

LEGACY of TURGUT ÖZAL and THE SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION of TURKEY with AK PARTY GOVERNMENTS

Erdoğan Selami, Acar Eray

Dumlupınar University, Kütahya, Turkey,

E-mails: *erdogans274@mynet.com, acar_era@hotmail.com*

Abstract

Turgut Özal is one of the most important actors in the Turkish Political life. He made fundamental changes in Turkey between 1983-1993 as a Prime Minister or President of Turkish Republic. He not only tried to liberate Turkish economy but also political sphere. Özal, especially focused on freedom of speech, freedom of belief and freedom of enterprise. At the same time, the latest refers to the free market economy. Until Özal's period Turkish political leaders applied the model of mixed economy, not free market economy, that is, the structure of Turkish economy wasn't entegrate with global markets. Initially, Özal changed it and he started to set up export-oriented economic model, free interest rates, privatization, etc... and then, made political reforms; like freedom of speaking the Kurdish language, dissolution of 141, 142 and 163. articles of Turkish Ciriminal Code, application for full membership to the European Union. Unfortunately, his sucesors could not able to sustain his revolutionary political and economic vision. In this respect, 1990s can be considered as lost years for the Turkey. Until AK Parti governments Turkey encountered deep economic and political crises such as April 1994 and 28 February 1997. After from this miserable period, with the AK Parti government Turkey returned to the Özal's reformist politics both politically and economically. According to the arguments which are mentioned below, Özal's transformation efforts will be examined from today's view. Besides, what are the main characteristics of Özal and the AK Parti leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, can we say continuity or divergence between them. In Today's Turkey, what is the importance of Turgut Özal, can we say that, Özal's ideas particularly in economic field-is being applied by the AK Parti government.

Keywords: Özal, AK Parti, Free Market Economy, Economic Crises, Political Reforms, Turkish Economy.

1.Turgut Özal And ANAP (Motherland Party)

Turkey encountered two important problems which were the political and economic crises in the late of 1970s. 24 January 1980 Desicions (Özal architect of desicions), a series of fundamental economic policy changes, couldn't be carried out by the weak Demirel's minority government. These problems paved the way for the military intervention of Turkey in September 12, 1980. The Junta came to power with overriding objectives, the first one was to repress the political sphere by applying rigid measures against extremists and the second objective was for economic restructuring (Boratav, 1998: 122 ; Topal, 2000: 122).The 1980

Military Coup in Turkey was an attempt by the General Kenan Evren and his friends who were called NSC (National Security Council) to reshape the Turkish political system for the sustainable democratic order. For that reason, some measures were implemented between September Coup 1980 and November 1983 by the military government to reestablish the Turkish political arena. The new constitution was approved by a referendum in 1982. (Ergüder, 1991: 152). After that, In order to regulate party formation and electoral system the new Political Parties Law and Electoral Law were enacted in April 1983. Also, It was decided that, new general elections would be realized in November 1983.

On the other hand, the ruling military government did not want coalition government for the stability of political sphere. To provide this target they introduced %10 election threshold which was very high. Similarly, according to this aim, they thought to allow only two political parties to attend the 1983 General Elections, one of them is moderate-right MDP (Nationalist Democracy Party), the other is moderate-left HP (Populist Party). But, the powerful Generals gave permission reluctantly Özal's Party ANAP to enter into elections due to foreign pressure (Akdoğan, 2001:88; Ahmad, 2007: 189-190). However, the junta supported his own party (MDP) strongly. Indeed, President Evren had already made a television speech before the elections, he clearly criticized Turgut Özal and his party (MP), favoured MDP. In any case, Evren's speech didn't contribute MDP, but it damaged. At the end, NSC allowed to compete of the three political parties for the 6 November General Elections.

During the elections campaigning it was understood that, Özal was ready for government, he was talking about the measures to recover corrupted (ruined) economy, economic transformation, free market economy, also selling to the Bosphorus Bridge etc. On the other hand, the other two leaders (Necdet Calp and Turgut Sunalp) couldn't say concrete projects. Especially, MDP was presenting itself as the representative of 12 September Military Coup. Unlike Özal's political meetings, their meetings were not exciting to Turkish voters. Moreover, Özal and his party managed to present itself as a civilian force, the most competent among other two parties to normalize Turkish democracy and economic system. At the same time, Özal was using more civilian discourse, he meant that his party autonomous from the military (Akdoğan, 2001: 88).

