

THE ROLE OF IDEAS IN POLITICAL PARTY CHANGE:
THE CASE OF THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY IN TURKEY (1965-
1973)

A Ph.D. Dissertation

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Bilkent University 2022

To two RPP Youth Branch Members who lost their lives while this dissertation was

being written,

Tugay Adak and İlkey Yiğit

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By Ali Açıkgöz

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines the role of ideas as explanatory factors in the phenomenon of party change. Based on historical research on the case of party change in the Republican People’s Party (RPP) between 1965 and 1973, I argue that the specific idea of the “left of center” caused and catalyzed party change in the RPP. Creating a coalition around that idea, a group of actors, the Left of Center Movement, joined the leadership of the RPP in 1966 and gradually took over its rule. Following their ideas, this group changed the policy prescriptions, cadres, organizational composition, and the identity of the RPP. In seven years, the RPP moved from being a “national developmentalist” party and became a “social democratic developmentalist” party, following the “roadmap” of “left of center”.

I examine the role of ideas in the party change of the RPP considering differences between actors on “party goals”. In the course of “several external shocks” actors with different ideas on party goals fought over the definition of “left of center” as factions. These factions were gathered around ideas, serving as “coalition magnets”. Ultimately ideational differences explain leadership changes in 1966 and 1972, and two waves of factional exoduses in from the RPP in 1967 and 1972.

Keywords: Ideas, Party Change, Social Democracy, Left of Center, Republican People’s Party

ÖZET

SİYASİ PARTİLERİN DEĞİŞİMİNDE FİKİRLERİN ROLÜ: TÜRKİYE’DE CUMHURİYET HALK PARTİSİ ÖRNEĞİ (1965-1973)

Açıkgöz, Ali

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Tez Yöneticisi: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Meral Uğur Çınar

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Bu tez siyasi partilerde değişim olgusunda fikirlerin açıklayıcı faktörler olarak rollerini incelemektedir. Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi’nde (CHP) 1965 ve 1973 yılları arasında yaşanan değişim vakası üzerine tarihsel araştırmaya dayanarak, kendine özgü “Ortanın Solu” fikrinin CHP’de yaşanan değişimin sebebi ve katalizörü olduğunu iddia etmekteyim. Bu fikir etrafında bir koalisyon kuran Ortanın Solu Hareketi, 1966’da CHP’nin yönetimine ortak olmuş ve zamanla idaresini ele almıştır. Bu grup, fikirlerinin izinde CHP’nin teşkilat yapısını, kadrolarını, siyaset önerilerini ve kimliğini değiştirmiştir. CHP, yedi yıl içinde, “Ortanın Solu”nun “yol haritasını” takip ederek “ulusal kalkınmacı” bir partiden “sosyal demokrat kalkınmacı” bir partiye dönüşmüştür.

CHP’de yaşanan parti deęişiminde fikirlerin rolünü aktörlerin “parti amaçları” açısından farklı duruşlarına bakarak inceledim. Birbirini takip eden birkaç “dış şok” sonrasında partinin amaçlarına dair farklı fikirleri olan aktörler “ortanın solu”nun anlamı üzerine hizip mücadelesi yapmıştır. Hizipler “koalisyon mıknatısı” işlevi gören fikirler etrafında kümelenmiştir. Nihayet fikirsel farklılıklar CHP’de 1966 ve 1972’deki liderlik deęişikliklerini ve 1967 ile 1972’deki iki istifa dalgasını açıklamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Fikirler, Parti Deęişimi, Sosyal Demokrasi, Ortanın Solu, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

How do ideas affect party change? In this dissertation, this question will be answered with a qualitative case study research on the party change in the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi-RPP), between 1965-1973. I argue that ideas serve as "roadmaps" which shape vote-seeking behavior, and "coalition magnets" which allow for actors to come together and form factions in competitive political parties that drive party change. I use process tracing as my methodology for a case of a non-western party change from a "national developmentalist" party to a "social democratic developmentalist" party.

The case of the RPP between 1965-73 and the "Left of Center" provides several puzzles: Firstly, it provides a case of party change that cannot be explained simply by existing party change literature which either focuses on organizational or policy track changes. The phenomenon of party change also requires "ideas" to be brought in as an independent variable. Secondly, it provides a case for studies on the formation of a social democratic party in a "third-world" context, which did not have a consolidated polyarchy and therefore additional contextual concerns that needed to be addressed theoretically. Last and not least, it provides a case that has been mostly

overlooked and understudied in the Turkish studies area and provides a chance to question existing paradigmatic tendencies in the field, which deny change for the most part and focus on statics.

Ideas are beliefs that make certain behavior happen in a world of limited information. As no human being can attain full knowledge of their world, creating an accurate and clear picture of ideas (at least in an ideal sense) are what allows us to make our way between waves of foggy and stormy seas. As much as the information is imperfect, the ideas themselves are imperfect. They are carried by actors who have imperfect information. This does not mean they are a mere reflection of the world, or “epiphenomenon”. Rather, ideas are what actors make from what they know *a priori*, reflecting of what exists and in the confines of what they know to shape *a posteriori*. Action in the real world depends on the “causal beliefs” of actors, as they understand their world through such beliefs. In that sense ideas guide action as beliefs on *what ought to be*.

The realm of politics is perhaps most easily understood as the realm of interests. It is argued that interests are the primary drive for actors who try to maximize their good when engaging in political activity. The continuous constraints on the actions of actors (sometimes over generations) are understood as institutions or “rules of the game”. In that sense, the constraints on actions are understood as deep running material, temporal and spatial limits, limitations caused by actors on each other due to differing interests, and limitations in their cultural world, symbols, and values. What such views make us think is that human beings are subjects in a seemingly unchanging world.

We know from Heraclitus that change is part of the human world. As much as there are visible big rocks in the middle of a running river, the rock in the middle is never the same. Over time with running water, rock erodes slowly. Temporality allows us to make sense of the heuristic. The rock will stay the same or serve as a static object forcing water to go around it for one observer that visits the scene of the big rock in the river daily. However, for an observer who visits the scene once a decade, the rock will erode over time surely.

Human beings carved their stories, achievements, and constraints on rocks to make them known to others living after them. This is perhaps the best incarnation of an institution, a carved rock, as a pillar, a monolith for all eyes to see and learn. However, over time rocks are subjected to wind, sand, and water. Carvings smooth out. This brings us to an interesting puzzle about the pillar itself. The pillar with carvings is a result of a desire to let others know of trials and tribulations, victories and defeats, friends and enemies. They are the results of conflicts of interest and resolutions of such interests. They are made over time with the available material, with the symbols of the people who can understand them made for their understanding. Sometimes pillars get toppled. Even if they keep their basic form as pillars sometimes some parts of the rock are chipped away, losing an important part of the message carved on the rock. They even get carried away to distant lands to be seen, attaining new, strange meanings in strange lands, in the minds of strange people. Therefore, the rules set on the rock are neither limited by the rock nor the carving. Change is part of the story of the pillar or the institution itself. No monolith we look at is ever the same, and neither is the idea we get from it. The pillar with carvings is then both a static and a being in change.

The rock, pillar, or monolith with carvings then starts and persists with ideas. They are carved and set with someone saying “Gee, I sure like those people over there to know what I want them to know.” Then someone comes in with the idea of setting those ideas on the rock to be seen by all eyes for the rest of the time. The message on the rock is not disseminated equally, therefore creating differences in thought. One might believe enough in the message to act upon it, word by word. Some might disagree with the message, prompted to make their own carved rocks. Others might find the message or the notion of monolith wrong and then topple the pillar.

The pillar then is the result of ideas as much as interests, environment, and symbols. More than that, the pillar’s journey is shaped by the ideas of others looking upon it. Sometimes it is a good idea to uproot the pillar and carry it over continents, and sometimes it is just a silly idea, therefore it is left on the spot.

Ideas then are important in two ways. Firstly, they are causes of behavior to change things. They convey actors act in certain ways. Believing in carving your message on a stone will make it convey to others for all eternity and will make you build a monolith. Even better, others might agree with you in such an endeavor coming together around the idea of building a pillar with carvings. In this sense, they are the causes of the phenomenon. Secondly, both the message carved on the pillar and the pillar itself are sources of inspiration and contention as they disseminate ideas.

Sometimes it is the rule carved on stone or the idea of carving something on the stone or conversely carrying or breaking the stone is the idea that comes up to mind. In this sense, they are catalysts of a phenomenon.

Ideas are both causes and catalysts in political life. They make, change or break institutions, setting, changing, or abolishing the rules of the game. Therefore, they

are as important as interests, culture, or history in explaining how actors behave in political life (Blyth, 2003; Béland and Cox, 2011).

Political parties are such institutions, that are made up of different actors that come together around ideas, interests, symbols, and shared stories (Vasallo and Wilcox, 2006). Parties operate around set goals to come to the office, get votes, defend certain policies, or make their supporters heard. Once they make themselves felt on the political scene they tend to crystalize. Parties are essentially conservative entities (Harmel and Janda, 1994; Harmel, 2002), that are made of groups clinging to their beliefs and interests, competing for power both within and without the party.

Ideas have several roles in a political party. They are firstly the reason for a party to come together. The ideas do not cause the party to change in a vacuum. Rather they are carried by actors who use them to differentiate among themselves, and garner support from party grassroots and voters (Berman, 1998; 2006; 2011). Actors come together around the same approximate idea at a party. However, this does not mean the ideas are limitless magnets (Béland and Cox, 2015). There are always differences in beliefs on what is going on and interests between different actors. The actors, approximating their environment, react to each other and each other's goals.

Different views on events and goals will shape how one might want the party to steer in political waters. As a result, ideas are important in explaining party change. Lastly, ideas are a means of breaking the dominance of conservative leadership, or factional dominance, by showing that the application of party goals is not correct to the rest of the party and offers new ways to the party. Ideas allow party actors to challenge each other (Berman, 1998; 2006; 2011).

To answer the research question, ideas are direct causes of political differences and competition in political parties. Therefore, they are catalysts in party change. Actors compete over where the party should go, how it should present itself to the public, and how it should implement its goals. They are “roadmaps” on how to implement politics and shift a party to acquire a consistent image and shape for the road ahead. Moreover, ideas further exacerbate differences and stir up competition causing factionalism. Differences in ideas are sources of faction formation and factional friction in parties, allowing for cadres to shift per the roadmap. Therefore, these ideas may prompt leadership change, factional change, organizational change, and identity change in political parties.

Much like interest-based explanations of party change, the ideational explanation also relies on differences over party goals. As parties could have different primary goals, different actors in a party could also place primary importance on some goals. They might want their party to protect the political system above all else. They could want their party to represent a particular political identity or a certain set of policy prescriptions. They may want to pursue more votes to do better in elections or want to join a government with or without regard to vote-seeking. Actors with a similar set of ideas in their minds come together around. They will form factions and compete. Even actors who have similar goals might have different ideas about how to achieve their preferred goal, prompting further friction (Hamel and Janda, 1994; Harmel, Heo, Tan, and Janda, 1995, Harmel 2002).

I will answer the thesis question with a single case analysis of the case of the RPP in the Turkish polity. I engage with the historical party change in the RPP caused by the idea of “Left of Center” [Ortanın Solu] between 1965-1973. A group of actors who

associated themselves with this idea carried it to take over the party, and bring change to its policies, cadres, organization, and identity.

In this period, at least three “external shocks” in the form of two electoral shocks in 1965 and 1969, and one military intervention in 1971 caused two sets of factional disputes and one leadership change respectively in 1967, 1970, and 1972. The catalyst of the party change was a set of ideas collectively known as “left of center”. A group of younger politicians, led by Bülent Ecevit, formed a movement called the “Left of Center Movement” (LoC Faction) and engaged both in ideational discussions and factionalism. The idea of “left of center” was a key factor in creating coalitions both within the RPP and externally with the left wing of the main labor union of the day, Türk-iş. Factional disputes in the RPP primarily took the shape of an ideational dispute between the LoC Faction and two other factions. These groups differed ideationally in terms of their party goal priorities or their policy preferences. The LoC Faction gave primary importance to “vote maximization” and differed from others in terms of the military’s role in politics, participation, redistribution, labor’s role in the economy, the role of the market in the economy, and secularism.

In 1965 the RPP was going through an identity crisis as the founder of the state and strived for relevance in politics. In 1973, RPP managed to win the ballots for the first time in 23 years in free and fair elections. How then did RPP change or reform itself? My argument is that it managed to bring about a set of ideas then called “Left of Center”.

1.1 Presenting the Case

The RPP was found as a continuum of the cadres that ruled throughout the internal and external conflict in Turkey between 1919-1923. The cadres of the RPP were a mixture of the former “Union and Progress” cadres, both from central and local elements, and other local notables, *eşraf*. The RPP ruled over Turkey as a single party for almost 23 years until 1946. Apart from several armed rebellions and controlled experiments of multi-party politics, the RPP kept its power unchallenged. The general elections were neither free nor fair.

During this period the RPP organization was an amalgamation of factions of former communists, pro-business liberals, former *ulema*, ex-soldiers, and right-wingers who were under the influence of rising fascism in Europe. The party tried to extend itself to the periphery of Turkey by including notables, such as landlords, businessmen, and professionals.

The RPP brought this loose coalition mostly with the charisma of the founding fathers, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and İsmet İnönü. The ideational magnet of the coalition was called the “Six arrows” or the six principles of the RPP:

Republicanism, secularism, revolutionarism, nationalism, étatism, and populism.

These loose principles were formulated over time and became the identity of the modernization program of the RPP. These principles were modified with changing times and kept their prominence as the ideational preset for the “national developmentalist” outlook of the RPP until the end of the single-party period (Güneş Ayata, 2010; Kili, 1976; Emre, 2014a).

The loose organizational formation and structure of the RPP was a major legacy of the single-party period for the RPP in the multi-party politics period, starting in 1946. From this date onwards several voices rose to reform the party. Even if those were not received all ears by the party leadership, nevertheless the continuous defeats at the hands of the Democratic Party (Demokrat Parti, DP) throughout the 1950s, forced the RPP to change.

The party organization received rights to assert itself in the party rule via the Congress of the RPP. It picked a new and energetic General Secretary, Kasım Gülek, in opposition to the will of Chairperson İnönü and the perceived apathy of the leadership coalition towards the electoral defeat in 1950. In the next decade, the RPP evolved in tandem with ongoing factional friction between Gülek and İnönü's guard. Gülek was ousted in 1959 from his post, and İnönü solidified his rule over the RPP.

Meanwhile, a new generation of politicians entered the RPP. The major drive for this influx of new members was the increasing authoritarianism of the DP. These recruits brought in a much-needed drive for new policy entrepreneurship and revitalization of existing efforts of the RPP on that front.

Throughout the decade one of the specific qualities of the RPP was the constant iteration of its founding role in the Republic of Turkey and its pioneering and protective role in the transition to a system with free and fair elections. On matters of electoral fairness, secularism, and fundamental political rights the RPP appeared as a sentinel at the turn of the decade. It had also added economic rights, a promise of redistribution, and social security to its programme. In 1961 after a coup d'état that toppled the DP government, the RPP pushed for constitutional guarantees of the

reforms. Consequently, the political system opened for the political left for the first time.

The 1961-1965 period was emblematic of a set of failures for the RPP. The RPP failed to garner enough votes to implement its policy prescriptions. In three consequent coalition governments, the RPP failed to implement its redistribution and social security policies except for the Strike and Lock-Out Law. Internally, opposition from prominent figures of the RPP to the Chairperson. Externally İnönü spent most of his energy to keep the disgruntled officer corps of the Army who were forming juntas to assert their goals and rule. In 1962 and 1963 İnönü thwarted one rebellion and one coup attempt. Turkey's unconsolidated democracy was of paramount importance for İnönü. However, the regime guardianship of the RPP did not automatically translate to votes in the 1961 and 1965 General Elections. On the contrary, due to failures in reform, the RPP constantly lost ground to its contenders to right and of course from the left.

The RPP leadership correctly placed themselves on the center-left in 1960, due to the existing programme of the RPP at the time. However, as the left organized itself into another political party on the left, the Worker's Party of Turkey, the RPP increasingly appeared as an archaic body to the intelligentsia and the youth. At the same time, rising left-right cleavage created a continuous need to differentiate the RPP's position on the center-left.

In 1965, after weeks of anti-communist propaganda against the RPP declared that it was a party on the "left of center". This caused a public uproar on the right and internal confusion in the RPP. After the defeat of 1965, in the ensuing discussions

the electoral blunder a movement giving content, organizing, and carrying the idea of “left of center” started to challenge the existing leadership coalition.

The “left of center” was a nativization and approximation of the social democratic ideas originating from the European socialist movements, in the essentialist tradition of the RPP. The party actors had claimed since before the official foundation of the party that their tradition was unlike the rest of the world. What the “Left of Center Movement” managed was to create a marriage of the global social democracy and the local tradition of their national developmentalist party. Soon they challenged the party elite by implementing party reform in organization and cadres, shifting cleavages (Ugur-Cinar, Acikgoz, and Esen, Forthcoming), and designating new strategies to reach a new audience.

For the actors in the RPP, the “left of center” was not a mere catalyst (or intervening variable that sped up the change in the party) but the main reason for the change. Challengers saw the “left of center” as social democracy, which was a means of differentiation from other left-wing and centrist groups both within and without the RPP, in terms of party goals. Without the “left of center”, the factional friction in the RPP perhaps would have been less severe, even non-existent to the most extent. Without the appeal of the idea of “left of center”, the RPP could not create the electoral appeal of the 1970s in the polity of Turkey which was subject to left-right polarization and factionalism. In the case of RPP, ideas appear as an explanatory variable.

1.2 Methodology

In this part, I provide my case study design, my methodology and operationalization of the variables, sources, and lastly the outline of my dissertation. I present the case selection and how the case of RPP in Turkey between 1965-1973 could be useful for expanding our understanding of the role of ideas in politics. The ideational approach makes special emphasis on “process tracing” as a method. At the same time, it emphasizes the use of comparative and counterfactuals. Henceforth, I present the junctures in RPP’s change between 1965 and 1973 and use them to guide the research. the main body of this research and presents the discussion of the case of RPP, for ideational change and its effect on the Party and its politics.

1.2.1 Case Study Design: Case Selection

For this research project, I select the case of party change in the RPP between 1965-1973. My motivation for this selection is the lack of studies on non-western cases of party change (Harmel, Heo, Tan and Janda, 1995; Gauja, 2017; Goes, 2021).

Furthermore, the case is suitable for taking ideas to test the theoretical assumptions of the ideational approach literature which also focused on western cases of party change via ideas. The case is extremely interesting as a divergent case of the “social democratic developmental party” due to its non-Marxist “national developmental” origins. Still, it was a competitive party that fit well within the assumptions of the discrete party change approach. Therefore, the case of RPP diverges on several fronts allowing me to “uncover” additional variables (Lijphart, 1971: 692) that could further expand the existing literature to new frontiers.

1.2.2 Process Tracing and Operationalization of Variables

Following the assumptions of the ideational approach, I will define independent variables in this research as ideas. These are “causal beliefs” that influence the behavior of actors in a world of imperfect informational flow. The parties themselves are conservative institutions that consist of different actors with “common ideals”. Ideas as independent variables in party change, therefore, matter as actors understand or make sense of their environment, and events around, them through their ideational dispositions and respond to them accordingly.

This has a major implication for the model of “discrete party change” literature. In its original iteration interests is the main reason behind the independent variables of party change, namely, external shocks, leadership change, and dominant faction change. The discrete change approach focuses on presenting complexity and therefore tests various independent variables over party change. The addition of ideas allows us to reflect on external shocks in their capacity to bring on party change via actors who challenge internal conservatism in a party. External shocks shake the ground for actors with ideas to present the situation in a new light (Berman, 1998). Significantly, ideas allow actors to form internal alliances or factions, as coalition magnets. Henceforth, factional friction and leadership changes are the results of conflicts created by ideational differences. These differences still reflect over party goals, and differences in behavior due to ideas about the application of party goals are the reason behind the changes in a party.

Therefore, the independent variable is ideas in this research project. Specifically, “left of center” prompted and catalyzed the party change in the RPP. It was the reason for faction formation in the RPP after 1965 and allowed actors to compete

with each other. Effects of other independent variables such as external shocks, leadership, and factional changes are still in the picture explaining party change from the lens of the independent variable of ideas. What matters is the sequencing of the variables. External shocks are significant events when actors are forced to react rather than consciously start the sequence of ideas themselves. As for factional and leadership changes, these are events that allow for new paths to open in party change. In all explanations, ideas serve as “containing” factors of behavior.

Scholars using the ideational approach, suggest “process tracing” as an important method of producing inferences for qualitative research. Collier, (2011) defined it as “an analytic tool for drawing descriptive and causal inferences from diagnostic pieces of evidence often understood as part of a temporal sequence of events or phenomena” (824). It could be used to description of “political and social phenomena” and “evaluate causal claims”. “Careful description” of key steps in a process and then analyzing the change following the “sequence” of variables is extremely important (823-4). The second tier in process tracing is to apply tests of causal inference to see if the explanations of the theory are necessary and/or sufficient to answer “why” questions (825). For Berman (1998), process tracing is about “opening up the ‘black box of decision-making’” or reconstructing actors' behavior (34). In this research, I focus on describing the case and presenting the actors' “motivations, as well as their definitions and evaluations” concerning their actions in party change. Therefore trying to describe how decisions are made in party politics (Berman, 2001: 244).

I will be carefully describing the effects of change in the RPP between 1965-1973. The recurring empirical regularities (Collier, 2011: 824) are Congresses of the RPP.

In the same period, four ordinary and two extraordinary (and one special) congresses of the RPP convened. These are both events where elections for party administration and by-law changes took place. 1969 Elections are important to observe the extent of the change of platform and policies offered. Therefore, it is an important benchmark. 1965 Elections and 1971 Coup-by-memorandum are two very important critical events that unfold the effects of ideas (or their lack).

One criterion I adopt from Berman is the “ideational theory”. Berman (2011) placed the requirement to show “that a particular idea can be considered an independent variable”, and “mechanisms” of how it influenced the dependent variables (24) such as organization, cadre selection, policies, and slogans.

1.2.3 Data Sources

The main challenge of studying the case of the RPP is the lack of data. My main goal was to expand the available sample of the data on RPP during this period. On one hand, the party archives were removed from existence after the 1980 coup.

Potentially, existing copies and archival material are hard to track, and potentially spread to individual archives of former members of the RPP. Therefore, it is impossible to the full picture of the party change in the RPP via the extensive study of party archival material.

On the other hand, Kili’s (1976) seminal study offered a good starting ground for tracking data sources. Following Kili’s tracks, I have gathered party material (such as Central Administrative Committee and Party Assembly reports, brochures, and booklets) from the period as well as reviewed the semi-official newspaper *Ulus* and its continuity *Barış*. *Ulus* had printed official declarations of the Party Assembly and

Central Administrative Committee, as well as provided large amounts of material from Congresses, visits of party officials, and occasionally about the events and discussions around the Local RPP Branches. However, the semi-official nature of *Ulus* made me reach out to other journalistic sources such as *Milliyet* and *Cumhuriyet* which tracked the actions of prominent RPP members during this period. In addition to these sources, I also tracked party booklets, by-laws, programmatic texts such as electoral platforms, and Party Assembly reports.

However, it was important to detail the actor's perspectives and ideas. Therefore, I have expanded the data sources to biographical, auto-biographical, and journalistic narratives written by or attributed to actors involved in various levels of the RPP in the period.

Finally, I was able to track the books detailing views of the LoC Faction and their opponents. These were mainly published for congresses and served as important sources of the actors' ideas.

Outline

The thesis contributes to four sets of literature. The “discrete party change” literature argues that party change occurs following internal perceptions of party elites of “external shocks” and competing “party goals” of the elites. The thesis extends the definition of “external shocks” and “party goals” to include notions of military intervention in competitive politics and the goal of “regime guardianship”. The thesis addresses the lack of ideational variables in the aforementioned literature via engaging with “ideational approach” literature, which argues that ideas are more than an epiphenomenon and should be taken seriously as explanatory variables. Ideas

work as explanatory variables via carriers who champion them to establish coalitions within and without the party and serve as roadmaps. The thesis contributes to the literature via discussion of the case of the party change in RPP that ideas could also be explanatory of factional divisions, and leadership struggles. The contribution of the thesis to “global social democracy” literature is to provide the case of the RPP as a social democratic party in the global south. In terms of the “global social democracy” literature, the case of the RPP appears as a party that started as a national liberation movement in the 1920s and then took a non-Marxist path to social democracy, being heavily influenced by and engaging with the examples in Europe in the 1960s. The RPP elite reinterpreted their own tradition of “Kemalism” with ideas and formulations of the European social democracy. They envisioned a cross-class alliance between the labor movement, intellectuals, and the peasantry, even urban professionals. Lastly, the thesis contributes to “Turkish Studies literature” by providing a case of party change, and a revisionist account regarding the history of left-wing politics, showing that the ideas regarding party change in the RPP are more than an epiphenomenon that should be studied with political competition in the party system. The primary contribution of this dissertation in this sense is to understand the RPP better.

In Chapter 2, I present the theoretical framework. I first provide the approach of “discrete party change” and discuss the issue of ideas in the comparative politics literature or namely “Ideational Approach” literature. Thus, I will try to present the mainstays of that scholarly work, how ideas matter, what are their uses, and in what ways they could be treated as causal mechanisms. Afterward, I try to present the state of the art in the social democratic party literature and also Turkish studies literature.

Chapter 3 is divided into three parts following the various stages of the process of party change. I present the process of party change in the RPP via tracing the process of external shocks, congresses, and factional disputes. Overall, the disagreements regarding the notion of “left of center” and its implications for the RPP’s vote-seeking behavior and identity caused a series of factional disputes that ended with two changes in factional dominance in 1967 and 1970. In 1971 a military intervention broke down the leadership coalition and caused a leadership change within the RPP in 1972. In the following months, several efforts of organizational reform and another factional conflict took place.

Chapter 4 serves as an epilogue. I present the results of the case study and discuss the implications of the party change in the RPP between 1965-1973 and what they bring to the table on the role of ideas in the change of political institutions concerning the literature. Here I approach the issue of party change via angles of party goals and ideas themselves. I argue that in all instances ideas served as the main factor of change in the RPP with institutional and material factors limiting the effects. I do this by presenting an “ideational theory” of the party change in the RPP. I then present the findings on the ideational differences of the actors via party goals and “coalition-making”. I then make suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II: PARTY CHANGE, IDEAS, SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, AND THE CASE OF RPP

2.1 Research Question and Puzzle

How do political ideas affect “party change”? How do ideas cause any change in the internal shape and outward presence of a political party? In what ways does such change in a party structure manifest itself in the realm of politics?

