Cyprus problem, the amendment of Article 301 and the Democratic Initiative. Both of these parties pursued a nationalist policy concerning the certain events and the EU related developments. However, during the period after 2002, even though the RPP directed its criticism towards both the AKP's EU policy and the EU itself, unlike the

MHP it renewed its support for Turkey's EU membership. In this period, the MHP stated that "EU demands for minority rights constitute a direct threat to the power of the Turkish state and the unity of the nation by continuing the centuries-old Western strategy of dividing the Turkish nation by creating 'artificial minorities', taking them under Western patronage and provoking them to rebel against the state (Yılmaz, 2011: 189). After 2002, RPP was considered as a soft Eurosceptic party whereas the MHP is the hard Eurosceptic political party.

However, it would be necessary to note that the MHP was a coalition partner from 1999 to 2002 and during this period Turkey recognized as a candidate country and significant constitutional amendments were passed including the reforms in the minority rights, the abolishment of death penalty and the right to broadcast to the non-Turkish speaking minorities. The hard Euroscepticism of the MHP was moderated when the party was in power. The situation was in similar line with Sitter argument that even hard Eurosceptic political parties can become 'softer' when the party in question participates in government (Yılmaz, 2011: 195).

The change in the attitudes of the RPP is not an ideological U-turn, but it is related to conditional situations. The RPP's negative attitude towards the EU and Euroscepticism is a result of its distrust towards the AKP's policies (Celep, 2011: 423). The scepticism of the RPP has not resulted from its ideological shift, but as a result of its competition with the government party, the AKP. In fact, its opposition to both AKP's EU agenda and EU policies can be seen as a result of the continuation of its commitment to secularism and Republican values.

Since 2002, the Turkey's EU agenda has been shaped by the AKP so the RPP formed its discourse as a response to the AKP's agenda. The RPP objected to AKP policies related to the EU on two aspects. Firstly, the RPP argued that AKP uses EU

membership process as a means to implement its hidden “conservative” agenda and undermine secularism. Secondly, the RPP asserted that the AKP does not necessarily defend Turkey’s national interests during this process. In this context, it can be said that the RPP’s soft Eurosceptical attitude towards the EU resulted from its distrust of the AKP government’s honesty and ability in implementing the required reforms; it is therefore a conditional situation (Celep, 2011: 423). The RPP showed resentment towards the EU and AKP due to policy differences and the issue of national interest.

Furthermore, it seems that, during this period, the RPP has become more critical towards the EU in general. It has increased its opposition to certain EU policies independently, and not purely as a reaction to the AKP government’s EU policies. For example, after the Brussels Summit, the RPP suggested that the EU deviated from its path and founding ideas, as it started to push for concessions rather than democratic reforms. Some RPP officials even expressed concerns that the EU’s purpose could be to maintain Turkey’s candidate status for ever or to treat Turkey as a second-class partner, because both scenarios served the EU’s interests better (Gülmez, 2008: 430). This situation was resulted from the increasing nationalist orientation of the RPP.

In 2010, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu became the new leader of the RPP. In the beginning, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu indicated a positive policy change concerning the RPP’s approach to the EU. He stated that the RPP separates Turkey’s EU membership process from the AKP’s way of dealing with process. Although, he accused of the AKP for being not honest in this process, he described the EU as a “project of civilization” (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2010b). Also he reiterated several times the RPP’s support for Turkey’s EU membership and also argued that a new process between the RPP and the EU would start.

Despite Kılıçdaroğlu's optimistic and supportive approach towards the EU earlier, the expected change did not occur. He continued RPP's campaign against the constitutional referendum in 2011. In a similar line with Deniz Baykal, Kılıçdaroğlu also accused the government of wanting to change the legal system in Turkey in a way which would bring it under the control of the AKP government (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2010b). Moreover, in this process, the RPP harshly criticized the EU for its support of the constitutional amendments as "overlooking the danger behind some of the amendments that would further empower the AKP rule rather than contribute to the rule of law" (Gülmez, 2013: 321).