ANAP was advocating consensus and toleration in political sphere unlike MDP and HP. According to Özal, economic problems could be resolved only by decisive and logical methods. That is, he meant that their government could overcome these problems. Turkish People believed him. Only Özal's Party used positive discourses and formulations, other parties preferred to say state-oriented rhetoric (Özkazanç, 1996: 1221). At the same time, conversation programmes on TRT (Turkish Radio and Television) contributed Özal's success. At these programmes Özal told his economic projects simply and clearly instead of ideological issues, (Heper, 2011: 206). Özal persuaded Turkish People on economic issues easily. And, ANAP was able to win the elections getting a little more votes than 45 percent (%45.2) 211 deputies (400/211) in the Elections of November 1983 and come to the power only by itself (one-party government).

1.1. Özal's Governments and Economic Transformation of Turkey

The ideology of the ANAP was based on four different political views, nationalism, conservatism, social justice, and market economy (ANAP programme, 1983). In this respect, Özal claimed that our party was the representative of the whole society rather than a part of it.

Prime Minister Özal and his party acted carefully in order not to do an action to disturb the soldiers (NSC), as it was transition government and completely signed the decisions about the economy can be seen. While noticing the conditions of that time, it is seen that this was a logical preference. During those years Özal introduced himself as a calculating man by using a rather moderate language and stressed on economical issues (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002: 46).

On the other hand, Özal accused the previous governments of being too closed in international community and economy. According to him, Turkish politicians were hesitating to be open to the international arena and attempting to build a wall around Turkey. In this context, closed society and closed economy meant an isolated country. Özal aimed to change these closed policies (Topal, 2001: 40). The primary aim of Özal was to make structural changes in economy and to make the economy open to the outside (Kazdağlı 2003: 460) He eventually started to make his decisions into practice which he had planned before. The major reforms of Özal roughly (Morgil, 1996: 104-105; Akad: 2000: 267).

- He abolished "The Law of the Protection of the Value of Turkish Lira" that he had come from the years of 1930.
- The flexible exchange rate policy was started (It means no devaluation suddenly)
- The control of prices was abolished (Black Market ended)
- The importing limitations and quotas were almost completely abolished
- Out of budget funds applications were established in order to get rid of the bureaucratic formalities
- Reduced bureaucracy for taking driver's license and passport
- Privatization efforts, the industrialization policies which are open to foreign competition and the encouragement of the industrial and service investments.

Özal is usually remembered for his infrastructural projects that he had made for supporting the investments. For instance, Fatih Sultan Mehmed Bridge (2. Bosphorus Bridge), Atatürk Dam, highways, roads, harbours, airports, the commonization of the telephone networks of the villages are appearing at the first sight for evaluating in this respect. In the different centres of Anatolia (Denizli, Konya, Kayseri etc.) the firms which were called as "Anatolian Tigers" were able to exist by means of incentives that Özal had given (Öniş, 2000: 289).

By means of Özal's radical economical transformations which we have counted above, the import-substitution period in Turkish economy finished, an economical model that is export-oriented had been started with Özal (Çalık, 1992: 6). Thanks to these reforms, it wasn't anymore guilt to have foreign currency or foreign cigarettes in your pocket in Turkey. Also, The absence of goods and queues of goods were no longer problems though they had been very common before 12th September. Özal said that we shouldn't be afraid of making competition with the World and gave importance to the freedom of enterprising. Instead of being afraid of globalisation, Özal made it stress that it was an opportunity for us. He often went to on journeys abroad by making his plane full of businessmen. In his opinion, our age was an age of individuals', freedoms and opportunities. In this context, ANAP governments gave

incentives to the businessmen in every field, for that reason, big success were realized in private sector, e.g tourism(Kazdağlı, 1996: 100). Besides successful enterprisers emerged in all the parts of Anatolia. They started to export different goods to all around the World.

Between the years 1983-1989 in which Özal was ruling the country, the average growth rate in a year in Turkey was more than 5 percent. Again in this period the export of Turkey had been increased up to 350 percent (Öniş, 2000: 289). On the other side, the economic crises that Turkey was used to, were not seen in Özal's period. However didn't only apply policies based on economy, but he also wanted to entegrate the economical liberalism with the political liberalism in the following period. We realize that serious steps were made in his time in the field of democratization.