My main answer is that ideas work as roadmaps, coalition magnets, and tools of factional differentiation and competition for political actors operating within political parties significantly among the party elites. Albeit hard to differentiate from interests, ideas work as independent variables, as “reasons” for party change. To articulate my answer in terms of the case, the RPP experienced a “dominant faction displacement” followed by another “dominant faction change” between 1966-1970 and then another “leadership change” in 1972. Upon a forced and ambiguous utterance of left-wing tendencies publicly by its Chairperson in 1965, a faction was formed by left-leaning members of the RPP. This faction incrementally asserted its ideas in the programmatical texts, identity, and policies of the RPP. Ultimately internal strife in

the party peaked around 1970-1971 and after coup-by-memorandum by the Turkish Armed Forces led to leadership change.

Unlike the party change between 1950-1965 in RPP, the changes between 1966 and 1972 were articulated, discussed, and fought over the idea of the “left”. This phenomenon could be understood on several levels. The roles of ideas should be addressed in terms of structural factors political system-political Culture, party System, and party level. Three issues in the context of Turkey need to be taken into consideration: Anti-communism, “Left” and “Kemalism”. All three needs to be addressed as serious ideational currents of the day at multiple levels. These were especially important as alliance-forming both within and without the RPP with different groups. Outside groups attracted by ideas played a role in the party change in the RPP either by joining the party or trying to support some groups in the party.

At the individual party level role of ideas as explanatory factors should be taken into consideration at three sublevels: Party leadership, party elite, and party grassroots.

As I will try to show the ideational variable is most explanatory at the elite level. Key carriers can affect the internal disposition of a party by their ideas prompting resistance from those thinking differently. As in the case of RPP, the party elites are organized under different factions. They vie for the control of the party and compete with each other centrally and locally following the pretext of their ideas. This reflects, as the discussions among upper echelons regarding policy entrepreneurship and candidate selection processes for local and general elections. Still, over the entire grassroots, the effects of the ideas are most explanatory for either key secondary organizations such as youth branches or semi-official youth organizations such as Social Democracy Associations or at the level of local leadership and activists (who

are in turn members of unions and youth branch/organization). These groups took up the left-wing ideas articulated with “left of center” as their roadmap, engaged in political action, and felt the ideational friction in the upper echelons of the RPP the most.

For purposes of this thesis, I will be focusing on presenting a “process tracing” of the party change in RPP between 1965-1973. Using expanding media outlets and the refined discourse of its leader, the left-wing faction in the RPP managed to create an intra-party coalition that brought about a change that was translated into a social democratic identity. That was further translated into a political force that was able to achieve office after 1973.

However, as per theoretical requirements, I will need to make sense of how ideas were key variables in the process of change in question. Ultimately, in the case of RPP ideas were of paramount importance as an independent variable. “Ideas”, that allowed for a successful change of organizational structure, party identity, electoral strategy, and policy entrepreneurship. Ideas allowed the key actors to form factions (coalitions) and alliances outside the party. Therefore, ideas serve as enablers and demarcation lines during factional competition.

2.2 Discussion of Theory and Literature

In this subchapter, I bring in discussions in the political science literature on party change, ideas, and their relations with political institutions, along with studies of social democracy and Turkish studies as they provide the link for the case of the RPP. Literature is lengthy and based on different analytical and empirical views. However, to understand the role of ideas in the party reform in the case of RPP

between 1965-73, I will need to take several factors and potential causal factors. Therefore, I will first start with the common denominator of both pieces of literature: The issue of change. I will use this benchmark to bring in party organizational change and ideological change literature. Since the latter is rather limited in its theoretical reach, I will then bring in the “ideational approach” literature. The case here is that, since both lines of literature take multiple levels of analyses and different ways of approaching problems of epistemology, there is ample and fertile ground to try to come up with a sound theoretical discussion on how to address the issue of party change and role ideas in the said change. Lastly, I bring in the social democracy and Turkish studies literature. On one hand, the former traditionally focused on the European examples of social democracy, and slowly opened towards the cases elsewhere in the global south and developing world. One major contribution of this literature is to provide the ground for a comparative perspective in this project and also point at the need to take context seriously. Turkish studies literature could be grouped under two categories. The first, Turkish political history literature, had been dominated by historical work that has limitations theoretically and thematically. Apart from a few select party studies this literature still has room to grow. The studies on the Turkish Left, however, provide ground for a fruitful debate considering the party change and ideational approach works of literature. This literature has been dominated by studies that follow predominantly two sets of paradigms that either side-line the RPP or do not take it seriously.

2.2.1 Party Change Literature

The question of “change” in politics became a hot topic with the end of the cold war. By the mid-1990s, scholars of politics had consistently turned their attention to change from “statics” (Blyth, 2003: 695) to polities, systems, and institutions. Over time, the need to address change in different areas of politics became vivid. One such avenue of research on change for political science was political parties and party systems. Mair’s discussion of the “party system change” in Western European polities started with discussing how the party change could be cataloged. Mair’s take was that the party change boiled down to specifying “the ‘essence’ or ‘identity’ of a given political party” and change could only be mentioned when what had changed could be defined. Mair argued that change in parties was “a permanent feature” of the political landscape. What needed to be done was to show when change mattered and “specify different *levels* and *types* of change” (Mair, 1989: 255). In other words, what constituted a party, “the core of party”, needed to be distilled and certain aspects of the party had to be discussed in restriction. Simply Mair called for the differentiation of “party change” from “party continuity” (256).

As my goal in this thesis work is to understand and provide explanations for the role of ideas in the party change phenomenon, I will go over the understanding of “party change”. Whereas studies on “party system” and “electoral volatility” focused on the demand side of political change, the “party change” literature focused on organizational change in party organizations (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 260).

Robert Harmel’s (2002) take on the matter presents a picture of a vast field. In that text Harmel argued that the first two of three main approaches in the literature could be designated: The “Life-cycle”, “System Level Trends” and “Discrete Change”

approaches. The “Life-Cycle” approach is exemplified by Robert Michels work, the “system-level trends” approach (Harmel, 2002: 120). In the “life-cycle” approach change in party organizations was studied as incremental change that could be understood as “birth”, “rise”, “decline”, or “survival”. Parties with a “common pattern of development” even if they have different but certain points of origin, such as mass movements, policy entrepreneurship, and democratic organizations were studied via that approach “to explain fundamental changes in roles and relationships of various components of party organization” (121). Closely after a decade of research works using the discrete change approach produced the “summary conclusion that both environmental and internal factors have roles to play in explaining discrete organizational change”. Both produce important stimuli “only when party actors allow them to do so” (127-8).

Harmel (2002) also offered advice for future research: Engaging in data collection/hypothesis testing driven research comparatively (135), specifying the organizational change to differentiate changes at the different aspects of such change: “Type”, “degree/intensiveness”, and “extensiveness” of change (136-137).¹ Thirdly,

¹ For Harmel decision-making, and representation in decision making needed to be addressed separately. One issue Harmel (2002: 137-139) went over each of the aspects in detail. Different types of change such as organizational complexity (number of levels, “wings”, organizational boundaries (who can participate), number and variety of tasks, and specialization of such tasks), magnitude (number of staff members or supporters), bureaucratization (or efficiency, as put by Panebianco (1988: 199, in Harmel, 2002: 138)) and distribution of organizational power. One important note was the issue of “adaptive change” to capture “a particular frame of mind of the decision makers, more so than on some particular point of reference”. In other words focus here was on the mindset of the party reformers rather than the specific circumstance that needs to be addressed. Secondly, for the degree/intensiveness of change, it rests upon the understanding that some changes will be accepted while some other would simply be taken as ‘going too far’ in within the party organization (139-140). Extensiveness of change stood for simultaneous change occurring in a party and “also involved [...] notions such as clustering/patterning and directionality” hence, bringing together the multi-level thinking (140-141). Lastly, elaboration of the environment, stood for differentiating the effect of an environmental “event” or “trend” on differing parties or at least being open to such a possibility (141-142).

considering the environment in terms of events and trends, in terms of multiple parties (141-142).

The ultimate suggestion of Harmel (2002) was that researchers should keep in mind the inverse relationship between parsimony in the theory of a party change and the reality of party change. The party change theory in question was “put forward for elaborating rather than simplifying theoretical work on party change. From the standpoint of parsimony, this may seem nothing short of heresy. But parsimony is not the only goal of social science, and its needs must be balanced with those achieving clarity, coherence, and yes, completeness of explanation”. That passage could be read as a call for taking the complexity of the matter to the heart and not fearing it (142).

In the “system-level trends” approach students of the political party-types provided discussions on developing party types such as “cadre”, “mass”, “catch-all”, and “cartel” (Harmel, 2002: 122-3). Harmel argued that the common link in that strain of political party studies was “the view that in particular periods of history, environmental trends have created the circumstances for the development of new party forms and that in each such period, the same parties have undertaken organizational transformation into the new forms” (124). For Harmel, that line of literature, with its emphasis on “evolution” and “transformation” focused on the “gradual, cumulative nature of a *process* of organizational adaptation to a changing environment” while offering explanations of a change via a model of “system-level trends” as independent variables and multiple organizational variations over time as dependent variables (124-5).

Lastly in the “discrete change” approach, scholars emphasized that not all party changes were wholesome transformations over the life-cycle of a single party or systemically caused at certain periods for entire polities. In this approach “discrete changes in a party’s environment and/or internal circumstances may result in rather abrupt, discrete changes in the party’s organization”, and “changes of interest” relevant to the “discrete change approach” were “often disconnected from other changes and might, in fact, at first appear to be quite ‘random’” (Harmel, 2002: 125). In this approach, party change does not happen randomly.

Similarly, the RPP’s story of change fits with the observation of the discrete change approach that shows only when the party elite allowed for change meaningful outcomes take place. Between 1950 and 1965 the party change trajectory of the RPP had been following external shocks as perceived by the RPP elite. One such effort to party reform in the RPP in 1954 was curbed by competing factions who tried to maximize their factional power. During this decade the party change in the RPP was mostly aimed to survive against a government that went more and more authoritarian over time (Kili, 1976; Emre, 2014a). The party change after 1965 coincided with larger trends such as the rise of left-right cleavage and accordingly rise of the political left and anti-communism in the Turkish party system. Rising competition from both the left and the right forced the RPP leadership to reassert their position in the political system. The subsequent discussions started a period of party change, due to ideas.

Discrete Change Approach and Party Goals

Harmel and Janda’s (1994) theorization, focused on “competitive political parties” that competed in free and fair elections. They stated that the “ultimate purpose” of

their theory was “to propose a set of interrelated statements that explain the circumstances under which competitive parties change their rules, structures, policies, strategies or tactics” (272). To that end, Harmel and Janda offered a quite extensive formal theory of the above-described discussion of party change (272-83).

In the discrete change approach (Harmel and Janda, 1994) cases of “abrupt changes in party ideology for electoral gains” were noted, as in the case of SPD’s 1959 change (261). Harmel and Janda noted that the alternative views focused on “specific actions” of party leadership as a reaction to environmental changes, as well as shifting the attention to “abrupt changes in party ideology” (ibid.). For them, that shift meant changing the focus of research to discontinuous changes at the party level. It also meant a theoretical orientation shift that takes intra-party “decision-making processes” as the primary causes of party change (ibid.). Harmel and Janda’s main response to that shift was to argue that “party change does not ‘just happen’”. Party change needed a reason, and such decisions usually attract resistance in the party institution. Hence, party change needs a “good reason” probably related to some environmental effect and “the building of a coalition of support” (261-2). By theorizing two separate lines of literature, party change, and party goals, they propose an integrated theory that tried to address “differing impacts of different external stimuli” concerning a party’s “primary goal”. The aim here was to explain both the “occurrence” and the “magnitude” of the change. The core assumption here was that party change was a result of change in leadership, a dominant faction “and/or an external stimulus for change” (262).

Harmel and Janda (1994) then put forward a formal theory of party change over several iterations and empirical testing. In its core Harmel and Janda’s take went

over potential understandings of party change such as, “evolutionary” (following a necessary path, brought upon by “natural tendencies” following stages), “developmental” (change as a factor of coalition formations among organizations members) (262), whether “intentional” or “non-intentional”, (“both seemed valid as the organizational change was resulted both from choices and, unforeseeable effects”) (262-3), and finally on the source of motivation, whether exogenous (“environmental and/or technological”) or endogenous(for instance “generational changes”) (263). Discussing the last dimension, Harmel and Janda, argue that “critical actors within the party must *perceive* environmental changes and probably effects for the party in order for the environmental change to have an impact in the form of party change” (263). There the most relevant environmental factor was the “other parties” due to the need to compete with them. “National constitutional reform, the public subsidies of political parties, the reform of local government boundaries and shifting the public support” were listed as secondary environmental motivations. As for the internal motivations, Albinsson addressed “changes in economic resources and internal conflicts” (as well as changes in party membership) as the primary motivations (264). Harmel and Janda’s response to that debate was that parties resisted change, internal factors mattered, as well as potential external factors potentially serving as a catalyst, and increased levels of party institutionalization curbed the effects of “factors promoting change”. They add to the discussion that explanations of both fully internal and external stimuli must be addressed explicitly (264-5). Especially on the latter point, “externally induced ‘shocks’” were noted as “...the most potent external stimuli are those which cause a party to reevaluate its effectiveness in meeting its primary goal, whether that be electoral success or something else” (265).

This theory also tried to explain “fundamental party change on several dimensions (organization, strategy and ideology/policy positions)”. Factors such as “leadership personnel, financial resources, factional dominance” and external stimuli were taken into consideration with the limitation of a change in the party goals (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 266). The theory had three key assumptions: First, all parties had a “primary goal” among others. These were listed as “vote maximizing, office maximizing, representation/participation of members, and policy/ideology advocacy”. Second, although explanations based on purely internal stimuli such as leadership change or factional disputes were possible, external shocks were the most dramatic of the stimuli, as they might come over internal resistance to change (265). Lastly, whereas shocks are external motivating factors for parties to reassess their primary goal, they would have different effects on different parties with different primary goals. Electoral or policy-related stimuli were going to have differing effects on relevant parties (265-6). Four party goals were listed in total: “Vote maximization, office maximization, policy advocacy, and intraparty democracy maximization” (269).

The case of the RPP however requires an additional party goal to be addressed: “Regime guardianship”. The RPP, unlike the parties taken into consideration by Harmel and Janda, was a part of a family of political parties that were not situated within consolidated democracies. Therefore their histories had different trajectories than those on the European continent (Sandbrook, Edelman, Heller, and Teichman, 2006). The RPP was directly responsible for the creation of a republican regime in Turkey, and the regime’s transformation into a competitive system (Kili, 1976; Turan, 2006; Esen, 2014). Its leaders and cadre were directly responsible, and jealously guarded the series of “revolutions” and “reforms”. Internally, the RPP

always considered itself of having *Sonderweg* and differentiated itself from other parties elsewhere. In addition, they tried to protect the reforms and revolutions to their utmost ability, arranging their policy prescriptions such as social security, secularism, and redistribution from that perspective. The party leadership responded extremely heavily to the authoritarian tendencies of its competitors, as well as the authoritarian tendencies of the Turkish Armed Forces. Therefore, a context-specific party goal is explanatory for the priorities and behavior of the RPP elite: Regime Guardianship.

Regime Guardianship as a party goal denotes the willingness and ability to “protect” the status quo of the political system, chiefly from internal dissidents. Much like other party goals, parties with such a goal still tend to operate within the competitive system. This is a different party goal than the other four as parties working for this goal will primarily focus on keeping the regime intact even if they lose votes, or office, stop procedures of internal democracy and pursue policy prescriptions. Significantly, it is different from the policy-advocacy party goal. When necessary conditions to the detriment of the regime occur parties might leave all policy advocacy aside. The external shocks that could activate this party's goal could be more than electoral shocks that threaten the system. Military interventions are such external stimuli as well, and the actions of groups against the regime could activate this goal.

The RPP was a *par excellence* example of this type of party goal having primary status in a party. The party leadership considered themselves the sentinels of the Republican tradition and values. When faced with military interventions and authoritarian rivals they directed their energy to negate and dismiss such perceived

threats to the political system, while keeping to the confines of the democratic system itself. RPP's chairperson acted visibly to guard the regime twice between 1960-1963 and 1971-1972 against military interventions, leaving behind vote maximization or application of party policies, and even going against the democratic will of its members at times. Moreover, the RPP made guarantor of democracy a part of its identity against the extreme right and left, pointing much of its adversary against such groups in the society.

Independent Variables in Discrete Party Change

Key independent variables were listed as leadership change, change in dominant factions, and external stimuli. Also "party age as an indicator of institutionalization" could curb the reform measures in a party (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 266).

Leadership change might be related to overall party change in multiple ways:

leadership change as part of an already ongoing "commitment to change" or changing leaders as "incidental to intentions of change" even if external stimuli were absent, and lastly, leadership change as a result of a battle for being dominant faction might bring changes to the party that was "closest to the hearts of the factions".

Leadership changes in themselves might not, unlike external shocks, be "likely to produce the situation where change on a number of dimensions" (266). Change in the dominant faction(s), as an independent variable focused on different factions in parties potentially as "collections of rival factions" (266). Strong divisions "on the 'basics' of the party's identity, strategy or organization" and changes in faction status in terms of dominance might prompt change on the topic of dispute. Again, the lack of external shocks tended to limit the extent of change. That factional displacement and leadership changes had equal weight in their theory and if the former is followed

by the latter, they assumed the effects to be “additive” (267). Finally, “external stimuli”, encompassed “environmental changes” (relevant constitutional reforms, provision for public funding, the birth of relevant new parties, and changes in the number of votes and parliamentary seats) that might be affecting parties in a system universally or in particular (ibid). Harmel and Janda differentiated between external effects that prompted adaptation in a party that received resistance from the institutional tendency to inertia, and “particular party-specific stimuli can be identified which would not just produce limited change, but rather stimulate a significant reassessment of the party’s effectiveness with ripples felt throughout the organization” (ibid). Such shocks might coincide with or result in changes in leadership and status of dominant factions, as they could soften or crack intra-party conservative tendencies resisting change (ibid).

The three categories of independent variables, with external “shocks”, potentially having a critical effect on internal forces of change, were understood as having effects on decision-maker actions to reconsider party performance concerning the “primary goal”. “Given the extent of internal disruption caused by the shock, abrupt, broad and dramatic changes may result” (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 267-8). The appearance of an external stimulus as a “shock” might be dependent on the differing primary goals of different parties (268). The different goals revolved around electoral performance, coalition building for seeking power, participation, and representation. Those functions allowed for mutually exclusive categories of competitive party goals: “Vote maximization, office maximization, policy advocacy, and intra-party democracy maximization” (268-9). Harmel and Janda theorized the relation between external and internal motivations of change, and each type of party goal. Firstly, “vote maximizers” were the most susceptible to shocks due to electoral failures (or

failure patterns). According to Harmel and Janda, looking at intra-party discussions “over how to ‘improve the dismal situation’” was a better way of observing such a shock than simply trying to make a sense of any amount of electoral drop (269).

Second, “office maximizers” shocks were related to curbing the ability of a party in participating in the government. That event might happen when large parties could not find a partner in a coalition or a small party is stopped from participating in a coalition by other parties due to either other parties changing and distancing themselves, new parties rising as better prospects for a coalition, or changing social outlook lowering acceptability for a coalition. Another such case was the collapse of one wing of a coalition. In that case, the party that lost its office might engage in changing relevant “policy/ideology positions” to increase acceptability for alternative parties. In the two-party systems distinguishing between vote-seeking and office-seeking goals was hard to distinguish from each other, as winning elections meant coming to power (270). Thirdly, parties with a dominant faction that had a “policy/ideology advocacy”, typically went for policy, and ideological purity, and deemed keeping that purity was given priority over vote-seeking and office-seeking goals. With such parties, shocks were “directly related to the party’s policy positions”. Here shocks might push even the most puritan members of a party as it might mean the incorrectness of a given position (270). Finally, “intraparty democracy maximizing” parties, wanted “careful and active representation of members' wishes”, shifts in the majority view of such a party might bring internal change or such an internal push factor might be affected by an external factor. Sudden increases or decreases in membership of such parties were examples of such shocks (271). Additionally, “regime guardians” acted outside the four goals when facing external shocks or threats that are perceived as threats to the competitive

system. When facing direct threats from outside actors focus primarily to contain the threat prioritizing going to status quo ante. To that end, they might appease or limit the effect of the influence over the system. Such a goal is a hampering effect on the party change as exemplified in the case of RPP.

When put to the empirical test (Harmel, Heo, Tan, and Janda, 1995), the framework and associated independent variables were measured “across 26 organizational and 17 issue variables”.² The empirical analysis produced varying theoretical implications for the proposed cause-effect relations: Negative electoral results appeared as “a necessary, though not necessarily sufficient, condition for party change”. On the opposite, similar levels of party change taking place after good electoral results were also observed. Ultimately, although the poor electoral performance of a party was a strong independent variable of party change for theory, it was not the case “that all, or even most, party change is attributable to poor electoral performances (10-12).

For the variable of Leadership Change, empirical tests supported two hypotheses of the study which were leadership change being a “necessary condition for party change” (Harmel, Heo, Tan, and Janda, 1995: 12) and a “sufficient but not necessary

² Organizational variables were listed (with group themes listed in brackets) as “name change, organizational discontinuity” (institutionalization); “use of mass media, contacting voters” (party tactics), “structural articulation, intensiveness of organization, extensiveness of organization, frequency of local meetings, frequency of national meetings, maintaining records, pervasiveness of organization” (organizational complexity); “nationalization of structure, selecting national leader, selecting parliamentary candidates, allocating funds, formulating policy, controlling communications, administering discipline, leadership concentration” (nationalization of power); “candidate selection, parliamentary leadership selection, conformation to extraparliamentary positions, discipline of parliamentary representatives, rotation requirement, public policy positions, primary leader of party” (distribution of parliamentary and extraparliamentary wings). Issue variables were listed as, (party position on) “ownership of means of production, economic planning, redistribution of wealth, social welfare, secularization of society, support of military,” (East-West alignment), “anti-colonialism, supranational integration, national integration, electoral participation, protecting civil rights, interfering with civil liberties, industrial relations, environmental policy, immigration policy, rights of women” (Harmel, Heo, Tan, and Janda, 1995: 25).

condition” or the suggestion “every time there is a leadership change, there should be a party change following closely on its heels” (13). Therefore, the argument that there was a relationship between leadership change and party change, considering different party structures of different parties was sound.³ However, Harmel et. al also noticed that it was not possible to test the different magnitudes of the effects of “bad electoral performance” and “leadership performance” over party change: “*both* [explanations] have received some support - may work cumulatively rather than redundantly to explain party change. That is, can the one factor *complement* (i.e., add to) the explanation already provided by the other, rather than merely competing with it for the same turf?” Following the literature, they “assign *all* shared effects to the bad electoral performances” (14).

The variable of Dominant Faction Change is not considered to be necessary for party change. Rather, it is “viewed as contributing to special opportunities for party change” (Harmel, Heo, Tan, and Janda, 1995: 15). In three cases (Conservative Party, Labour Party, and the SPD), “some party change” took place “within a few years of the internal power shift”. Although Harmel et al. report that in only one case (Conservative Party) factional change followed a bad electoral performance in two years, they also considered that bad electoral performance was neither sufficient nor necessary for party factional change. The relationship between dominant faction changes and leadership change could work bilaterally (16). The verdict for this variable was that it offers no addendums to what “was already covered by leadership

³ In the empirical test, parties with stronger “leadership structures” such as Conservative Party from the UK and CDU from Germany, showed more “association between leadership and party change”, whereas weaker leadership positions within a party structure, exemplified by SPD and Labour, showed less association (Harmel, Heo, Tan, and Janda, 1995: 13).

change alone”. There were no “concrete conclusions”, and further research on that point was welcome (17).

Different approaches in the field, in Harmel’s (2002) opinion, worked to explain “*purposeful decisions to change*” and their consequences, they explained different aspects of party change and all were multi-level analyses, that in actuality could work to complement each other (128). The life-cycle approach concerned a fundamental change that “eventually occurs for all parties (... of a given type)” perhaps linked to the age and growth patterns of political parties (130). System-level trends research (political system and party system, as articulated by Gauja (2017)) were “designed to [also] explain gradual, fundamental change but now occurring roughly across many or all parties of a given system and resulting in a new organizational form” (Harmel, 2002: 130). These were gradual and clustered changes that took place over certain periods of time. The discrete change approach, on the other hand, “focused on explaining changes which are relatively abrupt and usually discrete (i.e. not contributing to some common, patterned cluster of changes)”⁴ (130). The suggestion here was to bridge the different “theory islands” rather than eliminate the islands (128).

Ultimately, the scholars in the field stress that party change is a quite complex phenomenon. Multiple levels of political life and multiple factors need to be taken into consideration while studying party change. On the party level, more than one independent variable could prompt a change in conservative institutions, such as

⁴ Significantly, the “discrete change approach” should be highlighted in terms of its research design postulates: Here focus is on the “discrete changes”, changes are individual or without any particular pattern, direction of the change either dependent on the circumstance or actor-specific, changes are abrupt, scope of the change is an individual party. Independent variables are designated in terms of internal factors such as factional friction or personnel changes (which are abrupt) and external shocks (relating to perception of electoral performance, which could create abrupt or a trend of change) (Harmel, 2002: 131).

political parties: Electoral shocks, leadership changes, and factional disputes.

Researchers made sense of the matter in terms of party goals.

Party Change per Political Structure

A recent study on party organizational change by Gauja (2017) addressed the issue of party change in terms of “levels” in a comprehensive way. The first contribution of Gauja that needs to be addressed was her preference for “party reform” rather than simply “party change”. Rather than using both terms interchangeably, Gauja stressed that both processes differed in terms of decision-making, communication, and consultation (18-19). In this perspective, party reform was “defined as “intentional and publicized changes that are made to a party’s structures and practices to improve them” (19). According to Gauja, the speed, scope, and success of a party reform will depend on conditions that could be understood at the different levels of politics. A “reform” of the party organization was a larger phenomenon than organizational change. Whether it was symbolic or substantial, the type of change would have a publicization aspect: “As an outcome, reform is captured in deliberate and often very public changes to parties’ organizational rules and/or processes. As a process, reform offers the party the opportunity to ‘rebrand’ and publicly alter its image, to emphasize certain strategic priorities over others, and to alter relationships of power within the party.” (19).

Such a change occurred within the RPP between 1966-1972 when a partial leadership and dominant faction change gradually made organization, cadre, and ideological changes in the party. Organizational reform took to some extent while organizational expansion was the main outcome.