It can be said that, the RPP's critical attitude towards the AKP's EU policies has continued under the leadership of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. What is important to note is that after the leadership change, the RPP's focus was not on the same Republican reflexes to maintain the status quo (Gülmez, 2013: 322). The RPP's critical rhetoric towards the AKP government was mainly based on AKP's undermining the rule of law and democracy in Turkey. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu did not criticize the government of endangering the Republican values, especially secularism. Even in a press conference, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu stated that as the RPP, they do not see secularism in danger in Turkey (Küçükşahin, 2010). The origins of the RPP's continued criticism towards the AKP were from the fear that "some of the reforms the AKP introduces might undermine the advance of the rule of law and democracy in Turkey and thus, have negative repercussions on Turkey's EU membership prospects" (Gülmez, 2013: 322). The RPP under the leadership of Kılıçdaroğlu criticized the AKP in deceiving the EU with pro-European rhetoric and using the EU membership to increase its authoritarian rule rather than empowering democracy. Moreover, under the leadership of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the RPP attempted to reduce the existing 10

percent election threshold to 3 percent election threshold. While in 2001, the RPP actively opposed any attempts to lower the election threshold, now it actively engaged for it. This indicates the policy change in the RPP after the election of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu as a leader. The RPP evolved to develop more democratic practices and directed towards the social democracy with Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu.

However, under Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's leadership, there was no change in the RPP's critical attitude towards the EU in treating Turkey different from other candidate states. In the party election manifesto (2011), the RPP objects to any possible special status given to Turkey by the EU. Moreover, the RPP harshly opposes the conditionality of the Cyprus problem to Turkey's EU membership. Also the party still advocates fair membership negotiations with no double standards and full membership having equal rights with the rest of the members (RPP Election Mainfesto, 2011).

The leadership change in the RPP does not cause a significant change in the party's attitude and behaviour towards the EU nor the AKP's policies related to the EU. However, the RPP's negative attitude related to the EU has resulted from its opposition status. As mentioned above, the RPP adopted a Eurosceptic stance in order to deal with the government party. The RPP developed its European strategy depending on contextual situations; it was not the result of an ideological U-turn.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The EU accession process affects the political, economic, and social structure of a candidate country. Adaptation to the EU laws of national laws and the implementation of these new EU laws require a significant change in the candidate country's system. In accordance with the change in the system, political parties in the country also need to undergo a transformation process in order to follow efficient European based party programmes and to engage with the EU itself. The Republican People's Party, as the oldest political party in Turkey, has engaged with the EU since the first application of Turkey to the EEC in 1959.

Historically, the Republican People's Party has been a pro-European party and supported the creation of EEC, European integration and also Turkey's membership. In the CHP's Vision for the EU membership (2012) stated that "the RPP as Turkey's social-democratic party and main opposition has always been a firm defender of EU's enlargement to Turkey." However, over the long candidacy years of Turkey, the EU's policies have been criticised by the RPP. The main concern has been the potential damage the EU would do on Turkey's territorial integrity, independence and national sovereignty. The RPP has been critical when the national interests of Turkey were at stake such as the Cyprus problem.

At 2002, the political system in Turkey was transformed as a single party government came to office after a long period of coalition governments. The AKP has emerged as a political party, which transformed “political Islam into a moderate conservative democratic party, reconciling it to the secular principles of the constitutions” (Özbudun, 2006b: 547). After 2002, the RPP’s discourse towards the EU has become more severe than ever. The RPP can be said to have been even transformed ideologically from a centre left political party to a nationalist party. The RPP’s negative attitude towards the EU has resulted from its distrust towards the AKP government. The RPP, as a “defender of secular state” has not trusted the AKP government and accused it of using the EU reforms to implement a hidden agenda which transform the secular way of life in Turkey to the “religious way of life” (Gülmez, 2008: 425). The RPP’s stance towards the EU has not changed with the leadership change in 2010. Even though, the new leader of the RPP Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu’s rhetoric was more pro-European at the beginning, there was no significant change in the policy of the RPP.

The soft Eurosceptical position of the RPP was not the result of an ideological U-turn. It mainly depended on the contextual situation that the AKP formed a single party government and the RPP became the main opposition party since 2002. The RPP has positioned itself in accordance with the AKP’s position. As the AKP directly engaged with the EU for Turkey’s membership process, the RPP conducted its EU policy over the AKP government’s EU policy. The RPP’s similar policy choices can also be observed in other domestic political events.

The future of the Turkish political system is unpredictable. It can be too assertive but also right to claim that if the RPP would have been a government party

and carried out direct relations with the EU, the RPP would become more supportive towards Turkey's EU accession process. The RPP has historically been a pro-European party based on its ideological commitment to raise Turkey's conditions to the same level with the developed countries. Its soft Eurosceptical stance since 2002 was not the result of an ideological U-turn but dependent on its opposition party status.

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