1.2. Özal and Democratization

Özal is generally accused of giving importance and first side to the liberalization in economy rather than not making a serious liberalization in political field. When Özal started to rule the country in 1983, the guardianship of the soldiers (NSC) was still continuing. Whether Özal wanted political liberalization or not, there wasn't a possibility for this in those times. The sings of political liberalization can be seen from the year 1987. Later, when we look at his reforms during his being the President of Republic (1989-1993), we can say that the political liberalization was at the top. His most common reforms are the followings (Dağı, 2003: 249-269; Acar, 2008: 202; Özbudun, 2003: 110, Barlas, 1994: 287):

- Individual application right to the European Human Rights Commission was given to the Turkish citizens (1987)
- Turkey made its application for being a full membership of the European Union(1987)
- The authority of the European Court of Justice was started to be accepted
- The European and United Nations convention was accepted against torture

- The 141st, 142nd, and 163rd articles of Turkish Criminal Code (TCK) which prohibited the socialist and the islamic views, were abolished by the personal efforts of Özal in April, 1991
- He was the main actor in abolishing the prohibition of speaking in Kurdish
- Turkey signed The European Social Charter and The Charter of Paris

On the other side, Özal signed some critical events that decreased the influence of the soldiers and increased and showed the strength of the civilian rulers. İn 1987, he opposed to the chosing of the General Staff without being asked to him and he appointed the person he preferred as the General Staff (Necip Torumtay), not the one who was dictated to him (Necdet Öztörün). Moreover, he checked a military force with his bermuda short (Heper, 2011: 223).

But the most important of all, he always underlined three freedoms throughtout his career:

- The Freedom of Thought

- The Freedom of Religion and Conscience
- The Freedom of Enterprise

In fact, the political philosophy of Özal is hidden in these three sentences. However, Özal had given importance mostly to the economic liberalism in his first ruling period (1983-1987) as the military guardianship was going on, but, especially when he was the president, he was able to make fundamental reforms in the field of democratization, he signed many important progressions.

2. Stagnation Period of Turkey (1990s)

The coalition governments period started again in Turkey from 1991. The years of 1990s were the years of economical and political crises with the coalition governments (1994etc.)

On account of the short lasting governments, political chaoses were always lived through. Worse than this, 28th. February 1997 Post-modern Coup was realized. Turkey lost its reformative identity in this period, failed the improvments throughtout the World as it was struggling with the artificial problems inside the country, its macroeconomic balances were damaged, its banks were robbed etc. On the other hand, the military and civilian bureaucracy intervened in every part of public life. Also, elected governments and politicians were threatened. That's why the years of 1990s are called as the years in which Turkey went back in economic and political liberalism. Nevertheless, the most positive thing in this period was that achieving the full membership status to the European Union in 1999.

3.The Governing of AK Party and Restarting of Transformation Period

As the DSP-MHP-ANAP Coalition Government took the country towards financial crises and was unsuccessful at solving the problem of corruption, it carried the AK Party to the government in the November 2002 Elections. It was unsuspecting that the success that the politicians working at AK Party had shown at the municipalities and except from this, the KOBİs' and the bourgeoisie of Anatolian's support was effective in this success (Öniş, 2010: 259). Two parties got the right to enter to TBMM after the elections. AK Party and CHP. AK Party became the governing party. In fact, AK Party came to the government after a similar period of ANAP. Because ANAP had also come to the government as a result of a very deep economical and political crises. Undoubtedly, a charismatic leader (Erdoğan) played an important role in the success of AK Party as it had been like in ANAP (Özal).

AK Party promised that it would do reforms in the field of economics, in addition to this, it would get rid of the problem of basic rights and freedoms. At the same time, AK Party preferred to make stress on economical issues and European Union process insistently instead

of classical ideological polarizations. People showed their support to AK Party's liberal policies in the 2002 elections (Altun, 2009:4).