The second contribution of Gauja (2017) was the establishment of the so-called “Swiss Cheese Model of Party Change”. Building upon the works of Harmel, Janda, Barnea, and Rahat Gauja’s model allowed for capturing different factors that cause change and accompanying motivations at different levels of “the political system, party system, and the political party” (8). For Gauja, the model’s strength was that it involved a range of potential “driving factors” parsimoniously, did not presuppose any given explanations at any level, and allowed for taking “individuals, groups, and institutions as relevant political actors” (8). Potential driving factors of change, units of analysis, and scope and object of the model are listed separately.

For the “political system” level, scope and units of analysis were designated as “Norms, conventions, and existing patterns of democratic practice. These norms and practices are situated within the general cultural, social, and political environment” (Gauja, 2017: 9). Potential driving motivations for change at this level were several challenges to “norms and conventions of ‘good’ democratic practice” via “changes to public expectations, legitimacy concerns, democratization, personalization, ‘Americanization’” (9). Gauja noted that the level of political system was the least theorized and least understood area of change, and the potential factors at this level provided limitations on parties’ organizational choices in directing their reform. Long-term trends in society, culture, politics (9), and “changes to the norms and public expectations surrounding the political practice and good governance threaten the legitimacy of all political parties, irrespective of their electoral strength, and therefore represent some of the most important and pressing catalysts for organizational reform in the modern era” (10-1). Alongside the motivational factors at the party system level, these external long-term pressures may passively or actively prompt political parties to increase their levels of electoral competitiveness

via “often copying or emulating the organizational practices of political parties deemed to be successful in other political contexts” (10).

The situation in Turkey between 1950 and 1972 provides such a context.

Significantly in 1960, the Turkish political context saw an expansion of civil society, a rise in ideological currents, and an immense amount of urbanization, and population mobility via emigration (Pekesen, 2020; Keyder, 1987). The actors in the RPP had different prescriptions leaning on different modes of vote-seeking (as well as office-seeking). The differences in their perspectives on the structural developments (or environmental changes) in Turkey affected their ideas on how to achieve electoral success.

For Gauja (2017) at the party system level, which was dominated by competitiveness, scope, and units of analysis were interactions of parties within a party system in terms of their competitive relationships. Potential motivating factors were again primarily to increase their enhance competitiveness, “remedying failure or damage to reputation, proactively creating advantage, contagion effects” (9). The main goal here for parties as singular units is to “maximize their seats and votes and increase their policy relevance” (9). Mair’s (1989) discussion of the party system change is enlightening on the effect of larger shifts in social and political cleavages. Mair argued that over the decades after Lipset and Rokkan provided their “freezing hypothesis” via discussion of political cleavages, the existing understanding of mass politics was challenged by “the changing *substantive* concerns of the voters” and changes in the “perspective of the *relationship* between the individual and the wider society” (253). In Mair’s discussion, the “appearance and disappearance of a party” was not simply related to either its size or ideology. It was a matter of its “*systemic*

role”. Henceforth, potential reasons for a shift in a party system might be “a transformation of the direction of competition or the governing formula” of ideological, strategic, or electoral shifts. Mair noted that the indicators of party change such as ideological change, electoral developments, and organizational reform are also indicators of party system change “when they also begin to have a bearing on the pattern of interactions which characterizes the system itself, or, in other words when they have systemic relevance” (257).

Perhaps the greatest change in the Turkish Party system occurred after the 1960 Coup d’état. Class-based associations were legalized for the first time, albeit with a serious limitation: Anti-communism (Emre, 2014a).⁵ The RPP already had a set of left-leaning policy prescriptions on its programme such as redistribution, labor rights, and land reform. However, it lacked a coherent and open left-wing identification in its agenda. Over time, it placed itself on the center-left due to influence from the Justice Party on its right and the Worker’s Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, WPT) on its left. This interaction was two-pronged: Primarily the competition from both the left and the right forced the RPP to change itself and reform itself. After 1967 the RPP extended its organizational capacity to university youth and women. The other side of this interaction was a differentiation in ideas. The actors in the RPP significantly presented their differences from the “socialist” ideas of the WPT and asserted their own positions on the center-left.⁶ The parties experienced extreme

⁵ Also see: Özman, Aylin, Yazıcı Yakın, Aslı. “The symbolic construction of communism in Turkish anti-communist propaganda during the Cold War”. *Journal of Language and Politics* 11:4 (2012), 583–605. doi 10.1075/jlp.11.4.06ozm; Çelik, Haydar Seçkin. “Resurgence of the Cold War state of mind: the debate on constitutional tolerance of socialism vis-à-vis the emerging left in Turkey (1967–1971)”, *Cold War History* (2022) DOI: 10.1080/14682745.2022.2100354.

⁶ For the Worker’s Party of Turkey (Ünsal, 2019). For differences of ideology between the WPT and the RPP see, (Erdem, 2012).

factionalism both within and without themselves, and the party system was significantly polarized (Sayari, 1978).

Finally, at the party level, Gauja (2017) presented the scope and units of analysis as the relationship between individual politicians, party members, and various intra-party factions and groupings. Potential drivers for reform were “Enacting changes to the balance of power within a party, through a leadership change, a party merger or split, weakening/shifting factional influence and increasing participation” (9). Gauja visited two potential explanations of “changing power dynamics” that accompany organizational changes in the neo-institutionalist literature: “From a rational choice perspective, actors and groups within the party are expected to act to enhance their power base and weaken those of their internal opponents, which may involve a change in the rules. From a sociological standpoint, a change in the balance of power might also allow a new group of elites to challenge the dominant ideology of the party and its philosophical direction, creating opportunities for organizational changes that reflect new political and strategic goals” (10). Gauja noted that party mergers and splits, “power struggles between challengers, and apparatchiks”, the role of factions or “collective groupings” in parties as additional motivational factors for party reform (10).

For this thesis project, this only brings in an incomplete picture. One similar view that explains the organizational change in the contemporary RPP argued that parties shift their strategical preferences over programmatic or clientelist policies depending on access to government funding, for the most part, depending on being in the office or not (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2021: 607-8). However, ideas could better explain the

strategical and organizational change. Programs are not mere preferences but rather roadmaps for tackling the organizational reliance on patronage.

So far in the party organizational change literature, ideas have been mentioned only in passing (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 261; 265; 270), as dependent variables, rather than independent variables. The next item on my theory-building bucket list is to visit the part of the RI literature that took ideational variables into account. The following item would be to engage in a separate yet relevant “island” of “ideational approach” since both could bring in more venues, and relevant theoretical understanding of complexity to the table. To go beyond the “fear of complexity” as Harmel advised (2002: 142), I will further complicate the matter of party change. So far, I have tried to bring in a general picture of the subfield of party change in comparative political science literature. The literature so far could be categorized under an overall approach called “rational choice institutionalism” (RI). Theory building so far comprised of a “discursive” attempt and worked to bring in why politicians engaged in party reform.

2.2.2 Change in Political Parties and Ideas

In this part, I will be discussing two sets of literature that discussed the role of ideas in political parties and change in the parties as institutions. Following Harmel (2002) I will be engaging with a set of literature that tries to theorize different aspects of a party (such as policy, identity, and ideology) in terms of ideas. Then I will be visiting another island on the literature that takes ideas as independent variables in studying political institutions.

Before getting into presenting different theories, I shortly discuss the basic understanding of the role of ideas in political parties and try to define the relationship. According to Vassallo and Wilcox (2006), parties had been defined as “individuals bound together by common ideas” even in earlier accounts (413). From one take, ideologies and policies “are the reason why parties exist” and central. They are closely linked to the notion of “party identity”, and it is means of discussion, presenting queries, and coming up with a hypothesis. They are the “true essence” of parties in terms of an ontological category rather than their actions. From another take, parties are primarily office-seeking collections of individuals, and ideologies are means to simply acquire more votes to reach the target of partially or fully controlling government. Most parties can be designated in terms of their ideological premises and thought systems. Variations and evolution of those are possible, although great breaks with the past are rare, and usually stably understood around the “left-right” dimension (414).

Ideologies serve as continuous firm grounds on which they present their positions to the electorate. Dramatic changes in party positions in party manifestos and platforms may push old voters and attract new ones. Additionally, ideologies present a means to motivate party members and activists, while bridging external ties with other non-party organizations. Ideologies are “conceptual maps” for party leadership, members, and the electorate to make a sense of the political track of a party. They make it easier to reach information on parties' positions on real-life problems. That is relevant in both long and short-term aspects: Parties are both “repositories of ideologies” and “short-term carriers of ideas”. These reflect themselves as policy prescriptions. These are linked to the general agenda of parties during election times. These are usually carried through multiple election cycles. At the same time, it is

common for parties to “coopt specific ideas offered by other parties to eliminate the issue in the campaign”. Ultimately party ideologies are considered to be embedded in what is called the “socially ordered” political cleavages (Vassallo and Wilcox, 2006: 414). The cleavages are also potentially present in parties themselves, and therefore parties present their compromises in their official documents. Studies are reportedly mostly focused on single cleavage dimensions, the “left-right dimension” (416).

However, geographical variations sometimes create a need to include other dimensions such as “center-periphery” or “religious-secular” dimensions (417).

For the studies, these ideologies and related policy prescriptions, “party platforms, manifestoes, and programs” are of paramount importance. These are official party statements, which include “some mix of ideological statements, abstract principles, broad goals, and specific policy proposals” (Vassallo and Wilcox, 2006: 414). Such documents are somehow stable but fluid, indicators of the ideas carried by the parties. Parties keep on their general ideological principles over time even if there are changes in names and organizational terms (416). In terms of their real-life functions, these present the electorate with a roadmap in power (415-416).

That being said, I will engage in presenting an overview of theories in the RI literature. The first set of perspectives is comprised of two series of working theories: Collective work behind the “Comparative Manifesto Project” (CMP), and the “spatial modeling” approach which tries to understand the relations between policy prescription change and the electorate. The second is based on several critical accounts of rational-choice institutionalism: The “ideational approach”.

Ideological Change and Parties

The first set of literature that focused on the ideological change in party positions is called the “spatial modeling” approach. Adams’ (2012) literature review stated that the spatial modeling approach rested upon a notion of the “Nash equilibrium”, as in parties did not shift policy positions by themselves, rather it was the party elites’ notion of the strategies and tactics of the competitors (402). According to Adams, this approach was rife with simplification that strayed away from the real-life side of politics in its explanations of the relationship between the party policy positions and the perception of the electorate: At the party level, party organizations were considered to be unitary actors that disseminate their positions to the electorate. Changes in those positions were instant and costless reiterations following the changes in the political environment. At the level of the electorate, voters were considered identical in reaching information and perception of party positions. Finally, in the relationship between a party and its voters, it was assumed that parties dominate the presentation of their “policy images” and voters corresponded “exactly” with the presentation of the party elites (403).

Adams (2012) took those premises, as paradoxical with real political life, and proposed alternative explanations to be studied further, on the relationship between the voters and party elites. One explanation was that, although the parties shifted their positions following “public opinion, past election results, valence issues, and rival parties’ policy shifts”, the voters and general electorate could be oblivious or outright fail to notice and react to the “left-right shifts” of policy positions of the elites (412). One reason for that could be that the politicians try to tap into smaller but much more active pools of political members of the general public. An

alternative reason was that even if the media and the larger public might “ignore, misconstrue, or dismiss” the policy shifts, there is greater potential to reach larger publicity (413). The second explanation of Adams was that public perception of parties depended upon the actions of the parties rather than the policy statements of parties, such as manifestos. In that take, it was harder for the opposition to change its public perception as deeds were rather scarce for parties when in opposition:

Henceforth “deeds not words” (413). When a party achieves office actions may “sharply” diverge from earlier policy prescriptions in party platforms due to intra-government problems, such as new social or economic circumstances, or “push-back from public opinion, resistance from organized labor or business interests, etc.” On the other hand, members of the public may react negatively to the actions of the parties (413). The third explanation suggested that factional strife in parties may create effects at the level of the voters. If intra-party strife between different factions of a party could be contained in the eyes of the public, therefore “stay on the message”, they might manage to bring about a meaningful change in their policy positions perceived by the public. Here an additional potential variable was the ability of party leaders to underplay the claims of rivals and the “charisma of their leaders” and the ability of rival parties to “display as they attempt to raise doubts about the focal party’s policy positions” became important (414).

One version of the CMP tradition of studies was following the “performance hypothesis” (parties reacting to the perception of performance in the last elections) of the “discrete change approach”, and focused on the effects of the new parties on older parties' ideologies, and the issue of party identity. Harmel and Svåsand’s (1997) work on the effects of new parties over old parties, focused on two claims: New parties having the potential to establish themselves in a party system, and new

parties influencing the older parties while staying small. For the latter cases, one of the influences that new parties had was being able to affect the party identities of older parties to “change key issue/ideological positions”, by posing threats (316). That change rested on the “new kids” ability to “reduce *uncertainty* as to what is the right move” (316). “Reducing uncertainty” meant that, in terms of shifts in electoral patterns, the loss of voters to an ideologically neighboring new party would move the larger competitive party to react against the perception of a “direct *threat* to the established party's own electoral well-being” (317). According to Harmel and Svåsand, mere potential threats were not enough for prompting a change in an established party due to the “innate conservatism” of parties. Rather, “evidence” in the form of enough votes/seats to be noticed. Moreover, the older party needed to perceive the new one as a personal threat, even without direct loss of voters/seats, again if the actions of the new ideologically neighboring party coincided with electoral losses of the older party (317). The study on party platforms from the right-wing parties in Denmark and Norway suggested that, although not as a complete explanation of the change in parties' ideological positions, new and ideologically neighboring parties had lasting effects on the party systems under question. Arguably the new and smaller parties in a party system would have at least a secondary role in pushing the older established parties to shift their positions (336).

Similarly, the introduction of left-wing ideals and slogans to the Turkish party system by the WPT paved the way for the shift to left for the RPP. The RPP elites tried to present their “leftist” positions in competition with the WPT. Although the communication between the two parties was severely limited, there was a mutual influence on the side of both parties. In addition, the mere existence of a small

competitor was not enough to steer the trajectory of the RPP in itself, as one call for party reform fell on the deaf ears of the conservative party leadership in 1962.

Another take, via the same tradition of performance hypothesis, by Janda, Harmel, Edens, and Goff (1995) took on the matter of “party identity”. Janda et. al.’s definition of party identity was “the image that citizens have in mind when they think about that party. Political parties develop their identities through the different faces they present to the public while in and out of government” (171). Here a “human face” heuristic was used and that was designated by the “characteristics of its leaders and supporters”. Whether disciplined or disorganized, such a “face” of a party was what the general public reacted to (171). In addition to the image of the party organization and leadership, parties present policy “faces” which were subject to “facelifts”, by shifting on left-right or other cleavage dimensions, or by picking new policy positions, on occasion (171-2). Shifting identities of the parties were presented not only in times of trouble but significantly before election times (172). For Janda et. al. the question of a change in party identities was studied by researching election manifestos (173). Again mainly relying on electoral performance as an independent variable, empirical tests were run on data from European Party Manifestos Project to see whether party policy prescriptions drastically changed accordingly (175-6).⁷ It is noted that manifestos and platforms did not provide knowledge on organizational changes or internal power distribution. Although they provided data on parts of party identity (how issues were addressed and numerous policy positions), it still fell short of informing us on party goals. Finally, as the party policy prescriptions were subject

⁷ Janda and his colleagues provided the key example of SPD and its infamous Bad Godesberg Program. In that text the SPD openly shied from the Marxist orthodoxy, and carried over from an earlier conference in 1952, articulated and programatized clearly in 1959. According to Janda et al., “This program is an example of the type of fundamental party change that will be missed in the manifesto database because it was not produced in the platform immediately preceding the election” (Janda, Harmel, Edens, and Goff, 1995: 176).

to moderation in office, it was hard to precisely determine changes in issue profiles from manifestoes alone (177). However, according to Janda et. al., keeping a nuance of “*substance* (i.e. positions or 'principles')” and “*packaging* (i.e. the relative salience of issues in the manifesto)”, studying manifestoes allowed us to understand the latter which attracted voters in competitive elections (178). A further assumption was that the packaging was more easily altered than the substance of party manifestos. As changes in principle positions risk causing infighting, it was easier for parties to fiddle with the former, and keep one aspect intact while fiddling with the other (178-179).

The change in the RPP was perhaps the most visible in this regard. A new group of left-wing actors rose over criticism of the RPP identity, platform, and outlook and gave it a “facelift”. Their primary efforts were a strategical reform of the party platform accompanied by its identity.

The scholarly tradition shortly presented in this subpart focused on the part of policy prescriptions and their presentation for the most part. The research while providing a meaningful means for studying such changes in political parties, also presented very complex and also conflicting results. On the one hand, it is clear from the literature that, parties change their political outlooks and related policy prescriptions only with the encouragement of existential threats. These could be other parties or general trends in society or party systems. However, there are questions on taking electoral performance as an independent variable of its own, at least, following the discrete change approach, without taking cognitive understandings of party elites. The literature noted that, whereas the policy prescriptions are more open to change, policy tracks or ideological principles are much harder to change, at least not without

serious internal (and external) consequences for the parties. That notion brings up to mind that potential ideological change in a political party has at least some sort of relation to internal frictions of parties albeit at the leadership or factional level.

Still, coming up with a full account of ideological change in political parties is not possible with the theoretical tools at hand. The discrete change approach falls short of taking the potential effects of ideas themselves on the perceptions of party leaders and cadres. However, an additional set of discussions within the comparative political science tradition provides a chance to take a fresh look at the matter, in terms of how to consider ideas when studying political parties.

Ideational Approach

In this part, I am going to outline the basic premises and discussions regarding the “ideational approach. It is evident from the literature that, there was a significant aspect of academic and intellectual unorthodoxy regarding already established institutionalisms, in the advent of this strain of academic endeavor. I follow a similar path to the party change/reform literature outlined above. That way I aim to achieve two things: Trying to keep explanations of the theory provided by party change literature that captures the complexity of party change while bringing in ideas as potential sources of explanation and building upon the existing literature. Therefore, I will first provide a general overview of the ideational approach postulates and then engage in how to approach the issue of party change from the angle of ideas as explanatory values at different levels.

The “ideational turn” came into being due to a series of paradigmatic shifts within the comparative political science tradition to understand from statics to change

(Blyth, 1997; 2003). For Matthijs, that was part of both the rise of the institutionalist tradition and the search for “eclecticism” in the field of comparative politics (Checkel et al., 2016: 176-7). There are several proposed names for that perspective and equally numerous discussions on the matter: “Ideational approach”, “constructivist institutionalism”, and “discursive institutionalism”. This division mattered in terms of discussing the role of ideas in politics as independent variables and depending on the perspective of different scholars that role could range a lot. Before getting into the heated debate, especially between constructivist and historical takes on ideas as explanatory variables, I will first try to present a picture of the overall role of ideas in politics as presented in the literature.

Blyth’s (2003) analysis of the overall paradigm shift in the institutionalist tradition had two implications: That “*internal* changes in the social sciences are often precipitated by *external*, real-world events” (695) and “Genuine theoretical advances... are made when the limits of one theory engender something new”. The problem of explaining how self-interest maximizing individuals engaged in collective action had rational-choice institutionalists to bring in “institutions” which explained “stability”. According to Blyth however, that did not solve the problem as institutions themselves were also subject to the same collective-action problems which prompted “ideas” to be invoked (696). The first invocator to do so was Douglas North (1990) in his famous article which argued that ideas were what allowed institutions to reduce the transaction costs of collective actions, and one of the sources of institutional change (Blyth, 2003: 696). The acceptance of deliberateness or consistency of choice and action of agents came started to have a problem if ideas were to be taken seriously. There, ideas had a potential effect on the content of the interest rather than being only about the order of the interests. That

posed an ontological problem for rational RI institutionalists according to Blyth (698).

In earlier work, Blyth (1997) offered a more detailed critique of the institutionalist tradition. Both in the RI and historical institutionalisms (HI), ideas were presented as “filler” to existing research programs, “instrumentally and functionally” (229). Unlike RI scholars who view ideas concerning institutions as means of getting around the lack of “Nash equilibria”, HI scholars turned to the ideas “in response to problems in conceptualizing change by agents” in which institutional environments are understood as structural inhibitors of political action (230). Ultimately in both strains of scholarship, “Ideas become desiderata, catch-all concepts to explain variance. No progressive attempt is made to analyze ideas themselves. The two schools asked ‘what stabilizes’ and ‘what causes change,’ not ‘what are ideas’ and ‘what do they do’” (231). Blyth argued that varying definitions of what was an institution still ended in viewing ideas (as independent variables) as “ad hoc addendum” (231). For HI, Blyth’s recommendation was to go beyond “undertheorized” conceptions such as “embeddedness”, “congruence” and policy paradigm (237). In addition, comparative or counterfactual cases were needed to present how a change in ideas on something might be meaningful. The final requirement that Blyth offered was from the realm of party politics and policy paradigms: “The elite game may tell us how the ideas get from the blackboard to the party, but not how or why certain ideas come to be accepted over others. The mechanism of translation from academic debate to popular consciousness needs to be spelled out” (237).

That, however, brought in another issue: If ideas mattered as parts of causal mechanisms in politics, what are their exact effects? Are they mere intervening steps in causal mechanisms used to explain the change in politics? Or is it possible to think of the ideas as explanatory factors of change on their own? Ideas were “causal beliefs” (Beland and Cox, 2011: 3), and that definition had certain implications on the role of ideas in the real world: When beliefs and ideas were produced by human cognition, they were “connected to the material world only via our interpretations of our surroundings” (3). As causal beliefs they, allowed human beings to make connections between things and/or people whether as causes creating outcomes or informal attachments of relational values on things with people (3) and, served as “guides for action” (4). In a world of ideas, there was no single truth, and the ensuing discrepancy allows people “to choose one among [ideational] interpretations opens space for politics” (4). According to Beland and Cox, politics was “the struggle for power and control among people who are motivated by myriad ideas”: Perceived interests, ideals, fear, and pride of human beings (3). Communicatively shared ideas did not only serve as mere informing of beliefs about their interests but also what they appropriated, legitimated, and deemed proper (3). Rather than maximizing outcomes, actors followed normative and ideational criteria in their actions, according to the ideational approach (Berman, 1998: 30).

As ideational theorists thought “focusing on ideas provide richer explanations of politics”, the students of this perspective aimed to rigorously study “how ideas shape political behavior and outcomes” (Beland and Cox, 2011: 5). Motivation for political action came from ideas and, these ideas have a chance to feedback into new and original ideas with potential feedback effects (5).

The ideational approach was first and foremost about taking ideas seriously in the sense that they were not mere blueprints brought by the real world. This was at odds with materialism and other positions (Mehta, 2011: 23). "... Marxists, many rational choice scholars, and realists tend to view ideas as epiphenomena" (Berman, 2011: 105). For those scholars, ideas were "smokescreens" or ruses by powerful actors (Mehta, 2011: 23). One criticism of those positions was that the world is not static (equilibrium), working according to linear causation (linearity), did not have continuous linear functions with equilibrium in it (exogeneity), or outcomes with a universally normal distribution (normality) (Blyth, 2011: 85). Even, looking at the world from the seemingly fixed realities of the West and the globalized Rest, one might avoid such "fallacies" (86). The world and people's cognitions of it change. Or in other words, they were dynamic (disequilibrium). On the other hand, "By specifying what kinds of ideas serve what functions, how ideas of different types interact with one another, how ideas change over time, and how ideas shape and are shaped by actors' choices, social scientists can provide greater analytic purchase on the question of exactly how ideas matter" (Mehta, 2011: 25).

The dynamic conception of the world did not refute causation. It dwelled upon casual empiricism (Blyth, 2011: 85; Schmidt, 2011: 61): Showing when ideas mattered and when they did not was still an important goal (Schmidt, 2011: 62). Therefore, in ideational studies, causality was established by studying the real world rather than solely fixating upon causal factors, such as "punctuated equilibrium" or "path dependence". However, others operating with the ideational approach proposed using such casual models, as they could be invaluable in understanding when ideas did not

explain the change: Structural changes might increase or decrease the effectiveness of an idea in changing political institutions (Berman, 2011: 107).⁸

According to Beland and Cox (2011), there were three common grounds in the overarching scholarship. Firstly, ideas were related to interests, as interests were a form of an idea (10). Interests were articulated before they are realized by a political act as a subjective interpretation (11). Thus, human cognition had independent status here as the engine of ideas, which were created as actors interact and communicate with each other and their world, affective over decision-making and action (11). Interests changed as the actors' understanding of the world (and emotions connected with it) changed in tandem with recalculations (11). This could be simply strategic calculations (in the materialist view) or "it might also involve a fundamental reassessment of priorities, perhaps even of identity" (11). Yet Berman (1998) mentioned elsewhere, that actors' knowledge of the world was often incomplete or distorted and, acceptance of such limitations on actors meant one must take into consideration both actors' deliberations and the contextual world (31-2). Second, there was the agreement that ideas and institutions were related as "ideas are embedded in the design of institutions" (Beland and Cox, 2011: 8). Here ideas were causal as the main component of a causal chain: Ideas paved way for action and as those actions "form routines, the results are social institutions", in turn when people interacted with the said institutions, their founding ideas were reproduced (9). Yet, that did not mean ideas were completely clear and coherent. Ideas in this mode of non-mechanical causality provided actors with power, and embedded ideas in

⁸ Interestingly Schmidt classifies perspective of Berman's works as "Discursive Institutionalism within the Historical Institutionalism Tradition": Focus here is on the ideas, as the independent explanatory variable of institutional change, not fitting with "'rationalist' interests, and/or represent a break with historical paths" (Schmidt, 2011: 54).

institutions, further “institutionalize, even legitimize, power differentials” (9). How inequalities and group boundaries were defined and reproduced by institutions, shaped by ideas, could be invaluable to understanding “power and domination” (9). Still, these institutional processes could be challenged, as actors drawing on the existing ideological and symbolical frames might challenge the institutional ideas by providing alternatives (10). In sum, “ideas were in flux, often at odds and often malleable” (10).

Methodologically, ideational variables are considered as part of the stable background, producing stable “patterns of behavior over time” (Berman, 2011: 106). For Berman, “political life is never stable”, and both continuity and change must be taken into consideration, and when change and stability could not be explained with ideas, then other factors should be brought in (106). The goal here is to study why certain ideologies are discarded and, why some are introduced. External shocks and contextual changes are important in the different ways actors respond to them. Therefore, methodology wise different variables, and contexts must be examined (108).

Study of the rise and fall of ideas then are done following “a two-stage process”: In the first phase, ideas “are questioned and tarnished, opening up a political space that competitors aspire to fill”, an intellectual void, which creates a “demand” for new ideas. The second phase begins when “failures or inadequacies” of existing ideas are then addressed by “competitors”, who start to “supply” the space with alternatives and compete with the ideas they embrace. “The ones that seem to offer the best solutions to contemporary problems, in turn, win out over their ‘competitors’” (Berman, 2011: 107).

For Berman (2001), additional questions needed to be answered in terms of context to show the explanatory value of an idea: “What characteristics of a situation are important in determining how easy or difficult the assimilation of new ideas will be? How do ideational factors (for example, the internal structure and logic of ideas, pre-existing ideational and cultural frameworks), institutional factors (for example, the organizational context within which ideas emerge), and material factors (for example, the power and interests of different political actors) interact to shape the likelihood that a broad public will adopt new ideas?” (237). Berman offered several responses to those questions.

After establishing a framework that allowed for ideas to be studied tangibly as a behavioral explanandum, Berman (1998) engaged in building an “ideational theory” that allowed for the identification of specific ideas and actors. Theory building started with providing items to check. The first was to tackle the issue of tangibility in studying ideas. It regarded the identification of specific ideas via political actors (22). The second, questioned “whether ideas are consistent with the outcomes at issue” and regarded causality (23). The final two questions concerned the notion of ideas being epiphenomenal. The third question tested if there were a “third, omitted variable” in the proposed causal relation. Predation of acts by ideas suggested a lower chance for such an intervening variable (23). The fourth question again revolved around testing whether an ideational variable could be reduced to a structural characteristic of the environment. Berman warned that ideas could indeed be epiphenomenal in many cases and could be “readily and parsimoniously explained by some other nonideational factor” (23-4).

Another form of the “ideational turn” in comparative political science, “Discursive Institutionalism” (DI), draws upon and studies that notion: “ideas stand as forces that help individuals formulate their preferences and are the currency for the discursive interactive processes that help produce policy change” (Schmidt, 2011: 48). Political science, focused on research-based on such questions and tried to answer them through a vigorous study of real-life cases. The DI did that by taking ideas seriously and their disseminations, and discourses, in their capacity to make or break assemblages of political actors. In other words, this range of scholarly works of political inquiry took “account of the substantive content of ideas and the interactive processes of discourse that serve to generate those ideas and communicate them to the public” (47).

Goes (2021) stated that parties themselves were ideological institutions that were “heavily involved in the production and contestation of ideologies” not only due to maximizing electoral success, and historical constraints “but also because ideology is what political parties ‘do’” (180-1). Goes preferred to combine Schmidt’s DI with Hall’s historical take on ideas, relying on notions of “persuasive capacity of ideas”, “comprehensibility”, and “endorsement from relevant authorities” (185), to show how ideas were used by parties “to make sense of the world and to address specific political challenges they face at a given time and space”, how parties linked “zeitgeist ideas to their own ideological traditions”, and lastly, how “parties try to renew ideological traditions whilst pursuing other goals” (181). Goes brought in a pinch of “stability” to the dynamic of ideas and political parties, stating that ideological adherences or identities of parties were “disruption-prone” therefore being constrained while engaging in vote-maximization or transforming an ideology, as “ideological leapfrogging can be a risky ideological strategy” (182). Studying

British Labour Party under Ed Miliband, Goes stated that ideas could serve “as catalysts to ideological change and renewal” (194). However, Goes also pointed out Miliband’s inability to bridge the gap between “rhetorical commitment” and “policy proposals”, as well as convincing “key actors in the shadow cabinet”. Still Miliband’s agenda was carried with “idea of predistribution”, in an “attempt to change the party’s ideological direction and develop an egalitarian programme that renewed Labour’s socialist roots” (194).

The final agreement in ideational scholarship was the notion of increased ability to study “political change” via this dynamic model of politics. The focus of change was on the agency: “Politics is about how people interact with the world and one other” (Beland and Cox, 2011: 12). These ideas guided people’s actions and shape their interactions with others. Common ideas held by many actors might turn into “routine practices” and further cause institutionalization. “Then lesson drawing processes reshape ideas, exposing and sorting out the tensions among competing ideas. Such processes offer lots of opportunities for conflict, misinterpretation, miscommunication, deception, and duplicity, as well as cooperation, enlightenment and resolution” (12-13).

There were also, several limitations to the usefulness of the ideational perspective. The idea that our world was cognitively and socially constructed raised an epistemological question: Since ideas were not tangible and hard to pin down, how did we know they have “strong impacts on the political behavior and outcomes?” (Beland and Cox 2011: 13). There was also the problem of “cognitive locks”, the refusal of certain policy solutions over ideological fixations, and, the “problem of zeitgeist”, as ideational research requires acceptance of possibly working at an

analytical level at which unconscious ideas are at work (15). One final issue is “*explanans* (the explanation)” and *explanandum* “(what needs to be explained)” (Ibid). Ideas could work as sources of institutional change, yet their easy dissemination could be hindered by strong institutions (Ibid.). Beland and Cox argue that these issues could be resolved by studying the “utterance of ideas” and their application must be studied empirically rigorously (13).

One prominent demarcation line in the field reflects an older theme: structure vs agency. The main discussion in that theme is between ideational scholars with a “constructivist” approach and a more “historical” approach to institutions. The varying approaches of institutionalism needed to explicitly engage with each other in terms of their main concepts “such as power, path dependence, feedback...” To reflect upon the older debate, I will follow that advice to bring in a dialogue between different sides: Historical institutionalism on one end, and constructivist institutionalism on the other (Checkel et al., 2016: 180).

Thelen (1999), presented the HI tradition in debate with the RI. Arguing that the best works out of both traditions came out of studies that focused on both the theoretical and empirical aspects (372). Differences however were the level of theoretical generalization (HI focusing on mid-range, and RI taking a more general applicability stance (373)), hypothesis formation (HI focusing on puzzles emerging from observations and comparisons, RI picking puzzles from observations that deviate from theoretical generalizations (373-4)) and treatment preference formation (for HI endogenous, for RI exogenous (374-5)). One key difference was between taking “historical processes” (HI) and “equilibrium order” (RI) (381). In other words, the difference was taking the origins and development of parts of a system, and taking

the system and its functions into consideration (382). For Thelen, HI tradition was as interested as the RI in continuity caused by institutions, with a twist: Rather than reducing institutions to coordinating functions, taking them as “concrete historical processes” (384).⁹ That position is arguably one end of the ideational turn.

The other end of the spectrum is perhaps best defined by Colin Hay (2006; 2011) who presented “constructivist institutionalism” (CI) as a move by neoinstitutionalist scholars to understand “complex institutional change” (Hay, 2006: 57). Hay stated that HI was a point of inspiration yet became “a point of departure” due to focusing on “institutional genesis at the expense of an adequate account of post-formative institutional change” while claiming a focus on process-tracing and institutional change (60). According to Hay, much like RI and “sociological institutionalism” (SI) in their respective fields, HI was better suited to explain “path-dependent institutional change they tend to assume” than explaining “path-shaping institutional change” or “disequilibrium dynamics” (61). However, the main criticism of Hay was ontological as he wanted to move away from materialist positions of “real or genuine interest” (Hay, 2011: 70).

According to Hay (2006), HI started with a criticism of the RI in terms of the conception of actors as having a “calculus approach”, having a “fixed (and immutable) preference set” and “extensive (often perfect) information and foresight” (61-2). As for the SI, downplay of agency and emphasis on “conventional or norm-driven behavior” was at odds with assumptions of the HI approach (62). Hay

⁹ The key theoretical notions were “path dependency” and “critical junctures”. According to Thelen, the first, invoked “that institutions continue to evolve in response to changing environmental conditions and ongoing political maneuvering but in ways that are constrained by past trajectories.” The second meant “crucial founding moments of institutional formation that send countries along broadly different developmental paths” (Thelen, 1999: 387).

discussed different definitions of the HI¹⁰ and then, made an ontological criticism over the point of whether CI was a variant of the HI or rejection: If the HI was an approach that was a mix of “cultural and calculus approaches” then it was not compatible with the CI. If, HI was more of a dynamic of “material and ideational factors” then common ground and differences between HI and CI needed to be unfolded (62).

One commonality was the focus on explaining the endogenous change in institutions (Hay, 2006: 63). Another was the context: While it was understood as an institutional matter, rather than understanding institutions as frameworks for “reducing uncertainty”, functions and dysfunctions were to be answered rather than assumed in the CI. That was where differences begin. Hay argued “... [P]olitics is rather less about the blind pursuit of transparent material interest and rather more about both the fashioning, identification, and rendering actionable of such conceptions, and the balancing of (presumed) instrumentality and rather more affective motivations” and the preference of actors could not be “derived from the (institutional) setting in which they are located” (64). Hay also added that interests were “social constructions and cannot serve as proxies for material factors; as a consequence they are far more difficult to operationalize empirically than is conventionally assumed” (64).¹¹ The

¹⁰ The first definition according to Hay was Hall and Taylor’s (1996) take which saw HI as actors who displayed “a combination of ‘calculus’ and ‘cultural’ logics” while presuming equilibrium (Hay, 2006: 60-1). The other definition was made Thelen and Steinmo (1992), and provided that institutionalist research of politics allowed for studying “the relationship between political actors as objects and as agents of history”. From that angle institutions were able to “shape and constrain political strategies in important ways, but they are themselves also the outcome (conscious or unintended)” (Hay, 2006: 62).

¹¹ For Hay, Blyth’s (2002) take on interests was contradictory, as it occasionally referred to interests in terms of material conditions, and at other occasions as ideational constructs (Hay, 2006: 69). Elsewhere, Hay (2011) provided a detailed criticism of that contradiction based on the definition of interests. Hay argued against the material conceptions of “real” interests as a drive for “naturalist science of politics” (Hay, 2011: 71). In “social/political arenas” actors were “shapers of their own destiny” whereas in natural areas they were “passive and responsive” (71). In the naturalist understanding, according to Hay, behavior of actors were simple reflections of their self-interest, and

“institutional innovation, evolution, and transformation” or change was to be understood internally to “the relationship between actors and the context in which they find themselves, between institutional ‘architects,’ institutionalized subjects, and institutional environments” (64). A further and crucial point was also made by Hay: Similarly with HI scholars, in CI, that relationship was understood in terms of “institutional path dependency” or “the order in which things happen affects how they happen. The trajectory of change up to a certain point itself constrains the trajectory after that point and the strategic choices made at a particular moment eliminated whole ranges of possibilities from later choices while serving as the very condition of existence of others” (64-5). CI, according to Hay, also looked at “ideational path dependency”, and ideas along with institutions also place limits on political action of actors (65). Therefore, CI aimed both “to identify, detail, and interrogate” establishment or codification of ideas, as “cognitive filters” that shaped actors’ perceptions of their environment, and how the established cognitive filters were “contested, challenged, and replaced”. For Hay, paradigmatic shifts heralded significant institutional change (65). In a world, in which actors were imperfectly informed, their perceptions on possibilities of action were “shaped both the institutional environment” and “by existing policy paradigms and world-views” (65). Ultimately, Hay’s position could be understood as the other end of the ideational turn.

such interests were “both given by and hence a logical derivative of their material context”, and context itself was “assumed to be in a state of equilibrium” (72). After discussing that there are more than one way of optimizing interests in terms of game theory models, Hay added a fourth postulate regarding interests via naturalist conception: “... [A]ctors are blessed with perfect information” (73). Only in an environment within which, actors could achieve perfect information, interests could be understood as objective, therefore Hay argued that “material self-interest” was “a conception and a construction” (77).

A response from the HI perspective should be noted to further the discussion. Bell's (2011) criticism of CI could be understood as an attempt at breaking Matthijs called "unconscious uncoupling" (Checkel et al., 2016: 179). Bell found irony in the CI, as he saw it as a potential return to "overly agent-centered approaches", and "taking institutions 'back out'", and argued that constructivism was a version of HI. The problem was "how to describe and explain contingent degrees of agent-centered discretion... within a context of constraint, conditioning, and empowerment" of actors embedded in institutions. Bell argued that "empowerment and discretion" would be amplified when actors operated "across multiple institutional environments" and "wider structural environments which are often changing..." (Bell, 2011: 885). Bell agreed with the criticisms of Blyth, Hay, and Schmidt on the static, exogenous, and constraining perspectives of certain HI scholars over institutional change. However, he took issue with what he defined as "to zero in on agency, but especially the subjective ideational and inter-subjective discursive realm, seemingly a more fluid and flexible environment in which to effect change..." (886). Criticizing Blyth for constructing special cases in crises that allow for full ideational effectiveness, and Schmidt as underplaying institutions as "meaning context", "providing 'background information', or as contingent" ultimately dissociating from institutions altogether, Bell stated that there was a degree of confusion in defining degrees of constructivism (888-9). Rather he seemed to argue for "HI in a more agency-based approach that is capable of absorbing constructivist insights and offering a rounded account of institutional change" (890).

The ideational approach provides a novel way to study party change which takes the ideas of its actors seriously, as reasons or independent variables. This perspective allows me to study the clash of different actors in conducting party politics. As I will

try to present below, the studies of RPP as part of the social democratic family are either lacking or it is bracketed out of the study of the Turkish left under the pretense of left-wing ideas in the RPP being epiphenomenal.

Discussion of agency and structure has important ramifications for the study of the party change in the RPP. The agents of change in the RPP had their agency limited by the existing idea set of principles, the “six arrows” of “Kemalism”. The “left of center”, after its ambiguous utterance by RPP’s Chairperson in 1965 quickly became a catchphrase or declaration of treason to the party’s core values for different actor groups in the RPP. These actors fought over the meaning of what was left and how it should be implemented, not only in the rooms of RPP Centrum but also in the wider public. Their effectiveness was limited by extra-party factionalism, the existence of an anti-communist state, and the raging cold war itself. Still, over some core principles, actors of change in the RPP managed to provide “revisionist” accounts to existing principles of both “Kemalism” and “Left”. One further limitation had two effects. On one hand, with the guidance of their ideas, the actors in the RPP managed to bring a meaningful change of identity and outlook to their party significantly in population-dense metropolitan areas, and areas with industrial production and cash-crop production where labor populations and farmers respectively voted for the party. Elsewhere the existing organizational structure resisted the party change for some part.

Ideational factors are “the internal structure and logic of ideas, pre-existing ideational and cultural frameworks” (Berman, 2011: 137). The case of RPP had a special condition. As a founding party with a claim of having its own conditions of existence, the RPP refrained from defining any of the ideological families in Europe.

Rather it chose to adhere to what was called the “six arrows”, “Kemalism” or “Atatürkism”. All actors within the RPP embraced this tradition and experience to articulate their ideas.

Significantly Bülent Ecevit (1970a), leader of the Left of Center Movement, produced a revisionist account of Atatürkism that argued the way for “revolutionarism” was parliamentary politics that wanted to realize “revolutions of the base” rather than just protect “revolutions of superstructure”. Arguably this was left-wing revisionism in a la Bernstein, which took “primacy of politics” to the core (Berman, 2006).¹² In other words, Ecevit had translated an idea developed for democratic revisionism of European social democracy and presented it via Atatürkist experience. He aimed to distance the RPP from the putschist movements who also presented their ideology within the Kemalist tradition.¹³

Ecevit told, in an interview in the 1980s,

“I considered democratic left as a synonym of contemporary social democracy. However, our social democratic movement was not Marxist in

¹² In that light, Uyar’s argument that Ecevit took inspiration from Marxism when arguing “true revolutionarism was realizing the revolutions at the base” is misleading (Ecevit, 1970a: 61; Uyar, 2017b: 331). It is true that Ecevit’s axiom have uncanny similarities with the Marxist mantra of “base determines the superstructure” (of course missing the part “only in the last instance”). This is core of what Berman (2006) denoted as “primacy of economics” (25). Ecevit’s axiom is directly political in its call for democratic process as a requirement of “Atatürk’s revolutionary movement” (1970: 56) is an uncanny nativization of “primacy of politics” (Berman, 2006: 43) within the Kemalist tradition. Therefore it seems Ecevit’s inspiration was Bernstein’s democratic revisionism.

¹³ Birgit (2012) narrated a conversation between him and Ecevit around 19th Congress in 1968 “In fact I knew, due to being close to him, that Ecevit embraced democratic socialism. He argued that democratic socialism was a universal notion, therefore, to adopt it under term democratic left and interpret according to our indigenous needs in our country. Furthermore, he asked me in private, of his idea to replace the unmoving symbol of the party, six arrows, with a person holding a pigeon. I said ‘This is untimely and dangerous’, and explained that when the time comes that figure could be used, with the condition of being next to six arrows. In the future, he used this symbol not in the flag but program of the party and explained the difference between socialism and democratic left as popular presence being stronger than the state” (41). This claim implies that even with a desire to clearly represent the democratic socialist revisionism in a nativist way, the theoreticians of the LoC movement adhered to the symbols and some of the ideas of the Kemalist tradition.

origin. Western social democracy was historically Marxist, although it had split from Marxism completely, and this placed social democracy in the west under some constraints. Now and then doctrinarian or Marxist socialists made claims such as “you are distorting, corrupting, betraying” and pushed social democrats to defense.

“Why should we get dragged into such arguments? Already, we do not have Marxism in our origins. We prepare a left-wing program according to the special needs of our society, taking inspiration from contemporary Scandinavian social democracy” (Cılızoğlu, 2017: 338-9; also see, Taşkın, 2020: 281).

According to Tütüncü Esmir (2006), a theorist from left-wing unions in Türk-iş, Faruk Erginsoy claimed, “The main reason for putting aside social democracy, which was used before the term democratic left, was to differentiate from the west. Therefore, as it carried some peculiar characteristics for Turkey, the name Democratic Left was translated from ‘*La Leur Démocratique*’” (144).

The specific adherence of the RPP to a peculiar essentialist character, in Kili’s (1976) words “being ‘national’” [“ulusal” olmak] or “providing a national developmental model ‘which does not imitate any foreign action or doctrine’” was an internal structure for the ideas of the actors in the RPP.

Therefore, the discussion above guides me to study the case from a historical perspective where the ideas of the carriers matter not only in decision-making but consciously changing their party. This party change took the form of changes in its documents, alliances, identity, and leadership.

Overall, in this part, I have tried to present key discussions in the field of comparative politics regarding the role of ideas in institutional frameworks. Several points are prominent in the field: (1) Ideas matter as independent variables, and their effects need to be clearly shown when studying political institutions, (2) effects of ideas could be understood at multiple levels such as systems and culture, institutional frameworks, and individual institutions, (3) following the debates around institutionalist traditions, ideas should not be reduced to structural determinism or pave way for a notion unlimited agency, (4) change brought about by actors with ideas is not solely exogenous or endogenous, therefore the process is needed to be studied in detail. So far, the ideational turn appeared in tandem with the discrete change approach to study party change presented in the previous section. In both kinds of literature, exogenous shocks were subject to actors' perceptions and constructions of their interests. However, due to the limitations of my research, following the historical strain is more fitting to study an individual party. That does not mean the context of the political system and party system should be taken as given. On the contrary, actors that constitute individual institutions (political parties) need to be studied within the larger historical context they operated to see in what ways they were able to act as agents who may affect their environment and in what ways actors' actions were shaped by a party. Much like the discrete change approach stating political parties were conservative institutions that resist change, institutions in a HI framework with an ideational focus were also subject to limitations of "path contingencies". Still, the actors may engage in actions following their understanding of the larger framework, to bring about change ultimately, as carriers of ideas who are imperfectly informed. In that sense, actors can use ideas as roadmaps and tools

for bringing change, bringing ideas as coalition magnets to bring about alliances to challenge institutions themselves.

Finally, how political ideologies concerning political parties are studied through an ideational approach must be clarified. Berman who studied several social democratic parties in dynamic ideational change argues that ideologies are “broad ‘worldviews’ that provide coherent interpretations of the world otherwise be linked and create political communities that simply would not have existed in the ideologies’ existence” (Berman 2011: 105). That is a point leading to counterfactual thinking: Without ideologies and human relations made by them, subsequent ends would be different.

Ideas, Interests, Politics, Culture

As discussed above designating the role of ideas as explanatory variables in studying political parties is of paramount importance. There arises a problem of how explanatory are ideas at different levels of analyses and in this part, I will try to bring in discussions on the matter. I find it useful to follow Gauja’s “Swiss Cheese” heuristic (2017: 8) to approach the matter on three different levels: political system, party system, and political party. Remembering that the political culture level involved long-term changes in society, culture, and politics (9), and at the party system level tried to study the change following the relations of the individual parties (9), I will look into the ideational comparative politics literature. As for the primary focus of this thesis project, the individual party level, the relevant variables could very well be ideas of the individual politicians, party members, and factions. To follow the heuristic, I will review discussions on the role of ideas in politics at three levels: Political Culture, Political System, and Individual Institutions.

Berman's (2001) review article on "ideas, norms, and culture" focused on different works that discuss the matter of the role of ideas, norms, culture, and identity as explanatory variables (233). According to Berman, three questions were present: "First, how new ideas rise to political prominence, and why do individuals or groups trade old beliefs for new ones? Second, how do ideas become embedded in organizations, patterns of discourse, and collective identities, thereby taking on a life of their own separate from the original conditions that gave rise to them? Third, how do ideational variables influence political behavior? What specific causal pathways connect ideational variables to particular political outcomes?" (233).

Berman (2001) stated that the first question had received rather little attention due to scholars neglecting the relation of ideas with other factors, partly in reaction to materialist tradition which regards ideas as an epiphenomenon (233), and due to "a status quo bias" in the field which took the ideas, norms, and culture as pre-given parts of the political universe (234). Berman reacted to the first as ideas could be both dependent and independent variables, and "neither role need be considered dominant in the abstract" (233). The second was a matter of taking the actors producing and carrying the ideas seriously. Not investigating the supply side of the political idea-sphere might create an imbalance that laid too much emphasis on continuity in political life. For Berman, the strain of scholarship that focused on the statics was valuable in understanding "why political actors often remain stubbornly attached to traditional behavioral or decision-making patterns even when confronted with powerful (material) incentives to change course" (234). However, Berman found political life not constantly stable, and both continuity and change must be accounted or at the very least different types of variables should be taken into consideration (Ibid.).

Taking ideational variables into consideration revolved around some other questions: What were the root causes of ideational change? How new ideas were brought into the political space? Why did certain ideas rise to prominence, but others did not? (Berman, 2001: 234-6).

The question of root causes was answered in the field as “exogenous shock” or “gradual yet increasing disillusionment and slow-delegitimization of existing beliefs”, in other words, “dissatisfaction with or a recognition of the inadequacy of existing belief structures or behavioral patterns” (Berman, 2001: 234). Ultimately, political spaces opened up new ideas due to “changing material conditions” (235).

Questions of how and why, and which ideas were picked in place of the old were related and rested on relationships of actors, and functions of ideas. According to Berman ideas did not reach prominence by themselves but rest upon the power struggles among elite actors: “carriers or entrepreneurs, individuals or groups capable of persuading others” (Berman, 2001: 235) Berman noted two perspectives on that matter: “Marxists, rational choice theorists, and realists” who view “ideas as weapons, embraced and deployed by political actors for “goal achieving”, or to “justify and further self-interested agendas” on one hand, and others who took ideas as “road maps” guiding political actors in tumultuous times. From the perspective of the second group, ideas were means of adaptation or “flashlights” that guided actors (235). Another such role that was later discussed in the ideational approach literature was “coalition-magnets”: According to Beland and Cox (2015), ideas had capacities “to appeal to a diversity of individuals and groups, and to be used strategically by policy entrepreneurs[...] to frame interests, mobilize supporters and build coalitions” (2). These ideas were mostly “novel constructions”, either providing uncharted

territory for policy debates or opening paths for new usages. Beland and Cox designated three simultaneous conditions for coalition-magnets to be able to operate as independent variables: “Effective manipulation” of ideas by policy entrepreneurs who “seek a new language to define a policy problem”, adoption or promotion of such ideas by “key actors” who were individuals with authority in decision-making which in turn provides the coalition-magnet with authority in the eyes of the larger public, and finally, “coalition-magnets” being able to bring together actors in the policy-sphere whose ideas were formerly at odds or activate a new venue of thinking in the said actors who were not particularly engaged in the issue (Ibid).¹⁴ The functions of ideas as coalition magnets rested on two qualities: polysemicness and valence. “Polysemicness” stood for the ambiguity of an idea as it is taken up by many actors who attain different meanings to a certain idea. Polysemic ideas were better suited to create an appealing coalition than other “better defined” narrower ideas (5). The second quality of ideas as coalition magnets was “valence” or “attractiveness of an idea” (5). Ultimately, according to Beland and Cox, however ambiguous or attractive an idea increased (or decreased) the intrinsic ability of a coalition magnet to bring together a coalition, also depended on “the actions and framing activities of policy entrepreneurs” (5-6). For Beland and Cox, “framing” was the “process by which actors use their ideas and their power to influence discourse” and via framing “actors present their ideas, attempt to connect their ideas to important values, and strive to persuade others of the validity of their particular interpretation of ideas”. Actors push for success in broader acceptance of their ideas via framing. (4-5).

¹⁴ Beland and Cox (2015) used “solidarity”, “sustainability”, and “social inclusion” as their empirical cases (6-13).

Berman (2001) understood this process of why certain ideas were taken into a prominent position, via the notion of ideas having “political resonance”: One reason could be carriers of ideas that had potential in “resources, power, and political longevity” that would have allowed for ideas to get a “better, longer, or more respectful hearing” (235). Moreover, explaining the “backstory” or why some ideas got picked while others did not in terms of previous events that place them “in a position to influence politics” is a goal (233). Another issue is tackling “status quo bias built into much work” in the field, not only by not being satisfied with culture, norms, and ideas as given but also by taking the actors into account (234). According to Berman that point also made sense in terms of the issue of statics vs. change. Taking ideas, norms, and culture granted, while having an advantage in explaining “why political actors often remain stubbornly attached to traditional behavioral or decision-making patterns even when confronted with powerful (material) incentives to change course” had issues in capturing change. For Berman, ideational scholars should account for both change and continuity (236). Consequently, the power and influence of the carriers might not be sufficient, but the fitness of the idea via the environment (or context) was also influential (235-6). “One could even say that ideas can make history, but not just as they please, and only under circumstances found, given, and transmitted” (236).

“Packaging” or “framing” of “left of center” was an important part of the change in the RPP as it started to garner both the attention of the party grassroots, the youth, and the general public (Tütüncü Esmer, 2006). The “left of center” became a roadmap for a group of carriers in the RPP and became a coherent approach to change the RPP and engage in politics strategically. On one hand, Those actors provided “slogans” either derived from existing vernacular of the Turkish Left or

other parts of the world or made up. Either way, the carriers that took “left of center” seriously soon created their own words with “valence”. On the other hand, it was “polysemic” enough to attract actors with different degrees of left-leaning stance and act as a “coalition magnet”. These could include social democrats, union representatives, and socialists who in turn started to ideologically compete with each other after the “left of center” and became the dominant force in the RPP.