4.AK Party Governments and Re-transformation of The Turkish Economy

Turkey regained its reformatory identity that it had lost in the 1990 years with AK Party. The Party stayed loyal to the free market economy and which had been started by Özal in the period that was after 1980. In addition to this, Erdogan declared the loyalty to European Union Process. It started to apply the targets that it had put forward with patience in 2002 November after it came to government despite some political disadvantages (soldiers and civilian bureaucracy). Erdogan's Party also started to work intensely in many fields like education, health, building, transportation and others (Koç, 2011).

Besides, it stayed faithful to the IMF agreement that the former government had signed. By means of successful financial discipline and decisive economical reforms, AK Party has signed a lot of successes. Undoubtedly the European Union process has been one of the most important supporting factors to achieve these successes (Öniş, 2010: 269). Once AK Party became the government, it gave too much importance to this process, at the same time, by means of this process it strengthened its legitimacy. It should be pointed that the IMF criteria are important about decreasing the inflation and net debt amount. The records of Republic History has been achieved again in this period in the flow of foreign capital (Altun, 2009: 19).

Likewise it had been in ANAP's (Özal's period), big successes have been achieved in national income and export during AK Party government. If we look at these roughly (www.tuik.gov.tr)

- The export which has been 36 billion\$ in 2002 increased to 134 billion\$ in 2011
- National income which was 230 billion\$ in 2002 increased to 735 billion\$ in 2011
- The record was done in privatization between 2003-2011 (TÜPRAŞ. etc) 34 billion\$

If we look at the results in other fields in order to understand the dimensions of the transformation in Turkey (www.akparti.org.tr) :

- Turkey has been introduced with High Speed Train
- 13.500 kilometres double-road has been built
- TOKİ has been built about 500.000 flats
- Service has been carried even to the farthest villages with the KOYDES and BELDES projects
- There hasn't been any city without a university
- Six zeros have been abolished for Turkish Liras

On the other hand, Likewise Özal The Prime Minister Erdoğan took the businessman with him abroad so as to increase the trade. He abolished the visas with a lot of countries. In addition to these the number of tourists coming to Turkey has increased to 32 million from 13

million in 2011 (www.dha.com.tr). According to these data, it is clear that Erdogan's Party is developing in Turkey successfully, for that reason a large majority of Turkish voters support his party increasingly.

5. Democratization and AK Party

AK Party had given the signals that it would make democratization steps from the time it came to the government. The Prime Minister of that period, Abdullah Gül, stressed in his speech of İCO's Tehran Summit in May 2003 that the Muslim Countries had needed to care more about the democratization, human and women rights (Duran, 2010: 341).

In the following period, it could be seen that AK Party government was much sincere about this subject by the motivation of European Union as well. If we have to make notice to the most known reforms (Dağı, 2010: 132-140; Koç, 2011: 15-20, Altun, 2009: 15; www.akparti.org.tr).

- The applications of state of emergency was abolished
- The closing of political parties have been made difficult
- State Security Courts were abolished
- The Law of Getting Information has been enacted
- The political propaganda with an other language (Kurdish) than Turkish has been abolished
- Broadcasting in Kurdish has been made free for private TV and radios. 24 hour Kurdish broadcasting has been started in TRT 6.
- It has been allowed to establish Kurdish Language and Literature Departments and Institutions at Universities.
- National Unification and Brotherhood Projects have been started
- A lot of workshops about Alevi Problem has been done
- On the 12th September, 2010, a large change of Constitution which decreased the influence of the military in politics and brought a positive discrimination to the women and children has been adopted.
- On the 27th April, 2007, the civilian ruling (AK Party) has objected to the memorandum, which was broadcasted in the internet by the General Staff, but AK Party refused this memorandum and declared counter-memorandum in 28 April 2007 unexpectedly.

The success of AK Party both in the field of economy and its democratic standing has been appreciated by the Turkish public. AK Party has achieved an effective success by increasing its votes in the 3 general elections that followed one other.

On the other hand, in 1990s influence of the military was very high in political sphere, but with AK Party governments, it changed. When we look at the relationship between soldiers and AK Party, Tayyip Erdoğan has signed a cautious reform without damaging and destroying, by thinking the institutional reputation of TSK (Turkish Military Forces) (Aydın,

2012: 4). In a new period Turkey has entered, the Generals have been giving applications for retirement instead of memorandum now (İdiz, 2011: 17). Then, Turkey has been normalizing.

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