While some ideas rose to a position of influence to affect political life some disappeared, and some kept their influence over longer periods (Berman, 2001: 237). On that ground, Berman argued that “A crucial component of the ideational research program must therefore be the study of how and why ideas come to be associated over the long term with particular actors and can exert an extended impact over political life. It should reveal not least where the associations and impact of ideas could be manipulated or even changed” (238). Here reasons for an idea to rise to prominence and be institutionalized could be completely different. Therefore, the two should have been treated as two different stages in an ideational study. Still, Berman noted that institutionalized ideas taking a life of their own or separating from factors of their rise to prominence, could be an “intermediate stage in the ideational research program”: “To show how ideas, norms, and culture exert a powerful independent effect on outcomes we need sophisticated intermediate analyses of how ideas separate from the conditions that shape their emergence, become institutionalized and come to play an extended role of their own in political life” (238).

With “left of center” taking a life of its own via carriers, social democracy became a staple in Turkish polity. At least until the late-1970s social democrats managed to

keep a hold over the RPP and influence politics. However, after 1980 with the detrimental effects of the September 12th, 1980 Coup d'état the social democratic movement split. After 1980 the Turkish social democracy followed at least two tracks which had different paths taken until the mid-1990s. One followed the path of the charismatic leader of the RPP, Bülent Ecevit after 1980 (Kiniklioglu, 2000; 2002; Tachau, 2002). Another path took the majority of the former RPP cadres to Socialdemocratic Populist Party (Turan, 2006; Ayata and Güneş Ayata, 2007).

Berman's review and discussion provide important implications for all levels of the "swiss-cheese" heuristic: Especially for the political system and party system levels, which both relate to cultures and institutional frameworks which were set on norms and traditions, the existing venues of research require longitudinal studies which require to capture long term processes or latitudinal studies which require to present continuity and change caused by ideas over an entire political system or party system. As for the party level, the relationship between political party change and ideational variables could be understood in a much more tangible way as it focuses on actors such as party members, factions, and groupings.

Gauja (2017) approached the multiple levels in terms of agents and existing structures of the parties. Reflecting upon Harmel and Janda's (1994) work Gauja stated that party members could build a "coalition support" to overcome organizational resistance in parties. Crucial for studying such a possibility in a political party, was to take both "systemic drivers" and "actions of individuals and groups" into consideration rather than fully swinging towards a structural focus (14). Especially for understanding party change as a dynamic, "ideational and discursive aspects of the environment" required paying "attention to the discourse of reform and

hot actors within the party construct the narrative of change” (14). That point returned to an earlier reflection made by a scholar who studied “discrete change” in political parties that the ideas of the context or the environment mattered more in party change rather than the environment itself (15). Ultimately for Gauja, “The advantage of adopting a constructivist perspective, as well as drawing on the Swiss cheese heuristic, is that both these frames shift the analytical focus away from rather static exogenous/endogenous stimuli, emphasizing the importance of the discursive environment and the role of elite perceptions” (15).

Following both Berman and Gauja, it appears that the effect of ideas in institutional change should be studied at multiple levels taken into consideration, and focusing on how actors perceive environmental factors and act upon them. That means, research solely focusing on individual party level still needs to take other levels (political system and party system) into consideration. With the abovementioned points in mind, in the next section, I will approach the limited number of social democratic political party studies and mostly focus on a historical take with an ideational focus. With that, I will also try to present some key definitions required to understand the case at hand from a comparative perspective.

2.2.3 Social Democratic Parties

In this part, I will shortly present the key texts in social democracy literature. Esping-Andersen and van Kersbergen (1992) state in their review article on the state of the literature that social democracy means both a movement and its “achievements” (187). These achievements were “full employment and strong social citizenship”

which was predominantly studied and associated with Nordic countries, but also in the rest of the Western economies. At the time the social democratic movements were in a long decline since the 1973 crisis (202-4).

For the historical side of the development of social democracy, Berman's comparative work (1998; 2006; also see 2011) on European social democratic tradition is important. To enrich the discussion so far, I will focus solely on theoretical and methodological discussions (1998; 2011) and leave discussing tenants of social democracy to the next part. Berman strived to provide an account of ideas as independent variables in a comparative setting of German SPD and Swedish SAP (1998). According to Berman at the time of her study "historical and structural variables" were accepted as extremely constraining over "actual party decision making" (14). Berman's discussion there unfolds over the study of the differentiation and making of the social democracy in Europe around the turn of the 20th century in two different countries where different theoretical commitments to "orthodox-Marxism" produced two different outcomes (Berman, 2011: 108). The reason was the lack of political commitment to orthodox-Marxism of SPD or "primacy of economics". Over time its predictions failed to grasp the reality of capitalism, stayed politically passive, and were unable to keep its grassroots intact (109). This prompted revisionism, such as the violent revolutionary revolution of Lenin or the democratic revisionism of Bernstein (110).

Over several decades, some socialist parties tried to achieve their goals even with the protests from Marxist Second International for straying away from "class struggle" (Berman, 2011: 110-1). Marx himself had rejected democratic means of struggle for the worker's rights considering them "petty bourgeois" (Przeworski, 2020: 6-7).

However, following Bernstein's work democratic alternative or "class alliance" gained prominence over time significantly after the utter failure of the orthodoxy in the wake of WW1 (Berman, 2011: 116-8). According to Berman German social democratic movement was defeated due to an ideological conflict between the social democrats and the orthodox Marxists within the SPD preventing it from responding to the 1928 Crisis (118-9). Elsewhere in Sweden, where ideological commitments to Marx were not as tightly knit as in Germany, the SAP was able to champion an economic recovery program and communitarian values. This made them the only successful social democratic example before 1945 (121-3).

Smaldone (2009) offered a comparative account of the failure of German social democracy. The SPD leadership was among the most eligible left-wing leadership in the left's history. Yet their fates had been overdetermined, as they were crushed by the Nazis similarly to the Chilean case (253-4; 257). Although, a comparison regarding the reasons for failure for the failure of Turkish social democracy before 1980, Smaldone's comparison of Germany, Chile, Nicaragua, and South Africa is inspiring to take a comparative perspective seriously in this study. Four contextual similarities are striking, the existence of "antirepublican parties" operating via a democratic regime, "fear of civil war" firstly stopping a purge in the army and cutting the ties with "reactionary" elements in the larger entrepreneurial and agricultural elites, and secondly causing an overestimation of the neutrality of the "state" apparatus, ideological division in the labor movement, and limitations of coalitions (254-6). A similar case of failure for democratic socialist movements was noted in Chile (271). In Germany, Chile, and Nicaragua as "societies lacking minimal consensus, parliamentary democracy" worked as a "structural obstacle to the democratic socialist project" (271). The same problems existed in Turkey where

factionalism, even in violent forms, was a staple not only in parties but also in extreme-right and extreme-left movements in this period (White, 2020). Even in a center-left party with its own traditions violence was a part of politics, showing the reality of fragmentation and lack of adherence to the ideational discussion.

Eley (2002) provided a larger account of the European leftover *longue duree*. For him, “The history of the Left has been the struggle for democracy against systems of inequality that limit and distort, attack and repress, and sometimes seek even to liquidate human potential altogether” (XI). His work is significant for bringing in the gender dimension to understand the change in left-wing movements in Europe (4). Similar to Berman’s take, according to Eley, in 1848, “social democracy” “meant just the far left wing of the radical coalitions” (21). Starting in the 1860s Eley noted that “socialism was always the core of the Left, and the Left was always larger than socialism” and socialists started to engage in alliances (9). In 1960, socialists lost this hegemony, and “other radicalisms” made alliance-seeking more complicated. To this, socialists either responded by changing their programs to seek new allies or keeping to their ideologies and excluding significant groups (9). In Turkey, this trend was compressed into one or two decades. After 1960 a fledgling left-wing presence appeared to lack the experience of the left in Europe. To that end, the Turkish case is closer to those in the global south than in Europe.

Finally, Sandbrook, Edelman, Heller, and Teichman’s (2006) work,¹⁵ provides a major expansion of research the social democracy in other parts of the world. They consider Sri Lanka, Uruguay, Jamaica, Venezuela, Argentina, and Chile as

¹⁵ Also see: Sandbrook, Richard, Edelman, Marc, Heller, Patrick, Teichman Judith. “Can Social Democracies Survive in the Global South?”. *Dissent* 53(2). (2006). pp. 76-83. doi: [10.1353/dss.2006.0031](https://doi.org/10.1353/dss.2006.0031).

“interrupted” or “discontinuous” cases. Four cases of Kerala, Costa Rica, Mauritius, and Chile were studied in depth. (9; 16). Their case selection was based on the self-identification of the parties, and members or “consultative” parties in the Socialist International (16). The selected timeframe was mostly after 1980 and regarded both the heritage of colonialism and neoliberalism. However, the Turkish case is not mentioned in the discussion, whereas the RPP became a full member of the Socialist International in 1977 and fits with the designation of the case selection of Sandbrook et. al.¹⁶

For Sandbrook, Edelman, Heller, and Teichman (2006) the social democratic parties in the global south were “divergent” from the core European cases of social democracy. These were at disadvantage due to being on the periphery of the global economy. Secondly, the sequencing of “industrialization, democratization, and social citizenship” tended to “overlap” in the cases in the global periphery (19) as these were late-industrializing countries or outright former colonies. This meant that “pursue class compromises before a productive capitalism has generated a strong material base, and in the context of a heterogeneous and differentiated class structure” (19). These movements strived to promise “demands of equality and social citizenship” together. The poor were “heterogenous” and usually disorganized, living in rural areas or working in the “informal sector”. In such environments, class compromises tended to be more fragile (21).

Three types of social democratic movements were designated depending on “concepts” of “equity”, “democratic participation” and “role of the state in guiding the market forces”: Radical, Classical, and “Third Way” (Sandbrook, Edelman,

¹⁶ Muammer Aksoy had written a deatil book over the matter. See: Aksoy, Muammer. *Sosyalist Enternasyonal ve CHP*, İstnabul: Tekin Yayinevi, 1977.

Heller, and Teichman, 2006: 25). Radical social democratic movements (as in Kerala and West Bengal) work over long periods among “workers, peasants, and small farmers, and sectors of the urban middle classes” and aim to reduce inequality via land reforms, extensive labor rights, and welfare benefits, and even public ownership (26). The classical type thought of equity in terms of “universal and comprehensive welfare” and focused on job creation. Consensus in labor relations and state’s involvement in the markets, “Thus, the consensus tolerates persistent differentials in wealth and accepts the inviolability of private property (perhaps following an initial redistribution) as the price of economic dynamism” (27). These models were often confused with “populist and corporatist regimes”. What differentiated populism from social democracy was the “personalistic relationship” and reliance on “informal organizations” in creating ties with parts of the electorate putting them in a subordinate position. Populists rely on clientelism to create such subordinate positions “rather than policy appeals, for support among the urban poor, peasants, and workers.” Social democrats rely on programmatic class alliances and less on “clientelism, personalistic ties, and charismatic leaders”. A key difference is policy orientation and institutionalization (28).

Two issues must be taken into consideration: The Turkish case had exact problems regarding widespread clientelism in the rural areas and had problems with tackling it over the 1970s (Güneş Ayata, 2010). Still, during the period of party change between 1965-1973, the social democrats in the RPP tried to move past this heritage with their programmatic efforts. The RPP fitted somewhere close to the “classical” type with some “radical” twists in their programmatic orientations. Starting with labor reform in 1963 the RPP defended decentralized participation of the labor force in production, as well as called for a land reform significantly in the eastern and

southeastern parts of Turkey where inequality over land was higher (CHP, 1969; 1973).

As Kılıçdaroğlu's (2021) research showed same problems regarding clientelism persist today (608). However, as presented above social democratic parties try to get rid of the root causes of clientelism via programmatic strategies (Sandbrook, Edelman, Heller, and Teichman, 2006: 28). Arguably this means that social democratic ideas as roadmaps are directly suited for dealing with clientelism via organizing institutional means of redistribution, formulated as ideas in party programs.

One way of doing this was to come to terms with the “burdens of the past” for Sandbrook, Edelman, Heller, and Teichman (2006). A key factor was an “early and deep”, dependent integration to global markets as social democracy could not survive traditional quasi-feudal relations or peasant populations relying on clientelistic relations (30). Social democracy, therefore, was dependent on a demarcation from the “past political practices” and “promotes participatory democracy, challenges the special privileges of powerful groups, and builds a class compromise supportive of social justice” (35). For the global south, these factors were mostly prompted by colonialism. Structural poverty and inequality, clientelism, corporatism (40; 46-7), and regional, ethnic, cultural, and class fragmentation (44) were among the “burdens” in the global south.

In the case of Turkey, the RPP had to address and tackle two additional problems caused by its history: Secular-religious cleavage prompted by revolutions in the early republican period of the RPP and the burden of 1960 Military intervention which had been associated by RPP opponents and the general public. To that end, the RPP's

reformists came up with a strategy that tried to end polarization on the religious front for them in 1969, which also distanced the party from the military. Next year the General Secretary of the party reasserted that point and moved away from polarizing attitudes against religiosity, completely distanced itself from putschist elements in the intelligentsia, and declared that the only way for “revolutions” was the democratic parliamentary process. In 1971, when the Turkish Armed Forces intervened in civilian politics (successfully) for the second time in Republican history, the RPP leadership split. The left-wing coalition of the party made everything in its power to distance itself from the Army.

Ultimately, the case of RPP during the cold-war period appears as an extremely understudied “divergent” case in the social democracy literature. As this thesis project is focused on the change of RPP into a “social democratic developmentalist” party from a non-Marxist or national developmentalist party, it will only be able to provide an introduction of the case to this literature. However, this does not mean the case of the RPP should not be considered outside the general family of social democratic parties. Both RPP and its successors after the 1980s (apart from the case of the Democratic Left Party until 2009) have considered themselves members of this group, therefore this case has much to offer to the research on global social democracy (Ugur Cinar & Acikgoz, Forthcoming; Ugur Cinar, Acikgoz, and Esen, n.d.).

2.2.4 Turkish Studies Literature

To show the importance of the case of the RPP, I need to further delve into Turkish Studies literature where I can better exemplify the value of the lessons of the comparative literature on party change, ideas, and social democracy. I approach the

literature on two fronts. One group constitutes party studies or descriptive historical works that focus on the period of party change selected for this research. There are both academic and journalistic works in this group. The second group shows itself over “critical” tendencies and follows two paradigms that dominate the study of the Turkish left: Marxism and Post-Kemalism. In this group, I will take the academic and encyclopedical sources of the discussion for the most part. Apart from some notable examples, the literature lacks a comparative perspective or in general, focuses on the explanation of statics rather than change.

In the first group, Kili’s work (1976) stands the test of time as an undeniable benchmark in the literature. The work provides a detailed account of RPP’s history from its founding up until 1975. This work is most valuable since it provides some of the lost archives of the RPP¹⁷ and points to primary sources. I was able to trace these sources to some extent thanks to Kili. Güneş Ayata’s works (1995; 2002; 2010) also serve as important sources of the contextual history of the RPP. Her work on the grassroots of RPP in the 1970s was useful for context, although proved to focus on a later period than the time frame of my thesis. Emre (2013; 2014a; 2014b) focused on the transformation of the RPP in the early 1960s and parts of the late 1960-1970s. These are theoretically informed but still, historical works that are quite valuable to understanding the context and relationship of RPP with actors in the rest of the party system and political system.

Tachau's (2002) and Karpat’s (1966) works are extremely important classics. Bilâ’s (1987) journalistic account over several iterations, is still a helpful source. Uyar’s (2000, 2017a; 2017b), work is a methodological achievement for the period of 1950-

¹⁷ The RPP’s archives were destroyed on the orders of the Junta of 12th September 1980 Coup, along with other parties’ archives.

1960. However, the part on the 1960s (2017b) lacks engagement with RPP's official sources for the most part. Rather it relies on journalistic material that is available online. A significant aspect of this work is its polemical tone against Ecevit. Kaya's (2021) monograph on the history of the RPP Youth Branches is also a key addition to literature filling a much-needed hole in the RPP's history. Tütüncü Esmer's (2006) work, albeit a bit outdated still valuable as it provides a good source of propaganda and slogans for the RPP during the Cold War period. Kılıç's (2020) and Şendal's (2020) articles, and Koç's (2014; 2017) work show that there is an interest rising among historians of Turkish politics and RPP. Fedayi (2004), and Fedayi and Çelik (2012), also provided examples of descriptive work over RPP's history. Erdem's (2012) comparison of policy prescriptions provides a most valuable addition to the literature. Apart from the works of Kili and Güneş Ayata most of this group are descriptive historical works that have rare engagement with theoretical literature. Both Kili, Emre, and Ayata's works focus on other aspects of political science, such as modernization, clientelism, and patronage respectively.

The second group consists of two separate sets of literature that share a similar goal: Critical engagement with the RPP and its actors. Although the leftist tendencies create overlaps between those perspectives, and a focus on Kemalism as the explanatory variable is common, there are some theoretical differences between the two kinds of literature. The two differ, according to their ideological dispositions. Some follow post-Kemalism as a paradigm. Others, follow Marxist literature. I will shortly categorize this part of the literature and then engage critically with them via the lessons of the comparative literature. Both groups predominantly focus on Bülent Ecevit and his brand of politics as the single representative actor of the RPP and its ideas (Erdoğan, 1998; Kahraman, 1999; Yaşlı, 2020; Çolak, 2016). Some keep to

ideological themes, such as “left of center”, social democracy, and populism. The key common denominator is the reduction of ideas from the actors of the RPP to epiphenomenon. This is either done via explaining the matter via reducing them to a diminished form of “leftism” or to ideas carried by actors around WPT, significantly İdris Küçükömer.

The post-Kemalist current in the literature focused on portraying political parties as monolithic beings and understood party politics via statics. The key perspective used for this was Mardin’s (1973) “center-periphery framework” (Aytürk, 2015; Yardımcı Geyikçi and Esen, 2022: 441-2). Mardin’s thesis explained Turkish politics via a master cleavage of center and periphery. Accordingly, the elites of the center curbed the movement from the periphery to the center. This was an unchanging trend since the times of the Ottoman Empire and at the time was represented by the RPP and the bureaucrats at the center, and the ideological outsiders such as Kurds and the Islamists (445-447). Later scholarship had shown that this framework was not explanatory of the political developments in the 1970s as the RPP was successful even if it was designated as the party of the center (446-7; Bakiner, 2018: 9).

Arguably, Mardin’s (1973) prognosis in his seminal article on “Center-Periphery Relations” failed to grasp the reality of party change in the RPP a year after:

“All of the protests mounted by the Republican People's Party that it was the real Party of change, and the real supporter of democratic procedures were thus lost. Even the latest appeal of a faction of the Party to "populism"-an attempt to get down to the grass roots- dissipated, because the issue was not so much getting down to the grass roots as providing an alternative means of fundamental change. The grass roots had no confidence in the progressive,

democratic, and populist policies outlined in the various electoral program of the Republican People's Party because it placed no confidence in its methods of change” (186).

The RPP was split at the top of the leadership level due to an external shock in the form of military intervention in civilian politics. Unlike what Mardin saw, other figures than Ecevit had resisted Chairperson’s “regime guardianship” behavior, as in allowing the military to operate via the Centrists in the RPP to save the parliamentary process from being utterly ended. The LoC Faction was still able to keep its hold over the Party Centrum and in turn over the significant majority of the RPP’s local organizations. With the efforts of the LoC Movement members, the presence of opposition did not “dissipate” in the RPP, a significant portion of party cadres had resisted the Chairperson. In a year, what came to an end was the decades-old tenure of the chairperson. Still, the RPP was considered “the party of the center” by commentators in this current (Yardımcı Geyikçi and Esen, 2022: 448).

One adherent of the center-periphery framework, Kahraman, accepted that the RPP acted as a representative of the periphery (Yardımcı Geyikçi and Esen, 2022: 448). In his dissertation on social democracy from within a “structural” perspective, Kahraman defined the RPP and social democracy as a “nationalist and parochial political ideology” not getting much of an influence from the “universal norms of social democracy” and “Kemalism” as the official ideology of the state “has always acted as constitutive of Turkish social democratic ideology” (Kahraman, 1999: 3-4). Neither for Chairperson İnönü nor General Secretary Ecevit, “left of center” constituted a clear break and move towards universal social democracy (114-5; 119; 137). While Ecevit accepted the notion of class according to Kahraman, (133) it was

mostly relying on one of the Kemalist principles of “populism” [halkçılık] (132) and rather than envisioning a clear break with the “structure”, it wanted to rebuild a new “structure” (141-2).

Another figure in the literature whose arguments are used to explain Ecevit and the Left of Center is İdris Küçükömer. Küçükömer was a member of the WPT and in 1969 wrote a book called *Düzenin Yabancılaşması: Batılaşma* (1969). The book was written as an attack on the RPP and its Chairperson İnönü. Its entirety was devoted to the critique of İnönü’s position on the left of the center, and claimed that İnönü was in league with the military to reacquire office as leader of the “historical leader” of the “historical front of westernist-secular bureaucrats”. The only reference to Ecevit portrayed him as an “alone” person “outside” İnönü’s so-called alliance with the army to topple the WPT, and come to power (160). None of Ecevit’s works at the time were neither discussed nor (openly) referred to.

Küçükömer’s book became a staple in providing explanations of the left of center after his death in 1987 (Ağtaş, 2008; Özyüksel, 2016; Yaşlı, 2020). In recent years this was taken with the additional argument that Ecevit had great inspiration from Küçükömer (Günay, 2008; Hocoğlu, 2019; Uçkan, 2021).¹⁸ This argument was first uttered by Akat as Ecevit had inspiration from Küçükömer about the discussion on “Asiatic Mode of Production” and such ideas were visible in Ecevit’s texts before his tenure as General Secretary of the RPP, and the main figure for the ideology of “left of center” was Turan Güneş (Akat, 1991: 202-3). Akat’s claim was made during his days in the Social Democratic Populist Party and Ecevit was the chief rival of that party with his, Democratic Leftist Party. Günay (2020) carried the second part of the

¹⁸ Taşkın, (2022) makes the same point without uttering Küçükömer, about Ecevit. Still the link with Islamic populism is uncanny. (420).

argument to imply that left-wing ideas were first brought to the RPP via Freedom Party in the late 1950s (76; 147).

One problem with these claims is an anachronism. Ecevit's inspiration for "Asiatic Mode of Production", was from novelist Kemal Tahir who started the discussion in the mid-1960s (Emre, 2019: 124-5).¹⁹ However, Küçükömer's (1977) article on the topic appeared more than a decade after Ecevit's election as General Secretary in 1966. The second problem is about Güneş's role after 1966 and FP's influence on the RPP in general. Güneş was not present during the founding meetings of the LoC Movement and kept his distance from the group until the 18th Congress in 1966. Moreover, a claim by Güneş provided an alternate explanation for the intellectual effects of the Freedom Party, that the role of the Freedom Party was intentionally exaggerated to smooth out potential problems of party merger with the RPP (Simav, 1975: 68). It seems, that the literature followed the bandwagon of Akat's anachronism on Küçükömer and an unsupported claim about Güneş's role and extended it to a reduction of the ideas of the RPP to the FP-RPP merger.

This was no coincidence, Akat's iteration of the "truth" about the rise of "left of center" was to "choose one among [ideational] interpretations" which "opens space for politics" (Béland and Cox, 2011: 4). Similarly, this type of claim of influence over ideas of the RPP's actors existed as early as 1969 among the prominent political actors of WPT, such as Mehmet Ali Aybar and Çetin Altan (Uyar, 2017b: 329; Ünsal, 2019: 248). Such claims allowed them to compete against the RPP and the "left of center" by portraying ideas articulated via the RPP, as an epiphenomenon of WPT's politics. Küçükömer's work in 1969 is a prime example of such

¹⁹ Emre (2019) repeats the dating mistake of Küçükömer's contribution to "Asiatic Mode of Production" discussion (123).

competition.²⁰ The problem of this set of literature then is the reduction of ideas of a significant part of the Turkish left (specifically the RPP) to an epiphenomenon following the narratives of the WPT elite. For academic work, such adherence to narratives of political competitors comes at the price of disregarding significant chunks of history on one side, to raise the other on the pedestal. Rather what needs to be done is rigorous testing and acceptance that such competitive relationships in politics usually affect all sides to some extent, and needed to be verified by empirical evidence such as votes (Harmel and Svåsand, 1997: 137; Adams, 2012: 414).

A similar argumentation regarding the influence of larger socialist movements such as *Yön* and the WPT is emphasized throughout the literature when explaining the utterance of the “left of center” in 1965 (Kili, 1976; Emre, 2014a; Uyar, 2017b, Tütüncü Esmer, 2006) and some narratives (Öner, 1976). This makes sense on two levels: First is the level of political culture. During the first half of the 1960s, the RPP appeared as a passive player for the most part in the development of the larger left-wing culture in Turkey. This apathy towards the rise of the left helped broke down the dominance of existing ideas within the RPP in 1965. As argued in the literature one of the influences was competition from the WPT. However, it should be noted that the empirical evidence also suggests the competition on the right by the Justice Party was perhaps even more immediate in influencing İnönü’s sudden articulation of “left of center”. Moreover, the approaches of the RPP’s left-wing and the WPT leadership to the left-wing ideas, and subsequent policy prescriptions were fundamentally different (Erdem, 2012). In this work, I will try to build on this discrepancy between the literature and the data and offer a revisionist account of the

²⁰ One interesting fact was connection of Kamil Kırıkoğlu, who was deputy for and member of the left-wing coalition in the RPP and a future competitor of Ecevit, with Küçükömer while his book was being prepared (Küçükömer, 1994: 134).

ideological change in the RPP in the second half of the 1960s. I will do this by focusing on the endogenous change in the RPP.

Another major theme in the studies that focus on “left of center” or chiefly Ecevit, the theme of “populism” (Erdoğan, 1998; Çolak, 2016; Alper, 2008; Ağtaş, 2008; Bora, 2017; Yaşlı, 2020; Taşkın, 2020). This branch of literature started with the work of Erdoğan, (1992) who approached the issue via the theories of Laclau and Gramsci. This strain of literature stayed on this course ever since Erdoğan's work in the 1990s.²¹ He defined populism “as an ideological discourse characterized by” antagonistic articulation of popular identities via the dominant power bloc, an antagonism of “us vs. them”, the adulation of the “virtues of the ‘people’”, and mobilization of the masses by a charismatic leader with “an unmediated, plebiscitarian relationship” (2-3). His study was aimed to study the failure of “*Ecevitçilik*” (6). His comparative cases for populism were “Thatcherism” and “fascism” (19). Erdoğan's study had a detailed approach to Ecevit's texts, albeit not according to chronology. For Erdoğan, *Ecevitçilik* was a hegemonic project that did not include “autonomous and organized participation of (42) the popular masses into the political practice” and it reduces the points of antagonism in society to a singular axis between two poles of contradiction in the society (42-3) For Erdoğan, populism was not a set of ideas, and implied image politics and presentation of political self (43). Erdoğan's study ultimately rests on an *ex post facto* stretching of the RPP's failure to explain the advent of “left of center”, from 1965 onwards.

²¹ For recent literature that discusses the link of Ecevit and populism see: (Ugur Cinar & Acikgoz, Forthcoming); Boyraz, Cemil. “Populism and Democracy in Turkey: The Case of the Republican People's Party”. *Reflektif* 1(1) (2020). pp. 31-47. doi: 10.47613/reflektif.2020.1.

Recent scholarship on populism found such a conception of populism problematic. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, (2018) try to provide an explanatory approach to the term populism via a study of ideas. Populism is in connection with a “host ideology” that allows the populist to define an absolute difference between “the pure people” and “the corrupt elite”. The line was drawn at the “popular will” that ultimately leads to “procedural democracy”. Therefore one of the key factors to designate populists is to look at acts against liberal democracy (1670). Similarly, Sandbrook, Edelman, Heller, and Teichman’s (2006) warning about differentiating the populists and social democrats over institutionalism and policy orientation is useful (28).

To that end, the usage of “populism” is not useful as an analytical tool to explain party change in the RPP. There are certain reasons for it: First and foremost, although Erdoğan (is right) in pointing at the existence of discourses that define “a people” and “a corrupt elite” in antagonism between 1965-1973, the institutional and policy orientation of the carriers in the RPP, including Ecevit, is too strong to be dismissed as populism. The Left of Center Movement/Faction operated through RPP’s official channels and semi-official organizations that had clear demarcation lines in their operations. Party policies were always based on constitutional grounds. Secondly, Ecevit in this period Ecevit had not been the charismatic leader of the RPP. In other words, Ecevit was not “*Karaoğlan*” yet (Tachau, 2002; Erdoğan, 1998). Until leadership change in 1972 Ecevit had not yet developed his charismatic outlook. He had not established his blue shirt, simple cap clothing. Therefore, I will bracket out explanations regarding “populism” within the limitations of this study.

Both sides of the “critical” literature, therefore, suffer from “essentialism” that reduces the case of social democracy in Turkey between 1965-1980 to either the

ideas of its rivals or shallower forms of “genuine left”. As Gencoglu Onbasi (2016) wrote:

“The anti-essentialist approach of radical democracy to the question of the relations between political identities, with its stress on undecidability and the impossibility of their constitution as full totalities, can be the keystone of radical social democracy. It paves the way for the argument that ‘the open and incomplete character of every social identity permits its articulation to different historico-discursive formations ... [and] this eliminates any reference to a transcendental or origivative subject’ (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001: 100). So, social democrats may well take this advantage to combat the criticism that today’s social democracy is not ‘the real social democracy’” (Gencoglu Onbasi, 2016: 106).

Similarly, the same logic could be applied to the historical case of RPP’s change into a social democratic party, going past the traditional reductions of being an epiphenomenon of “genuine left”.

Both strains of research have a key methodological problem. They are produced after 1980 and lack the proper archival material in their subject the RPP. The literature is therefore limited to a smaller universe where Bülent Ecevit appears as the “chief” and single carrier of the RPP’s ideas. This methodological problem is also combined with paradigmatic, and theoretical questions of the day. For example, Kahraman’s (1999) “structural” work, criticized Kili’s historical work over periodization and engaging in historical research. For him, Kili had “difficulty” separating “the realms of history” and “political” (19). In turn what could be said for both strains of research (and those following *only* the narratives of WPT members) that they were ahistorical

takes that tried to provide its continuity with “Kemalism” or tried to portray social democratic ideas of Ecevit (and by reduction others) as diminished forms of leftism or populism. Such approaches to the study of RPP were problematic for their empirical shallowness.²²

2.2.5 Aim

In this chapter, I have provided a detailed picture of the state of the art, while I brought in the ideas as an independent variable over party change as a “reason” for party change following party goals. Accordingly, parties gradually and sometimes discretely change themselves per the ideas of key actors or carriers. When taken seriously as explanandum, these ideas chiefly serve as both the means of rationalization for understanding their environment as “causal beliefs”. In a world of imperfect information, actors make sense and compete over control over parties. Moreover, ideas serve as road maps that open or limit new paths (path contingency) for conscious party reform, allow for alliance-making as “coalition-magnets” and pursue party goals, significantly allowing to seek votes. Ideas empower their carriers who in turn still operate within the confines of their environment. Ideas also allow actors to shift the identities of parties by giving them “facelifts” or amending their policy prescriptions, platform, and programs.

Such ideas are key for social democratic parties who traditionally sought to make alliances in their societies. These ideas also allowed those parties to come to terms with their environments and their past or in other words, address the “burdens of the past”. These are environmental limitations over the actors. These limitations also

²² Sanlı’s (2021) take on early ideas of Ecevit is a very good example of how empirical dedication could counteract methodological shallowness.

limit the actions of parties as already conservative beings. However, ideas serve may serve as causes rather than mere outcomes of change by actors. As causes, they allow actors to change their parties and engage in politics in novel ways.

The case of RPP between 1965-1973 is a deviant case in terms of both the party change and ideational approach literature which chiefly focus on Western examples when explaining the party change and the role of ideas. This research focused on a case on very different grounds. The Turkish party system had only and partially welcomed left-wing politics in the early 1960s. Very soon it had to face the effects of the global upheaval in 1968. Among inexperience and a context already prone to factionalism, the social democratic actors in the RPP had to work in a very limiting environment to change their party, due to anti-communism of the right and the state actors, and radicalism of the left. Meanwhile, the RPP itself had a plethora of conservative forces that resisted change in their party's policy entrepreneurship, strategy, and identity. Even then actors in the RPP managed to present their ideas appealingly to the public which managed to bring about coalitions and recruits to the movement, as well as new votes for the party.

This case is important for showing that even within detrimental environments for ideational discussion, ideas can work to allow actors to change and start reforming their environment. This does not mean that the change was limitless. On the contrary, in the case of RPP whereas the actors of change who were also carriers of social democratic ideas, soon faced the limitations of their environment. As they were able to change the identity, policy prescriptions, and cadres of their party, they were only able to bring limited change to their organization itself. Furthermore, factionalism over leftist ideology soon surfaced in the RPP with the influx of a group of actors

who had far-left socialization. Therefore, the case of RPP's party change is a key case for studying party change caused by ideas to show its mechanisms and limits.

One further point that needs to be addressed is the lack of the case of the RPP within the global research on the historical family of social democratic parties. The RPP represented a divergent case not only for its place outside the European family of social democracies but also within the context of social democracies within the global south. In this research project, I have focused on a single case, and therefore I fail to deliver a comparison of the RPP and other cases of social in the global south. Rather, I aim at providing an account of the transformation of a "national developmentalist party" transforming into a "social democratic developmentalist party" via party change driven by social democratic ideas. This way I hope that I will be able to introduce the Turkish case to research circles in detail to pave way for future research (also see: Ugur Cinar and Acikgoz, Forthcoming; Ugur Cinar, Acikgoz and Esen, n.d.).

The final point regarding the importance of studying this case concerns Turkish studies literature, significantly, studies of the left-wing politics in Turkey. The change in the RPP after 1965 is studied as an epiphenomenon of the rise of the larger Turkish left. I will argue that it is possible to provide an alternative account that explains the party change in the RPP between 1965 and 1973 via endogenous factors. My aim here is to show that the RPP and actors associated with it could and should be taken into consideration as a unit of analysis.

CHAPTER III: HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF PARTY CHANGE IN THE RPP

This chapter aims to provide the context and prelude of the case of party change in the CHP. In terms of the goals of this thesis project, it focuses on placing the initial efforts and limitations of the ideas' effect on party change in the case of the RPP between 1966 and 1973.

With the organizational change, I denote changes in the RPP's structure and organization: By-law changes regarding organizational structure, organizational expansion such as Youth and Women's Branches, research or technical bodies, alliances with the labor movement, and changes regarding financial sources of the RPP. In this subchapter, I will also provide a case of failed reform in the party body. Moreover, I carry the discussion of major changes in party cadres apart from factional changes and party reform of cadres as exemplified by the case of İstanbul Local Branch.

The Ideational Theory for The Left of Center

Arguably, the chief effect of ideas was around carriers and their rivals who had vied for control of the RPP. Efforts for intra-party education and expansion of social democratic values to youth and the voters had been curbed by internal conservatism, and external pressures of anticommunist actors before 1972 and again after 1973 due to factionalism.

However, before providing a historical account for the idea of “left of center” in the RPP I need to address the need to provide an “ideational theory”. Going back to Berman’s (2001) questions for the formula of an ideational theory: (1) Are there real differences between the ideas held by different individuals or groups, and do they imply different policy choices on the part of those who hold them? (2) “Is it possible to establish a plausible connection between these differences and decisions made by political actors? [3] Did the relevant ideas predate the decisions being explained? [4] Is it impossible to deduce the specific content of the ideas from knowledge of some other observable variable in the system at the time the decision was made?” (Berman 2001: 22).

I will answer the fourth question by providing a short history of the discussions around the term “left of center” before the 1965 General Elections to provide its distinctive place in the Turkish polity. Henceforth I will be able to show the difference in sources for the ideas of the LoC Faction. As for the first and the second questions I will address them with a discussion over party goals and issue variables as it is the best way to provide differences in behavior due to ideational differences. Such differences are especially meaningful, within the context of my answer to the third question, retelling how the LoC Movement came together and started to

formulate its decisions. The answer is also tied to the process of preparation of the electoral strategy for the 1969 General Elections. This preparation period involved work in the RPP Centrum, and experience of travels of the carriers of the left-wing ideas, and ultimately rested on coming to terms with the “burdens of history” for the RPP. The result was a change in the RPP’s new identity which was further solidified in 1972. Finally, I present the effects of the “coalition-magnet” effect of “left of center” via a discussion of the alliance with the labor movement and its end with the “social democracy” vs “democratic left” debate. Consequently, the identity of the RPP was changed to the point of no return as Erim complained to Chairperson İnönü on the 8th of August 1970: “What is that Congress declaration? What is Ecevit’s words in the last few days? The RPP is losing the party identity I believe in and all this happens while you are at the helm” (Erim, 2021: 944; also see: Vassallo and Wilcox, 2006: 414; Adams, 2012: 412-4)

Two expectations of Berman over “path contingency” is valid for the rest of the chapter.

“[I]deational explanations predict that a particular actor will make similar choices over time, even as the environment changes” (Berman, 2001: 32).

“Ideational explanations predict, therefore, that actors with different ideas will make different decisions, even when placed in similar environments.” (33).

3.1 Party Change in the RPP: 1950-1960

The party change, in the RPP in this early period, could be understood as a series of reactions to external shocks, and internal efforts of party reform, rather than following a clear ideational path. The internal change in the RPP was mostly due to a

reaction of the party grassroots to the apathy of the RPP leadership coalition to intolerable electoral results. This did not mean that there was no change in terms of ideas. The RPP started to expand its electoral platform promises to the working class and found the first youth and women's branches in the history of Turkish politics around the 1954 General Elections. After this date, due to the rising authoritarianism of the Democratic Party as a severe change in the political environment, the RPP started to receive an influx of new members. A group of newcomers to the RPP was also present in the intellectual life and discussed new political ideas in the *Forum* magazine. This group gave the RPP a new effort in policy-making. The RPP solidified its policy stance and identity against the authoritarianism of the DP with the "Declaration of Primary Aims". What the RPP accomplished was to increase its competitive edge against the DP. However, the starting point of this change was not an idea. The factional friction in the RPP between İsmet İnönü and Kasım Gülek did not appear due to ideational differences but due to local interests. Moreover, Gülek did not engage in an ideational change with the help of a coalition that tried to adopt new ideas and associated with strategies, new policies or a new identity.

In this subchapter, I have opted to follow "critical events" prompted by such as external shocks: Namely the 1950 Elections and the 1954 Elections. Overall, the developments in the RPP in this period set some limitations, or "historical burdens" on its politics after 1960, and its change after 1965. To present those, I first will showcase a procession of institutional change in the CHP between 1946 and 1950. Then I will focus more thematically between 1950 and 1960, in terms of norms, organization, factions, and issue variables (most significantly redistribution of wealth, and relations with the civil society (i.e., trade unions)).

In a little more time than a decade, the RPP slowly reformed itself from a “national-developmental” party with limited organizational capacity (Esen, 2014: 601). The RPP evolved from its single-party status and slowly became a modern competitive political party by 1960. It recast its by-laws, program, electoral platforms, and organizational scope.

The founders of the RPP and the Republic of Turkey, opted to establish ties with local notables [eşraf] (Uyar, 2000) and increasingly rely on “state guardianship” that placed the Minister of Interior as RPP’s general secretary, and provincial governors as the local party chairpersons (Esen, 2014: 611).²³ The status of the RPP was an instrument of the state, as “the single party of the regime” (Emre, 2014a: 42) local party branches were weak. Combined with the elevated status of Atatürk and later (to a lesser extent) İnönü, as undisputable “chiefs” [şef], (Uyar, 2000: 14) and the inability of party sections, such as the “independent group” (Müstakil Grup), the RPP’s outlook until the end of WW2 was of a single party regime that relied intensely on the charisma (11), and authoritarian state power (Emre, 2014a: 42). However, with the end of WW2, and rising internal factions against the existing policies of the RPP governments, RPP’s chairperson İnönü changed course towards democratization. This would prompt a series of events that prompted the party change in the RPP, changing the internal power structure and organizational expansion.

Overall, the RPP engaged in party reform to survive in a new competitive environment. In other words, the RPP had to learn to compete. External shocks and subsequent internal factional disputes were the drives for the party change. However,

²³ The union of state and party came to an end in 1939 (Emre, 2014a: 42)

the effects of the ideational variables were very limited, due to factional friction based on personal differences or conflicts of interests regarding vote and office-seeking. One set of programmatic changes in the late 1940s was first an effort in keeping “regime guardianship/consolidation” at the forefront. Starting with the electoral defeat of 1950 “vote/office maximizing” goal was further activated, as party leadership engaged in party expansion to women and youth, alliance-forming behavior with other parties within the party system, and labor unions in the following years. After and in the final round in the late 1950s could be attributed to the ideational efforts of the youngest generation of the RPP at the time. And these were, much like similar efforts in the education sector and land reform in the late 1940s, unrealized in this period due to internal resistance from the party, and also since the RPP was not in power. In addition, most issues were resolved via the charisma of the chairperson rather than an openly presented idea that could bring about a meaningful coalition.

Foundations of Party Change and Anti-communism: Road to 1950

The beginning of the party change in the RPP had its roots in the transition to the multi-party regime in Turkey which started in 1945-1946. The RPP at the time was in power for 22 years. Turkey had not experienced a change in power via free and fair elections between 1908 and 1950. On one hand, the chairperson of RPP, İsmet İnönü, with the end of WW2 started to steer the political regime from a single-party rule to a multi-party regime with elections. On the other hand, The RPP would have had to adapt to the new regime and the new reality. This would be a long and tumultuous process. The RPP was a party that relied on an elite pact that extended its power mostly in the urban areas directly, and in the rural areas with the inclusion of

local notables into the party with clientelist ties (Güneş Ayata, 2010: 67-8). Another aspect of that single-party elite pact was the existence of several factions within the CHP. However, during the years of WW2, under the strict institutional authoritarianism of İnönü, the elite pact would have started to crumble (Güneş Ayata, 2010: 73-5). Moreover, especially in the urban areas such as İstanbul and Ankara the far-left and the far-right were forming. Those rifts were seemingly caused by ideological differences, as well as foreign policy preferences. İnönü governments followed a ‘balance of power’ policy²⁴ between the factions and prominent members of the RPP. The regime change took place in the early days of the Cold War, and certain figures fell from grace or outright rebelled.

Starting with Spring 1945, a group in the RPP led by Celal Bayar presented counterpoints to the party policy line on land reform and openly took the position of an intra-party opposition. İsmet İnönü encouraged at that point for the opponents to find a new party. Four notable breakaways of RPP, Bayar, Fuad Köprülü, Refik Koraltan and Adnan Menderes found the Democratic Party [*Demokrat Parti*, DP] in January 7th 1946 (Zürcher, 2019: 246-7; Ahmad, 2015: 30-1; Birand, Dündar, & Çaplı, 1993: 28-9; 33-4).

Two forces came into play in the multi-party era change of the RPP: It being the party in power for more than two decades, as a push factor, and the internal desire for change as a pull factor. Several RPP members already wanted to bring ideological change by bringing class politics in (Ahmad 2015: 34). Which was a reaction to DP’s alleged class connections.²⁵ Some other RPP members wanted to adhere to “peasants,

²⁴ Aytürk likened that to a sort of political “juggling” (Aytürk, 2021: 105).

²⁵ Both Karpat (1966: 178), and Ahmad (2015: 34), noted that the DP had mainstream appeal to the businessman with its market-oriented economy program. However, it must also be noted that

workers, small farmers, and small businessmen”. Ahmad argued, that such efforts turned problematic for the RPP after 1950, but in 1946 the RPP directed some of its campaigns at the peasantry (34).

Still, the 1946 General Elections would have culminated in a conflict between the DP and the RPP. Bureaucracy on the other hand kept a steady hard hand over the newly flourishing opposition. In the end, the snap elections on the 21st of July 1946 would have been a clear, yet disgraceful victory for the RPP, causing many sympathizers to retract their support for the RPP (Ahmad 2015: 37). In government, RPP cabinets saw several consecutive prime ministers in Recep Peker, Hasan Saka, and Şemseddin Günaltay, representing the transition of policy decision-making from authoritarians to conservatives within the RPP. That trend was both an internal conflict over the transition to multi-party politics, as exemplified by the dismissal of Peker, and the conservative faction of the RPP’s “reaction” or perhaps “revision” to “revolutions” of the single-party period in Günaltay.

Most important of the three, Peker manifested an internal opposition to İnönü’s will for multi-party transition. His refusal of adherence to regime transition, and would cause İnönü to openly defend the right of the opposition to exist in the “12th July

especially after 1946 and until mid-1950s DP would have broad appeal from all classes of the society, as a counter to the RPP (Ahmad 2015: 35). It must also be noted that there was a left-wing connection in that broad-spectrum anti-RPP alliance. One famous connection was Zekeriya and Sabiha Sertel of the daily *Tan*. Immediately after the “Motion with four signatures” affair [*Dörtlü Tavrır*], the names of the four later-DP founders would appear on a one-issue magazine, *Adımlar*. Sabiha Sertel wrote in detail of this appearance and the subsequent events. According to her *Adımlar*’s title design was tempered to make it look overtly pro-Soviet. The newspaper’s office and its publishing house fell victim of an anti-communist raid by RPP backed youth organizations. Please see: Sabiha Sertel, *Roman Gibi: Demokrasi Mücadelesinde Bir Kadın*. İstanbul. Belge Yayınları, 1987. Moreover, future Worker’s Party of Turkey Leader Mehmet Ali Aybar was listed as an independent candidate in the DP MP Candidates List in 1946. He would not be elected (32. *Gün Arşivi* 2017: 13:19-14:49). Lastly, Menderes answered the question on where the DP was standing on the political spectrum, compared to the RPP, as “Maybe an inch on to the left” (Birand, Dündar and Çaplı 1991: 38). That seemed to be discourse at best reflecting the non-establishment appeal of the DP rather than being an ideological statement.

Declaration” in 1947. In two months Peker stepped down as the Prime Minister (Kili, 1976: 98). Peker’s hardline approach to the new shape of the regime should be compared to more radical members of the DP. Both groups argued for means other than elections for reacting power, and leaders of respective parties would have to keep the reigns of their cadres in check to establish free and fair elections as an institution of the Turkish political landscape.

Günaltay’s tenure would mark another aspect of the era. Most prominently, reforms guided by the “humanist” minister of education Hasan Âli Yücel’s policies of employment of left-leaning personnel in the ministry for large-scale translation and curriculum projects, and the “Village Institutes” project would be retracted. The last government of RPP would take the outlook of a conservative one. The transition to multi-party politics had not been easy for the already suppressed left. Both communists and socialists were subject to suppression of the freedom of oppression.²⁶ However, most importantly, the “Law of Provision of Land to Farmers” of 1945 was defeated due to internal and external opposition, to its application. Even when the bill was accepted in the parliament with “immense effort”, its application was left at the hands of Adana Deputy Cavit Oral who was a wealthy landowner, and the law was left unapplicable (Kili, 1976: 107-108).²⁷

Starting in 1946, the RPP pushed for a democratization of the political regime (by starting to separate the state apparatus from the party body, as exemplified by ending

²⁶ That would be a common theme of the next decade as the Cold War context only reinforced and even stiffened institutional hardships for the left, as underground organizations were tracked and even hunted down. Known leftists would serve as “the usual suspects” in events such as the 6-7 September 1955 Pogrom. The underlying legal framework that allowed for the suppression of the far-left was articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code, and it allowed for the punishment of class based politics that “aimed at abolition of one of the social classes by force” (Emre, 2014a: 47) Trend for completely outlawing left-wing politics continued until 1960 (54-5) and the legal pretext for anti-communism was abolished only in 1991.

²⁷ Oral was also responsible for stopping a similar land-reform bill in 1961 (Kili, 1976: 108).

the practice of provincial governors and town officials automatically becoming RPP branch chairs, and providing oversight of party congress' over party centrum) a more liberal modus operandi in the economy (Güneş Ayata, 2010: 76).

Changes in the party by-laws in the 1947 Congress were important. Elections of party chairperson and deputy chairperson had been put into effect (Kili, 1976: 99). The most significant change was the increased role of the “party council” [parti divanı] with 40 members, which had the power to elect “general administrative council [genel idare kurulu] and general secretary, and abolishment of the “general presidium [genel başkanlık divanı]” (Uyar, 2000: 31). However, the main drive and effort for party change came after two significant external shocks.

The period of 1946-1950 saw an RPP that struggled to keep itself together while ever leaning on right-wing political values, albeit nationalistic or conservative. On one hand, the academic literature noted seldom left-wing voices in the RPP committees, the 1946-47 purges against the far-left caused a rift between fledgling but vocal left-wing intelligentsia, and the RPP. This dwelling in anti-communism would prove to be a “historical burden” in the future. On the other hand, in this period beginnings of internal reform to turn the RPP from a single-party under the tutelage of state apparatus to a competitive political party began.

Change in the RPP: 1950-1960

The first external shock prompted further internal change on the 18th of May 1950. The elections took place with the usage of a system of the list by majority. The RPP, the DP, and Nation Party [*Millet Partisi*, NP] were the entrants. Of the total

8.905.743 registered voters, 7.953.085 cast their ballots (89.3% turnout).²⁸ The DP would collect 416 of the 487 seats in the parliament. With one independent and one MP for the NP, the RPP would gain 69 seats (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu 2012: 9).

The initial response of the RPP leadership to the defeat on 14th May 1950 was shock and droll. Soon after the exchange of government to the DP cadres, the Party members would get into a debate about the reasons for the RPP's loss. On the 24th of May İnönü gave a press release noting that the RPP was going to compete with the DP in power with the same ideals it had during its tenure, the progress of Turkey, its rise and strengthening, while “[d]efense of amity and order in our homeland, and protection of our homeland's national unity, is above any party considerations and political currents” (Uyar 2017a: 27). Arguably, İnönü's first public message was for the normalization of the electoral defeat, thus institutionalization of the democratic process. Soon, others would join him. Ultimately, those debates showed some ideational effects on the Party only after the electoral defeat of 1954 against the DP. From another perspective, in İnönü's perspective, the goal of the RPP was regime consolidation/defense rather than vote/office maximization.

On May 27th, 11 days after the electoral defeat, İnönü, made a speech to the Party Council [*Parti Divanı*] to keep it motivated (Uyar 2017a: 29), to remind that the party was under pressure from external forces (30), and the RPP would win the favor of the people in lieu with its long historical service to it (30-1). All in all, between 1950-1954, the overall sentiment of İnönü and his cadres was inertia towards party change, backed by a sentiment of trust for the voters who will come back willingly to the

²⁸ Women's representation in the parliament would be limited immensely. Between 1950 and 1980 highest women's representation in the TBMM was between 1965-1969 with 1.8% (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2012: 5).

RPP after seeing the troubles caused by the DP or as Kili put an “inability with coming to terms with the defeat” (Kili, 1976: 119). However, internal disgruntlement and even panic pushed the party organization itself to take some steps to empower itself against the party centrum. Whereas the party leadership had been confident in their regime consolidation/guardianship, others in the party arguably had more of a vote/office maximizing mindset.

Nihat Erim and the RPP leadership were seen as responsible for the defeat by some prominent party members for several reasons: The majority system that was vehemently defended by Erim, caused the RPP to win only 14% parliamentary representation with a total of 39% of the vote (Uyar 2017a: 17; 22). However, for others, the reasons for the defeat were the party cadres becoming older, conservative, and apathetic towards the general electorate (18-21). This would be one of the key ideas in the party at this initial phase: The Old Guard that carried the party from the single-party rule to the multi-party regime was not able to shake itself to engage in the politics that was required in this new context (i.e. engaging in vote/office maximization). After the defeat, some would leave RPP ranks to have better relations with the DP government.²⁹ On the other hand, younger generations of the party rank managed to put their weight. This trend would first be seen in the 8. Ordinary Congress of RPP (June 29-July 3, 1950). Alongside rationalizations of the existing RPP leadership on defeat, as the people being subjected to demagoguery, and they would have come back to RPP with open arms in the future, and tendencies to stay on the defense (36-41) other responses were in order. A plan of reform was offered by the members of the party calling for revision and reorganization: changing the old single-party tradition of authority logic to change into programmatic rationality (37-

²⁹ One significant example that appeared in Bilâ’s narrative was Nihat Erim (2008: 139-42)

38). Only after the 1954 elections, a reform commission³⁰ would ask for a change in terms of principles and ideas within the party. It was a mix of both older and younger members of the party. Interestingly, Erim and Gülek, who were part of the young guard would prove influential in preventing change (134-5; Kılıç, 2020: 1391). This was arguably an indicator that Gülek did not push for ideational change in the party.

Politicians who stayed in the RPP after the split of 1945, served as senior members of the party after 1950. İsmet İnönü, Kasım Gülek, Şemseddin Günaltay, Erim³¹, Ferit Melen, Kemal Satır, İsmail Rüştü Aksal and Gülek would be influential in the days to come. That party elite were members of prominent *eşraf* or party professionals who used to run the clientelist network of the single-party era. Between 1950 and 1954 that group mostly kept thinking that “the nation” would come back to them, after seeing their wrong in supporting the DP. As the RPP’s network weakened significantly by the 1954 elections, some of these would put some distance from the RPP. At the same time, there were some notable outsiders to this ruling faction. One prominent example was, left-leaning Cemil Sait Barlas.

Another persistent debate was whether to follow the democratic track in achieving power or other “radical” means. By 1954 there were still debated in the party, over whether to take the parliamentary route or to protest the elections.³² That was due to the trauma of the losses of the multi-party era (Kili, 1976: 123). However, the fact

³⁰ According to Uyar, significant factions in the “Reform Commission” [Islahat Komisyonu] were Nihat Erim’s group who asked for mere changes in the bylaws, and those argued for a total overhaul of the Party principles and ideas. Among those Avni Doğan, Turgut Göle, Şevket Reşit Hatipoğlu and Cemil Sait Barlas (Uyar 2017a: 134). Bilâ added Faik Ahmet Barutçu, Nuri Okçuoğlu, Şemseddin Günaltay, Tahsin Bekir Balta, Cevat Dursunoğlu, Tahsin Banguoğlu Kamil Kırıkoglu, İsmail Rüştü aksal and Ferit Melen to the members list of the reform Commission. Gülek was the only opposing voter of the commission (Bilâ, 2008: 137). In Kılıç’s (2020) list Tevfik Fikret Silay, Cafer Tüzel, Cahit Zamangil, Atalay Akın and Kemali Bayazıt appeared (1385).

³¹ Nihat Erim took a hard stance against the DP government between 1950-1954. Erim’s newspaper *Halkçı* was “taken with discomfort in the moderates of the party” according to Uyar (2017a, 132).

³² Kılıç noted İlhami Sancar as one such figure in 1954 (2020: 1393).

that initial resistance of the authoritarian faction made the picture blurred. There was a group in the party that continued the old single-party era motivation for relying on connections with the members of the state apparatus for the achievement of power. Such members of the RPP were going to be influential in the future as connections with juntas in the army or rousers of anti-DP sentiments.

Henceforth the existing higher members of the RPP could be divided into two streams: The mainstream were either members of the Party leadership that wanted to conserve the old order in the party, whether it meant authoritarian stances towards the new order or mere continuation of the status quo. Others asked for a change in the party identity, even arguing for the closure and re-opening of the party at times. Chairperson İnönü would play these sentiments against each other while keeping the mainstream close to himself. However, the consecutive defeats against the DP forced İnönü's hand toward reforming the party's ideas and allowing the organization to include younger or even more radical members.

The second shock came four years later, and this time the RPP's leadership had to acknowledge the existence of a problem. Elections on May 2nd, 1954, saw 39.9% of the vote and 31 seats in the parliament for the RPP. The upper echelons of the RPP had to accept that defeat was not due to "voters voting without thinking, and in turmoil and rumbling" (Kili, 1976: 112; Uyar, 2017a: 127-8). Arguably this meant that the vote/office maximizing goal was further activated.

Immediate shock and crisis were apparent in the 11. Congress of the RPP, almost two months after the electoral defeat. The discussion focused on the reasons for

defeat,³³ the matter of participating in the local elections, whether the now ever-smaller RPP parliamentary group to remain in the parliament, and what was to be done in the future. “Main Issues Commission” [Ana Davalar Komisyonu] members voted not to participate in the local elections and advised the RPP to leave the parliament. In the following discussion in the congress, İnönü put his persona in the line and threatened to step down as the chairperson:

“I think, if you want to keep your chairperson and if his opinion matters, the effective struggle is made with participating in the elections. Friends, we face conditions that are changing and getting heavier, by the day. Those in power are moving away from the methods accepted in all democratic countries, by the day. Harsher conditions appear, by the day. But you are the members of a party that appeared to make democratic rules and normal administrative conditions to take hold completely and operate under...” (Kili, 1976: 122-3).³⁴

Arguably, İnönü kept his regime/consolidating goal active and steered the increased desire for vote/office maximization accordingly.

³³ After 1954 elections Barlas was one of the voices against Erim’s machinations in the daily *Yeni Ulus*. Barlas would accuse him of diverting the RPP opposition policy to a hardliner position and feeding into polarization between the RPP and the DP (Uyar 2017a: 147). Barlas was also, argued that the RPP should be annulled and founded again to get rid of “burdens of history” (131). Şemseddin Günaltay and nihat Erim were also annoyed with the spectacular defeat (132). Another set of criticisms was directed at İnönü’s performances and opposition discourse in the election campaign over the lines of “return of the capitulations” over the issues of petroleum law and foreign investment law. Uyar noted İlhami Sancar and Şevket Adalan among those who criticized İnönü (133)

³⁴ Kili (1976) reported that in the end the RPP Party Assembly decided to participate in the constabulary elections while not to participate in the municipal and local assembly elections (123-4). Overall, the DP’s pressure on the political system was becoming more apparent. According to Uyar (2017a) discussions in the 3rd Extraordinary Congress right before 1954 Elections showed the extent of the pressure: After initial limitations of the RPP’s propriety in 1951, on 14.12.1953 the repossessed another group of the RPP’s propriety. Another limitation on the system was the singular usage of the state radio by the DP and closure of the Nation Party (60-3).

After the defeat of 1954, a newer generation of local politicians was introduced to politics in the RPP, as older holders of local party officials started to step down either due to old age or being unable to compete against the younger members of the RPP. There was also a renewed interest in the local branches at the voter level. The younger generation of politicians started to increase their efforts in competing for office, as the status of RPP rose in the public significantly after 1956. This was not due to a clear and meaningful change brought by the RPP leadership itself but to the growing authoritarianism of the DP, worsening economical conditions, and the societal damage of September 6-7, 1955 Events (Kili, 1976: 124). A new party named Freedom Party [Hürriyet Partisi, FP] was founded and it would be influential in internal RPP politics before, and after the 1957 elections.

Kasım Gülek and His Faction

The most important factional friction in the RPP in this period was between İnönü and his circles, and Gülek's faction. Apart from the 1950 and the 1954 electoral defeats, I argue, this factional wrestling was an important driver for a series of by-laws changes, and organizational specialization of the RPP. That is not to mean there were no other voices than İnönü or Gülek. There were occasional appearances of Erim, Barlas, and others in the academic and journalistic narratives, yet they were mostly subsumed under the competition of Gülek and İnönü.

Gülek was an actor that represented the reaction of the younger generations and provincial interests in the RPP against the close circle around the that was associated with "elitism". The RPP organization, however, put its weight behind Gülek who was associated with "localism and particularism" (Güneş Ayata, 2010: 79). Gülek was unable to create an ideational shift in the RPP (80). Rather he focused on

creating an attitude around the local interests of the RPP Branches. The factional friction between the Gülek group and İnönü's circle was not due to clear ideological divisions. Gülek was perhaps the one among the "young guard" who was raised to the most prominent position between 1950 and 1960. He strived for reestablishing the ties of the party with its grassroots by looking at it, as one of "the people", rather than one of the stereotypical RPP "lords".³⁵ One very significant event in the 9. Congress of the RPP (1951) was the change in the bylaws of the Party regarding the election of the second in command of the Party, the general secretary by the Congress instead of the Party Assembly. This was a move to democratize the party organization internally. However, İnönü did not envision a full-fledged cadre change, on the contrary, it was evident that Erim was his preferred candidate. The immediate result of that change in the bylaws was the election of, the former Minister of Transportation, Gülek to the position of General Secretary, as a wildcard. Erim who had İnönü's favor stepped out of the race when he could not win the ballot in the first turn. Avni Doğan and Ahmet Faik Barutçu would follow him in stepping down, and Gülek, in a reportedly American fashion (Birand, Dündar and Çaplı 1991: 88), and as "the candidate of the Party youth" at the time (Cılızoğlu, 2017: 56) went to each of the delegates to introduce himself personally and give them a voting ballot that marked his name. In the end, he won against former prime minister Şemseddin Günaltay, and left-leaning Cemil Sait Barlas (Uyar, 2017: 42), reportedly to the displeasure of İnönü (Birand, Dündar and Çaplı 1991: 89). Arguably, the party delegates were not so keen on strictly following the authority of the old Pasha in this

³⁵ This expression about the old and new guard members was applied directly in the case of İsmail Rüştü Aksal, who was called "Lord Aksal". Aksal was a landowner and had problems with villagers near Lake Bafa as the owner of the lake area (Aydın and Taşkın, 2017: 170).

new era of multi-party politics (Güneş-Ayata, 2010: 79). That did not mean, however, that İnönü would refrain from asserting his charisma in balancing factions. Gülek's tenure as general secretary is described with condescending names such as *çarıklılar* and *kravatsızlar* [ones with peasant's shoes, ones without neck-ties], and he would garner the support of party grassroots significantly after the defeat in 1950. Cılızoğlu quoted Yaşar Keçeli, who argued that Gülek was "closed to left, yet open to social content". According to Keçeli one aide of Gülek in bringing "social content" [sosyal muhteva] to the party was Deputy General Secretary Kırıkoğlu. Keçeli's claimed that Kırıkoğlu's efforts were that he brought up the issue of labor to the table and argued for the inclusion of these rights in the RPP's electoral platform (Cılızoğlu, 2017: 108-9).³⁶ Kırıkoğlu, by Keçeli's claim, was also significant for asking class politics to have a place in RPP. According to the same account, İnönü was not too happy with that premise (Cılızoğlu, 2017: 55). The Cold war was raging, and "anti-communism" was all too powerful in terms of making or breaking an organization in those days. Whereas labor rights consistently existed in the RPP programs and electoral platforms after this date, the RPP would refrain from calling itself on the left at least until 1960.

It could be argued that between 1950 and 1960 there were three generations of politicians on the scene of the RPP: "Old guard", "new guard" and "young Turks". None of the groups were coherent in terms of their ideas, but rather these are generational tags. The old guard was the main group of politicians, who were active in the single-party period, and carried the RPP to a new era. This group could

³⁶ Emre (2013) argued that 1954 and 1957 election programs of RPP pale in comparison to 1961 and 1965 election manifestos in terms of ideational quality and quantity of text (73-4). According to Kili (1976), of the 33 themes in the 1954 election manifest of RPP, 7 were labor rights related (120-1).

arguably be comprised of figures such as İsmet İnönü, Şemseddin Günaltay, Hasan Saka, and Cemil Sait Barlas. Apart from İnönü, these figures were slowly sidelined after the electoral defeats of 1950 and 1954.³⁷ On the other hand, there were a younger group comprising of figures such as, Nihat Erim, Kasım Gülek, Nüvit Yetkin, Kemal Satır, İsmail Rüşdü Aksal, Ferit Melen and Turgut Göle. These were the younger and existing high-level members of the RPP, who rose to prominence significantly after the start of the multi-party politics. Both “guard” groups were members of the Republican elite, either as provincial landholders or educated professionals. The last group, “young Turks” were the youngest members who joined the RPP starting significantly with the years, 1953-1954. This group was predominantly comprised of young professionals who joined the RPP either out of previous connections to it³⁸ or out of a reaction against the DP’s rising authoritarianism (Kili, 1976: 124). Among those, Bülent Ecevit, Suphi Baykam, Kâmil Kırıkoğlu, Turhan Feyzioğlu, Murat Öner, Ferda Güley, as well as Turan Güneş from the FP.³⁹ In this period these newcomers were not part of an organized faction but they were working within party ranks as a younger generation. Some, such as Güneş and Feyzioğlu rose to prominence, while others were on the sidelines.

³⁷ Recep Peker should also be mentioned, however he was already sidelined due to his hardliner approach against the DP and democratization itself in the late 1940’s. Among abovementioned figures Barlas appeared as the most left-leaning one.

³⁸ Two examples of this tendency were perhaps Bülent Ecevit and Altan Öymen, whose fathers were in the parliament during the 1940’s, and lived in the same neighbourhood of Ankara, Bahçelievler (then called Mebusevleri).

³⁹ İbrahim Öktem from the FP was older than this generation although he should be considered as a part of this generation. Altan Öymen was also part of this generation even though, he stayed a journalist, unlike Ecevit. Muammer Aksoy should also be noted as one of the intellectuals that joined the party in the 1950’s. Another example of this generation of newcomers was Zeki Tekiner. He joined the RPP in 1951. After serving as a parliamentary deputy, he was killed in 1980 while he was provincial Chairperson of the RPP in Kırşehir. Please see: Tekiner, Aylin, T24, “Bir Politik Aymazlık Öyküsü: Celladını taltif, takdir ve terfi”, 09.08.2020, <https://t24.com.tr/haber/bir-politik-aymazlik-oykusu-celladini-taltif-takdir-ve-terfi,895731>

It could be argued that the factional disputes of the RPP, between İnönü and Gülek, had a lot to do with the personal and interest-based differences between the members of the “old guard” and the “new guard”. Still, the picture is much more complicated to be simplified into generations. Gülek and respectively Erim had their clashes with varying members of the RPP and with each other. The “young Turks” appeared on the scene during the factional disputes. Apart from Kırıkoğlu who served as one of the deputy general secretaries of Gülek, most of this generation acted with İnönü and against Gülek. This last group was going to be extremely important in the next decade (the 1960s) and worked with or clashed with the “young guard” in a series of events that brought about an ideational change in the RPP.

A significant event that presented factional disputes was Reform Commission [Islahat Komisyonu] asked for “essential” reforms to be made in the party program and by-laws, as a call for the RPP to achieve a new “identity” (Uyar, 2017a: 134-5).⁴⁰ Kılıç’s (2020) research on the matter unfolded a much more complicated picture. The Commission offered a “fundamental” change to existing principles and organizational hegemony. Those who argued for the changes were predominantly members of the General Administrative Committee. Those who opposed the proposed changes altogether were members of Gülek’s faction since those were understood as a move against Gülek himself (1396).

The tension between Gülek’s faction and İnönü’s alliance would persist. Throughout the 1950s İnönü would try to get rid of Gülek, either by a switch back to the old rule of the election of the general secretary in the Party Assembly or by reinstatement of the position of deputy party chairman [genel başkan vekili]. The constant tug-of-war

⁴⁰ Among the members of this commission Uyar (2017a) noted that Avni Doğan, Şevket Raşit Hatipoğlu, Cemil Sait Barlas and Turgut Göle expressed such views (134).

between Gülek and İnönü would have continued until 1959. In the 14th Ordinary Congress of RPP on January 12th, 1959, Gülek's hold of power would be tested. A compromise between İnönü's and Gülek's positions gave the congress the right to pick the general secretary and the PA to remove him with a 2/3 majority decision (Uyar 2017: 168). Gülek would be removed from his seat after the "Fens Letter Affair" in the same year and İnönü achieved better control over the party organization (Emre, 2014a: 85). A new group in the party assembly assisted İnönü's group in this maneuver: The new arrivals from the Freedom Party [Hürriyet Partisi, FP] were joined by the existing younger members of the RPP, who were effectively engaged in policy-making in the RPP Research and Documentation Bureau.

It seems, that the ideational aspect of the Gülek's faction was extremely limited to keeping an energetic new light on the notion of "the people", including left-wing sentiments in some members' minds. Gülek's "localist and particularistic" (Güneş-Ayata, 2010: 79) take on politics would keep adherent to the old way of clientelism and *eşraf* connections to the most extent. No significant opposition to the Cold War policy of the DP came from within. The RPP's policy opening towards labor rights was more of an effort to reach the working-class voters by competing with the DP for control of the patronage ties with the unions. Another inference that could be made is that factional disputes were both fed and resulted in organizational changes.

Two tendencies were clear here. First was the charisma of İnönü over the RPP organization. He was able to steer party strategy with his threats of resignation, even in the face of opposition from the local branches. His continuous influence and ability to juggle factionalism in the RPP would be crucial for at least another decade to come. While increasingly getting used to the vote/office maximizing requirements of competitive politics he would still stay true to his regime guardianship. However,

in this period two party goals did not come into conflict, rather the rising authoritarianism of the DP created a harmony between these two goals. His efforts in this period seemed to focus on establishing contacts with other political parties and the RPP's ability to appoint independent parliamentary deputy candidates via local RPP branches. The second was the renewed efforts in organizational expansion and renewal. As Kili suggested, at that point in RPP's history those efforts had not provided support for the RPP, as much as the growing social disgruntlement against the DP. However, it could be argued that those efforts would have effects in the future.

At the 13th Congress in 1957, the most important issue was a potential alliance at the ballot with the FP and Republican Nation Party [Cumhuriyetçi Millet Partisi] of Osman Bölükbaşı in an attempt at defeating the DP at the ballot and empty the government office. At the 12th Congress of RPP in 1956 chairperson had donned the power to establish such electoral alliances. Much to the dismay of the RPP grassroots İnönü again threatened to resign if chances of a potential electoral alliance were squandered, which were made possible in the previous Congress. While the discussions continued in the congress, the DP made a move to legally render such an alliance impossible and announced early elections (Kili, 1976: 125-6).

1957 Early General Elections were both a defeat and a comeback for the RPP. In that election, the DP's vote went as low as 48.6% while it garnered 424 seats in the Parliament. The RPP would gain 178 seats with 41.4% of the vote. FP was also defeated and failed to send delegates to the parliament except for a single province, and a significant portion of it soon joined the RPP. It also showed at least a small attempt at cleavage-shifting, as its main slogan was "To go reelections in May 1958

at the latest, after taking Main Rights under guarantee”. Rising authoritarianism of the DP was an ever-growing fact and the RPP based its electoral efforts to activate that cleavage, alongside a failed attempt at “opposition coordination”.⁴¹

The next two years saw the merger of the FP, spillover between then general secretary Gülek and İnönü, and ever-rising and starker clashes of the DP in power and İnönü at the helm of opposition. Especially in April-May 1960, İnönü came under physical attack, and university youth rose after the establishment of the “Commission of Inquiry” [Tahkikat Komisyonu] (Aydın & Taşkın, 2017: 61). On the 27th of May 1960, a group of officers succeeded in toppling the DP with a coup d’état, which arguably overturned the status of the RPP in Turkish Politics at the time.

Changes in Fundamental Principles after 1946

Normative changes in the RPP started immediately after the transition to multi-party politics in 1945-6. At the party leader level, the most significant change was the abolishment of the “unchanging” status of the chairperson in the 2nd Extraordinary Congress of the RPP on the 10th of May 1946.⁴² In 1951 the election process, powers, and tasks of the chairpersonship were redefined. There were small tweaks and changes to details of the chairperson’s ability to call for meetings and vote in the party organs. These mostly took place in congresses of the 1950s but less so in the 1960s. Uyar (2000) argued that this could be indeed a symptom of factional disputes

⁴¹ Contemporary research on Turkish polity showed that such activation of “democracy – authoritarianism cleavage” and “opposition coordination” is observed. Please see, Orçun Selçuk and Dilara Hekimci, The Rise of the democracy – authoritarianism cleavage and opposition coordination in Turkey (2014-2019), *Democratizaiton*, 27:8, 1496-1514, 2020.

⁴² To that end, role of deputy chairperson [genel başkan vekili] was abolished in the early 1960’s as it was a role more fitting to a single party system (Uyar, 2000: 18).

between İnönü and Gülek, as the chairperson's role was defined in minute details compared to that of the general secretary (14-6).

The main changes in terms of fundamental principles of the RPP started gradually with the transition to multi-party politics. "Six Arrows" [Altı Ok], republicanism, secularism, populism, nationalism, revolutionarism, and etatism kept their symbolical presence but were attached with different meanings over time (Emre, 2014a: 42-8). The effort to amend fundamental principles started in the 7th Congress in 1947. Kili (1976) offered a comparison of these changes with their former iterations. "Republicanism" had been kept mostly, as it was, however, it saw additions due to the democratization in Turkey at the time. The nation was going to use its sovereignty via the parliament which was going to be elected via universal direct suffrage and the RPP had the task to protect democracy against all threats (100). In "Nationalism" the RPP moved away from a "political interpretation" and accepted a linguistic, cultural, and historical iteration (101). In terms of "populism," Kili noted that the concept of "class" was not present similar to the single-party era. The RPP was supposed to develop the livelihood conditions of the peasantry and farmers, who were the majority of the society at the time. It was also noted that a "healthy approach" to democracy depended upon the differentiation of the individual and the society (ibid.). "Etatism" according to Kili evolved in the context of some critiques against the RPP's economic policies, a shift of straining Turko-Soviet relations, and a desire to develop relations with the USA. Therefore, according to Kili, the scope of the state intervention in the economy was "narrowed", and the role of the proposed relations of public and private sectors was "sharply" redefined to the advantage of the former (ibid.). "Secularism" was a topic of heated debate. Focus on the "national culture" was dropped in the 7th Congress and religion was understood,

as a factual topic of social and political life (ibid.). “Revolutionarism” was also a subject of significant change. Former refusal of gradual [tedrici] and maturation [tekâmül] from the 1943 program was dropped and “removal of obscure [geri kalmış] level of life and introduction of progressive [ilerici] institutions of civilization” were accepted. Another point was to protect the existing achievements of the revolutions of the single-party period. Kili argued that this was a move from revolutionarism to “evolutionism”. However, she also noted that between 1947 and 1950 the RPP struggled to even keep to that position and made concessions from its newly adopted evolutionism (101-2).

All these fundamental principles were compiled under the name “Kemalism” in 1947. In 1953, this usage was dropped and the term “Atatürk’s Way” [Atatürk Yolu] was adopted. 1953 also Etatism was the only one of the “Six Arrows” to saw changes in the fundamental principles. Definition of Etatism now included notions of “social justice and social security”. Still, in a contradictory statement, the potential private entrepreneurship over the natural resource and petroleum sectors was acknowledged. One significant inclusion was the notion of the “rule of law” (Kili, 1976: 117-8).

For the issue variables, the main programmatical changes in terms of took place in the respective congresses of 1947, 1953, 1959, and 1976. According to Tuncer (2021), even in the initial period of 1950-60 new concepts started to appear in RPP programs, starting with 1950: “constitutional guarantees, second parliament, constitutional court, high electoral council, proportional representation, the constitution of united nations, freedom of the press, autonomy of the university, guarantee of the judge, labor being the most important value, freedom to establish trade and labor unions, right to strike and lock-out, collective bargaining, social

security, planned economy” (5). The RPP’s program did not change between 1959 and 1976, which also covers the timeframe of this research. Instead of programmatical changes, electoral platforms varied or showed similarities per factional disputes and needs of the day. Therefore in this part, I will briefly present changes in the scope and content of the electoral platforms of the RPP between 1950 and 1960.

According to Kili (1976), the 1950 Electoral Platform of the RPP “mainly covered problems of villagers, forest issue, the topic of education, etatism and relations with the private sector, foreign investment, national defense and foreign policy” (103).

Kili also reported that in some issue areas⁴³ the RPP made concessions and argued that this was a trend of change that started with the 7th Congress in 1947 (103).

“Labor” was added to the party programme in 1953 in the 10th Congress (Emre, 2014a: 83). In the Electoral Platform of 1954 issues such as social security, discussion right to strike, and autonomy of universities made it into the text in addition to previously mentioned issues in 1950 (Kili, 1976: 121).

In the 1957 Electoral Platform, the RPP stated that after it won the elections it would go to a new election in May 1958 at the latest “after the main rights were secured”.

These main rights consisted of human rights, the autonomy of courts and legal guarantees for judges; freedoms of expression and speech, assembly, university autonomy, right to strike and freedom to unionize (both for workers and state officials), audit over party finances, right to prove for press, reduction of both the number of parliamentary deputies and their wages and lastly a two-house parliament (Kili, 1976: 126-7).

⁴³ Kili noted etatism and relations with the private sector, and foreign policy (1976: 103-4)

At the 14th Congress in 1959, labor rights were written into the RPP program (129-30). At the same Congress the “Declaration of First Aims” was also declared, and according to Kili the regime issues and fundamental citizenship rights were the primary issues. She also noted that the programmatic inclusion of labor rights was a significant indicator of the RPP’s adoption of socio-economic issues to its agenda (130).

To that end, the politician who read the Declaration of Primary Aims to the public in the 14th Congress, Turan Güneş, provided this account:

“In fact, this was not a union [of the RPP and the FP] but a joining. But taking not of the psychological aspect of the matter in the previous discussions we called it ‘union’. In addition, the Declaration of Primary Aims was prepared before the union was written due to that. The content in the declaration was ideas that were already defended by the RPP. However, to satisfy the grassroots of the Freedom Party we created the image that we preprepared the declaration. Therefore, that declaration was good support to satisfy our grassroots” (Simav, 1975: 68)

In short, the program and electoral platforms expanded in issue variables and started to show the inclusion of principles other than its traditional “Six Arrows”. Especially the focus on citizenship rights, such as social security, and the inclusion of labor rights in programmatic texts, such as party programs showed a slight leaning towards left-wing politics. However, at this point, the RPP did not define itself as a left-wing party or called its politics “leftist”. Rather it relied on an anti-authoritarian stance, and its more traditionally preferred etatist economical preferences with an opening to both market values, and social security measures. As İnönü put it after the 1954

elections: “The world is moved away from, shaken away liberalism. It moves towards another regime. Its name is socialism. We cannot name the party that. We are unable to do so, therefore we present our party as etatist, and we say that we are etatist. Our etatism is a regime that requires state intervention. Just like socialism has absorbed the liberal party, we make our nation accept it under the name etatism” (Bilâ, 2008: 138). To that end Emre (2014a) noted that the RPP had been looking for “a new direction for itself around 1960 (64-5). That direction was going to be found in the term “left of center”.

Organizational Change and Expansion in the RPP: 1950-1965

In this section, I present the organizational changes in the RPP in two periods: 1950 to 1965. I go over by-law changes that organized the roles, responsibilities, and powers of various bodies and posts in the RPP. I also present the expansion of the RPP in those two periods.

General Secretary: The role and electoral process of the general secretary were amended comparatively more in the by-laws. After the 1950 defeat on the ballot, the right to elect the party general secretary was given from the chairperson to the congress. At the 9th Congress in 1951 it was stated that the general secretary would be elected by closed voting, until the next election in a congress. If for some reason the post of general secretary was to be vacated, then the party assembly would have elected a new general secretary until the next Congress. The general secretary of the RPP was designated as the head of the general administrative committee, which in turn was elected by the party assembly. She or he was also tasked to pick two deputy secretaries, one to help take care of administrative duties while another was to coordinate party propaganda (Uyar, 2000: 22-3).

After nearly a decade of friction between İnönü and Gülek, by-laws regarding the general secretary were changed in the consecutive 14th (1959) and 15th (1961) Congresses. The latter rule was changed to general secretary to be elected by Congress, while the Party Assembly was empowered to dismiss the general secretary with a two-thirds majority (Uyar, 2000: 23). In 1961 the congress lost its right to elect the general secretary and the rule was changed to general secretary to be elected among the members of the Party Assembly, and Party Assembly having the right to dismiss a general secretary or any Central Administrative Committee member to be dismissed in fact, by a simple majority (23-4).

Central Administrative Committee: Another set of changes regarded the administrative bodies of the RPP. The earlier Chairpersonship Committee was dissolved with the transition to multi-party politics. General Administrative Committee saw changes in the 9th Congress (1951) and 10th Congress, from a name change to Central Administrative Committee (henceforth CAC), and its election was defined as CAC would be elected within Party Assembly and having 10 members with the general secretary being its head. With the changes in the 4th Extraordinary Congress (1967), and 19th Congress (1969) the number of CAC members was raised to 14. It was also added that the CAC was responsible for its actions to Party Assembly (Uyar, 2000: 26-27).

Party Assembly: The RPP Party Assembly was the successor of the Chairpersonship Committee, and it came into being in 1947 consisting of 40 members. It also saw a name change (from Parti Divanı to Parti Meclisi) in 1951, and expanded substantively, consisting of Chairperson, General Secretary, CAC, Deputy heads and administrative members of the RPP Parliamentary Group, and a delegate from each

provincial branch of the RPP (Uyar, 2000: 31). Along with special commissions that had limited right to vote, Uyar noted that the expansion of the coverage of the PA was a reaction to the single-party period. Still, this form of inclusion was short-lived due to impracticalities (32). Therefore, in the 11th Congress (1954) status of the provincial representatives was revoked and the PA was decided to be consisting of the Chairperson, General Secretary, and 30 members elected by the Congress. In 14th Congress (1959) the number of members was raised to 40, and the primary role of the PA was to audit the General Secretary and CAC via a two-thirds majority vote. PA Members were also barred from taking any other office within the RPP (32). The final major change within the limitations of this research took place around the 1967 and the 1968 Congresses: Among the aforementioned 42 members, one representative of the Women's Branch, and one from the Youth Branch were going to join the PA (33).

Congress: Congresses of the RPP were significantly lively events with competition and even fistfights, especially after 1951. In the 9th Congress (1951), Congress was defined as the "highest authority" of the RPP. The right to assemble the congress was given to the "PA and therefore the party organization" as a desire to control the party centrum. However, practicalities forced the convention timing to be tweaked in the later years. In 1967-1968, the Congress rules were tweaked again to provide weight to the parliamentary group of the RPP, its Women's and Youth Branches, and local party branches (Uyar, 2000: 38-39).

One significant point of the by-laws that stayed constant between 1951 and 1968 was the issue of the selection of parliamentary deputy candidates. According to Uyar, this issue was taken into consideration in the 1953 Congress, and it was decided that the

local party branches and their members would have decided on the matter in local primaries (Uyar, 2000: 51). However, this issue would prove to be a friction between the party centrum and the local branches throughout the 1950s as the party centrum asked continuously to have a quota in picking candidates. The local branches resisted this request and left only a limited number of quotas to the PA in 1954, for alliance purposes (51-2). This would have changed in the 1967-8 by-laws of the RPP, as a 5% quota was given to the party centrum for picking local candidates (52).

Youth Branches of the RPP: For Women's branches of the RPP, there is no historical academic work. However, its origins were the same as the youth branch: After the closure of "People's Houses" (Halkevleri) by the DP in 1951 the RPP centrum started to keep its connection with the youth. Letter of three students who were members of the National Student Federation of Turkey (Türkiye Milli Talebe Federasyonu, TMTF), stating that the RPP should found a youth organization seemed to give it the motivation the RPP was looking for. In the 9th Congress (1951), a section regarding "auxiliary organization" was added to the by-laws and it stated that provincial RPP organizations could found "Women's and Youth Branches" (Kaya, 2021: 36-7).

Between 1951 and its official founding with the By-laws of the RPP Youth Branch coming into effect on March 2nd, 1953, several "youth hearts" were founded in different localities (Kaya, 2021: 37-38). A former MTTB (Milli Türk Talebe Birliği, Turkish National Student Union) chairperson Suphi Baykam appeared as a figurehead in the official founding of the Youth Branch of the RPP. After his registration to the party in 1953 had a role in organizing the Youth Organization by opening the idea of Youth and Women's Branches to İnönü (Gündüz, 2004: 113-

115). According to Gündüz's narrative, after some months of initial work on bylaws and debate within the existing Party leadership, the idea of Youth and Women's branches was accepted by İnönü himself. Baykam was permitted to personally oversee the development of these Party organizations. The Youth Organization opened a separate bureau and its members assisted larger party organizations starting with the 1954 elections (120-2; Kaya, 2021: 42-3). Several young people entered the RPP after the increasing pressures of the DP over the RPP organization.⁴⁴ Starting with the 1954 elections Youth Branch members were taken to the election campaigning and permitted to publicly speak. According to Kaya, this provided both a sense of "RPP embracing the youth" and experience in campaigning for the younger members of the RPP (Kaya, 2021: 50). Also starting with this period, the increasing tensions between the DP and the RPP reflected upon the younger generations, and the authoritarianism of the DP became an activated cleavage. According to Karpat (1966), by 1960 "there were about 295 Republican youth branches in the country; the number went up about 530 in 1961, comprising roughly 25,000 young energetic members" (180).

The Youth Branch of RPP was significant for the period preceding the 27th of May 1960 coup d'état and its aftermath. Especially in Ankara and İstanbul Universities, the RPP Youth Branch was effective in rallying the student's anger against the DP. In İstanbul the protests in April-May 1960, of the students would be bloodied by police attack, whereas the army forces refrained from intervening with the clashes between the police and students. In Ankara, the so-called "555K" event would be another significant event that showed the ability of the RPP youth branches at the time. The

⁴⁴ Among those were the first members of the RPP Youth Branch CAC: Bülent Ağabeyoğlu, Bülent Ecevit, Nejat Etkin Bülent Gürkan, Yüksel Karaburçak, Altan Öymen, Nahit Özkutlu, Turhan Öztürk. These were mostly young professionals as doctors, intern lawyers, and journalists (Kaya, 2021: 44).

connection between the Armed Forces and the university youth was amiable throughout this period. Only after the advent of WPT in 1962, the RPP experienced a decrease in its hold over university students. Therefore, it could be argued that certain members of the youth and women's organizations were influential in the future the main body of ideational change did not come from these organizations.

The RPP Research and Documentation Bureau: Another important venue that directly affected the debate on paths of change, was a sub-organization within the RPP: Rather new party members such as Bülent Ecevit, prominent academics such as Turhan Feyzioğlu, members of the former Freedom Party, such as Turan Güneş, and newcomers like Doğan Avcıoğlu had met in the RPP Research Bureau which was founded after 1957's comeback. The 'external' source here was the Freedom Party and the connection was the *Forum* magazine,⁴⁵ while 'internal' actors from the RPP were also there. All those people would be important in the politics of 1960s politics (most significantly, the 1961 Constitution) whether on the left or the right. As

⁴⁵ The common public discussion forum for the abovementioned younger political actors had been a magazine creatively called *Forum*. That magazine was a prominent intellectual journal of 1950's (Beriş, 2005; Sanlı, 2021:135-6). Cangül Örnek (2015) argued that the journal housed different groups with different ideas, although it showed intellectual with the understanding of modernism, and "anti-communisms" of the previous generation of Republican thinkers (278). In its heyday during the 1950s it would serve as a bed of opposition to the increasingly authoritarian DP governments. Moreover, for Örnek, the journal openly developed an intellectual line that placed Turkey in the American-led anti-communist West with Anglo-Saxon liberal school of thought (282). At the same time the magazine looked for a "Kemalism that was reconciled with liberalism to block the road to the threat of socialism" (283). One peculiar theme of the magazine was the belief that the DP's majoritarianism was not enough for democracy and "many articles that argued the need for a democracy with legal safeties, first and foremost the freedom of thought and consciousness" were published (286). According to Örnek, another theme was planning in economy, as a means of market regulation or collection of projects (289). With the rise of the USSR model to prominence at the end of 1950, the Forum circle expanded its arguments on application of planning and development as a means to curb an expansion of communism (290). However, according to Örnek, Forum was not a "national developmentalist" magazine similar to *Kadro* of the 1930s. It was rather close to the social democratic tradition of post-war Western Europe, with calling for limited state involvement that guaranteed individual rights. Labor rights were also a part of Forum's overall discourse. For Örnek: "This ideologically anti-communist current was democratic in application of political rights, defending use of welfare mechanisms in social issues, close to the typical European Social Democracy of Cold War era" (294). One key issue was the defense of "left" as opposed to the reductionist stance of the DP. Forum defended the idea that finer points of left-wing thinking, socialism and social democracy as opposed to communism should have been acknowledged (296). Bülent Ecevit was one author that defended such a position (297).

Karaömerlioğlu and Kirişçiöğlu (2022: 2) argued the ‘external’ influence of the FP was part of a larger intellectual circle of the *Forum* and the reaction of one of its factions to the collapse of internal cohesion of the DP. In this section, I will present those sources and their place in the party change in the RPP between 1950 and 1960. From this group, a particular assemblage of actors from those backgrounds would be the most important in RPP’s ideational change between 1965 and 1972.

New ideational efforts came from the RPP Research and Documentation Bureau [CHP Araştırma ve Dokümantasyon Bürosu, CHP Araştırma Bürosu (1958-1965)]. This cadre of young politicians and experts (Emre, 2013: 60-61) were under the jurisdiction of Gülek on paper but, were directly connected to İnönü, in reality (61). The chairperson of the Bureau was Turhan Feyzioğlu who joined the party after his removal as the Dean of the Political Science School of Ankara University. A later chairman was Osman Okyar. Deputy chairman was Doğan Avcıoğlu. There were other important figures, such as Bülent Ecevit who came from the RPP ranks, Turan Güneş, and Coşkun Kırca who made into this bureau from the former-FP ranks⁴⁶

⁴⁶ The Freedom Party [Hürriyet Partisi, FP] came into existence after the fracture of Democratic Party in 1955 (Özçetin & Demirci, 2005). Based in the intra-party opposition of the DP led by Fevzi Lütfü Karaosmanoğlu in 1951, joined the RPP ranks after its defeat in the 1957 elections. In 1955 a number of the DP deputies have started to criticize the economic policy track of the Government. A second problem was the pressures on freedom of press and expression. A conflict between the Menderes Government and party opposition over the so-called “Right to Prove” [*İspat Hakkı*] (543) would fracture the DP. The main oppositional themes of that “intellectuals’ party” were impartiality of the presidency, limitation of the maximum number of presidential terms by two, parliament with two houses, lowering the number of the deputies of parliament, equality of political parties, political and financial autonomy of the universities, rule of law, local democratic competition having full local authority, impartiality of judges, guarantee of the freedom of press, engaging in constitutional reforms that would guarantee impartial development, adhering to the principle of social justice, and application of an economics that is adherent to the universal scientific rules of that field (544). The FP would engage in a alliance-making with the other opposition parties in the parliament before the 1958 elections, which was foiled with the DP’s alteration of the laws regarding electoral system in 1957. After winning a mere 3.85% of the votes and 4 seats in the parliament the FP (545-546), joined the RPP in 1958 with the 14th Ordinary Congress.

(Uyar, 2017a: 165). This group had worked with İnönü in limiting Gülek's hand in policy-making.⁴⁷

Upon its founding, the Bureau aimed to collect "documentation" regarding the RPP (such as budgetary criticisms in the parliament) and the other parties for policy-making purposes. Another aim was to arrange public conferences which according to Emre was not achieved. The bureau was successful in producing original research and publishing reports, in connection with both intra-party and extra-party researchers and politicians, regarding other parties, and policy and legal proposals (Emre, 2013: 62). The Bureau also served the function of running the foreign affairs relations of the Party for İnönü. Coşkun Kırca, Osman Okyar, Turhan Feyzioğlu, and Bülent Ecevit had continuous connections in the US Embassy to conduct communications between the US sources and the RPP leadership (Emre, 2013: 70-1; 72) arguably working, as a shadow foreign affairs ministry.

The decisive role of that group took place between 1958 and 1961 (Emre, 2013: 64). After that, the Bureau would lose its effectiveness in producing enduring policy-prescription effects on the RPP cadres. There were two aspects to that: Firstly, almost all members of the Bureau got involved in the active politics of the day. Ecevit, Öktem, and Feyzioğlu would serve in the RPP's coalition governments in the first half of the 1960s. Avcıoğlu would break out after disagreements over the content of the 1961 Constitution, and go on to find one of the most influential left-wing journals

⁴⁷ Kili (1976) noted that in a move called "Solidarity Movement" [Güçbirliği hareketi] Turan Güneş, İbrahim Öktem, Cihat Baban, Emin Paksüt, Feridun Ergin, Fevzi Lütfü Karaosmanoğlu, Enver Güreli from the FP, joined figures such as İsmail Rüştü Aksal, Turhan Feyzioğlu, Ferit Melen, Vedat Dicleli, Sırrı Atalay, Faik Ahmet Barutçu in the PA against Gülek (139).

of the period: *Yön* (later *Devrim*)⁴⁸. In addition to the dropout of the cadre to the larger left-wing politics of the era, the advent of the “young guard” under the leadership of Ferit Melen, İsmail Rüştü Aksal, and Kemal Satır meant that the younger members would be sidelined in the Party decision-making over policy tracks, at least for a short period (Emre, 2013: 64-65).

However, while it was active the Bureau was influential in the ideational change of the party. “Declaration of Primary Aims” [İlk Hedefler Beyannamesi]⁴⁹ was read by Turan Güneş in the 14th Congress (1959). Such ideational efforts would be very effective in shaping the 1961 Constitution and following the policy efforts of the RPP coalitions. Moreover, the institutionalization of the ideas of that group with the 1961 Constitution was extremely effective in shaping the Turkish political system, as left-wing ideas (except for communism) were legalized for the first time.

Overall, the Research and Documentation Bureau was significant in bringing about much-needed ideational aspects of the party change in form of policy prescriptions. From perspective, Güneş, Bülent Ecevit, and İbrahim Öktem were the most significant the RPP Research and Documentation Bureau in terms of the RPP’s swing to the left in the 1960s. Doğan Avcıoğlu would break with the centrism of the RPP after the constitution-making process of the post-1960 coup d’état and went on to lead one of the most influential socialist intellectual movements of the decade, the *Yön* circle. Other members of the RPP Research and Documentation Bureau would later find themselves in right-wing politics such as Turhan Feyzioğlu and Coşkun Kırca.

⁴⁸ Please see. Gökhan Atılğan, *Yön-Devrim Hareketi: Kemalizm ile Marksizm Arasında Geleneksel Aydınlar*. 2nd ed. İstanbul. Yordam Kitap, 2008. Also see, for a critical take on the matter (Karaömerlioğlu & Kirişçioğlu, 2022).

⁴⁹ See: (Kili, 1976: 161-163).

This group was influential in both bringing about normative and programmatic change to the RPP in the short run with the “Declaration of Primary Aims”. This document was also definitive in terms of being a basis for the 1961 constitution. At the same time, their presence allowed İnönü to sideline Gülek in terms of policy entrepreneurship, with his backing of the “young Turks”.

Outcome

As I tried to present above party change in the RPP had various aspects that were driven by several conceptions of party goals, external shocks in the form of electoral defeats, and potential for alliances within the party system. On the other hand, the internal friction of several figures and factions proved also influential in driving and limiting the conscious effort of reform at moments. Still, the RPP moved from its single-party form significantly towards being a modern competitive political party by 1960. It saw changes in its by-laws, program, electoral platforms, and organizational formation and reach. Finally, as the party leadership and their collaborators became younger the ideational efforts increased providing more nuanced ideas that had a significant leaning towards the left. That however did not mean that before the 27th of May 1960, the RPP identified itself as a left-wing party. The legacy of anti-communism was alive and well both in the RPP, and the overall political system.⁵⁰

Several inferences could be made to understand the events of 1960-1965.

The RPP increasingly saw heated discussions between varying factions. These had ideational differences on democratization, making sense of electoral defeats, internal

⁵⁰ Perhaps the best example of this reality was the DP’s “Commission of Inquiry” [Tahkikat Komisyonu] report. The report was due for being publicized on the 27th of May, and because of the coup d’état on that day it did not see public eyes for some time. In the report the RPP (among many other accusations) was blamed with collaborating with the then illegal Communist Party of Turkey (via harboring the CPT’s “Bizim Radyo”), and İnönü was called to deny the accusations in public eye (Kirişcioğlu, 1973, p 201-3)

democracy, organizational structure, and policy preferences (labor rights, guarantee of fundamental freedoms and rights, land and tax reform), as well as personal differences between varying factions and ringleaders. In line with the discrete change approach, these developments could be read, as part of party change.

The scope of change in RPP showed the inclusion of a younger generation of policy prescribers that showed left-leanings in their policy offers. That being said the RPP did not make an effort to rebrand itself as a left-wing party. Rather it relied on the redefinitions of its older principles such as “etatism” and “populism”.

To that end, it could be said that ideas were neither necessary nor sufficient in explaining the party change in the RPP between 1950 and 1960. Only some discussions could be attributed to the differentiation of ideas between members regarding democratization and participation in the elections. Rather than extended discussions or factional friction in accordance, those disputes were resolved over the charisma of the chairperson, İnönü. As Kili (1976) observed, İnönü kept a “balancing act” over the upper echelons of the RPP organization.

Kili (1976) provided a picture of the matter:

“In the internal structure of the RPP, the factionalism and friction taking place as personal contradictions, until the left of center movement, did not come into being due to differences of viewpoints on party principles. At the root of all unisons and divisions was the aim to take over the party after the leader and be close to the leader. The struggle due to ideational differences started with the ‘Left of Center’ movement. However, friction until 1971 coup-by-memorandum did not reach a point of competition in the

administration that was caused by ideation in a left-wing party, leaving aside ‘traditional’ internal factionalism. It could be said that the leader’s habits of having ‘internal opposition’ represented in accountable party bodies, keeping factions together, and ‘keeping’ secondary leadership cadres ‘in balance’ had an effect. That habit pushed the leader closer to a certain faction at some points, and to another faction at other times. Those who were ‘removed from the circle’ yesterday, were included in ‘the circle, and those ‘close to the circle’ today were ‘pushed out of the circle’ tomorrow. Leader’s that attitude was perhaps born out of the RPP’s single-party era habits” (241-2).

İnönü shuffled the prominent figures and kept them in check by playing them against each other. When he felt threatened by potential contenders, he outplayed his perceived opponents with his role as the mediator in the party. For many in the RPP İnönü was a founding father and a hero. Until 1972, he was taken with utmost regard by almost all RPP membership.

The RPP in those terms carried over a dual stance as a historical burden to the next decade. On one hand, it was able to meaningfully change its by-laws and programmatic texts. On the other hand, these were undermined by factions and actors in the RPP when it came to application.

Overall party change in terms of issue variables and programmatic changes could also be attributed to the DP’s authoritarianism, as the tone of the programmatic texts gained a “rights” oriented outlook.

The party change in the RPP showed deviations from the expectations of the discrete change theory (Janda, Harmel, Edens, & Patricia, 1995). A series of electoral shocks

indeed provoked a change in the policy outlook of the RPP (175) moving further left on the political spectrum. However, the existing party leadership refrained from openly articulating it as socialism. Rather they explained their move via an existing series of principles (Six arrows, most importantly, in this case, etatism and populism). This was arguably mostly due to the effect of the anti-communist conception of politics, as a historical burden. In addition, the party change was seemingly limited in terms of leadership change, as only the general secretary was changed by the party organization. Still, this was indicative of factional disputes in the party. At least between 1951 and 1959, the dominance of the existing ruling bloc of the RPP was tested by internal opposition. The drive for the opposition was not ideological divides.

On one hand, the electoral shocks encouraged change. The RPP leadership had to accept that continuous defeats were not due to problems on the demand side of politics but due to the supply of the RPP. The need to expand its voter base pushed the RPP to reform its organizational reach, as well as extend its ideational efforts. 1959's "Declaration of Primary Aims" was a very good example of this tendency. While still not defined with an overarching ideological term, the RPP extended its policy advocacy to new grounds such as labor rights, political rights, redistribution, and social state. On the other hand, change in the RPP was arguably a continuity of a series of by-law changes that started in 1946 with a transition to multi-party politics in Turkey. The electoral shocks then further strengthened the desire to change from a political party that served the state, to a competitive political party. Its leadership and grassroots played a tug-of-war game, in which elections of party ruling bodies and key leadership positions were jealously coveted.

That fact leads to a further inference: There was seemingly a duality when it came to the RPP and the party goals of its leadership. On one hand, the RPP leadership saw itself as the founders of the Republic of Turkey and adhered to a goal of regime building/guardianship. On the other hand, the RPP's move towards being a competitive political party meant that its leaders engaged in alliance building with other parties in the political system and engaged in organizational expansion and specialization, which paved way for new ideas and actors to join the RPP. Significantly between 1955-1960 two goals seemed to align and produce favorable results for the RPP in the context of an increasingly authoritarian government. A series of further events between 1960 and 1961, shifted the context, and put two goals at odds.

3.2 Limits of Change in the RPP: 1960-1965

This subchapter focuses on the period between 1960 and 1965, to present the initial opportunities and limitations for the RPP in politics in a new era. By extension, these opportunities and limitations were also reflected in the party reform or organized efforts of party change in the RPP. The ideational developments towards the end of the 1950s were sidelined to the most extent due to internal resistance and environmental pressures. Moreover, the conservative party leadership did not allow for meaningful change in this period. To that end, I will shortly engage with the external and internal developments regarding party change in the RPP. The topics are external shocks and internal resistance to change, as well as efforts of the reformers in larger politics.

I will argue that the 27th of May 1960 Coup D'état was the main external shock for the upper echelons of the RPP leadership. This external shock had two immediate

effects on the RPP. One was the relaxation over the lifting of authoritarian pressures placed on the entire party system by the DP. However, the other was a pull factor for the existing RPP leadership to engage in regime building and regime guardianship extensively.

In terms of theory, there are two implications discussed in this chapter. Firstly, the post-coup environment and at least two coup attempts between 1961 and 1963 pushed the RPP leadership to focus on “regime guardianship” as a party goal. This meant that “vote” seeking, “office” seeking, and “policy entrepreneurship” goals were put aside for the while, except for the issue of labor rights. Secondly, as anticipated by the “discrete change” approach dominant faction of the party ‘conservatives/centrists’ were able to push for their agenda until the 1965 Elections. Lack of ideational differences between the dominant faction and their competitors fed into that situation and alienated especially the younger members of the RPP. The context of the 1965 General Elections itself was a significant shift in the party system for the RPP with the advent of the Workers Party of Turkey, and the application of anti-communism as an offensive strategy by the Justice Party. In that context, the RPP leadership returned to a reformist discourse that was last seen just after the 1960 coup d’état.

In this period, several divisions of generations and ideas started to appear.

Ultimately, according to Emre (2014a), two RPPs came out of this period between 1960-1965. The first one was “traditional supporters and historical heritage of the party [that] resisted change” or arguably the “young guard” of the RPP who was growing older by the day. The second RPP was one of the “progressive and reformist wings” of the RPP that came mostly from the “young Turks”, as I previously called

them (66). Both RPPs stayed under the guiding hand of İnönü who on one hand accepted the need to change, however, stayed true to his “regime guardianship” goal.

In that context the party change in the RPP was curbed to a great extent, causing internal problems, and further limiting its capacity to realize its policy prescription. The brand of politics that took place in these five years was built on the experience of the last decade. To that end, the top leadership of the RPP even placed itself on the “left of center” in the political spectrum, albeit on very shaky ground. Apart from the limitations and the small number of realized opportunities, a catchphrase came to be used in the RPP: “Left of center” which was going to be extremely important to understand the party change period in the RPP between 1965-1972. However, as I will present in the following subchapters this phrase and its initial journey gave some insights into the overall chances and limits of ideational aspects of the party reform in the RPP.

Overall, this period is significant for showing that lack of ideas and apathy to extend ideational efforts considering new social developments is a detriment for the party change, and by extension competitiveness of the party.

First External Shock: 1960 Coup D'état and Its Aftermath

The First of the “Second Republics” or the immediate aftermath of the 27th of May 1960 Coup D'état came with a chance for institutional retrenchment for the opposition parties, significantly the RPP. However, it soon proved “harmful” (Güneş, 2014: 24) as it both was a detriment to the public image of the RPP (Emre, 2014a: 74), and also increased resistance to change within itself (66).

The Coup D'état of 1960 was to the most extent a makeshift coalition of younger colonels and some older generals who were at the least displeased with the development of the army-government relations during the DP era (Esen, 2020: 6). After five years of plotting, the junior members of the officer core of the Turkish Army toppled the DP with an operation that received little resistance from the army itself (7). However as two different camps of the 27th of May Junta (one group wanted long-term military rule, whereas the majority wanted a “speedy return to parliamentary rule” (2)) came into a clash, the putschists required legitimation of their grab of power under the guise of a “revolution” and “a second republic”. Although the latter name was soon dropped, the official acceptance of the 27th of May 1960 as a revolutionary date persisted until 1980.

The 1960 Coup brought a period of military tutelage over civilian politics. National Union Committee [Milli Birlik Komitesi, NUC] immediately collected several university professors to write a new constitution. The issue of returning to civilian politics and keeping the military order caused a rift between the two camps of the Committee. After 14 hardliners were ousted and exiled to foreign missions as attachés, a new effort of military radicalism would emerge. The Unity of Armed Forces [Silahlı Kuvvetler Birliği, UAF] organization assembled several high-ranking military officials commanding key operational positions. A leading member, Talat Aydemir, would try to build a coalition within the army, and outside with journalists and intellectuals⁵¹ to topple the post-1960 Coup order. He engaged in one rebellion in 1962 and a coup attempt in 1963, which were suppressed by the İnönü governments. However, the image of RPP as “in league with the army, against the

⁵¹ Among them former RPP-member and Gülek's former vice-secretary Kâmil Kırkoğlu (Yalta, 2020: 490) (Deniz, 2018: 110).

nation” would become popular (Kili, 1976: 138) or even academic perception (Mardin, 1973: 155-6). On the other hand, the competition from the successors of the DP had been successful in portraying the RPP in league with the TAF. The result of this portrayal was the widespread belief in the general electorate that the RPP aimed “to rule despite the will of the electorate with the support of the Army” (Kili, 1976: 207). Uyar argued that the RPP’s support for the role of NUC in politics, local enmity towards former-DP elements, the mishandled trials of the DP members, and the coalition performance of the RPP forged an image that presented the RPP as a party that could achieve power only via a military intervention of some sort (Uyar 2017b: 177-8). As Emre argued, “The conservative wing in the party increased its power during the government period” (Emre, 2014a: 87). With the combination of connection with the Coup of 1960, the RPP appeared as an authoritarian party that represented the state as of 1965.

İnönü tried to curb the tendency of vigilantism of RPP members in the rest of the country via messages of moderation (Uyar 2017b, 13).⁵² It appeared as if the RPP leadership was playing a dual game of balancing the potential reaction against the RPP by former-DP, and at the same time clinging to the gambit of presenting the 27th May coup d’etat as a “revolution”. The Youth Branches of the RPP had a role in this, as the resistance and vigilantism against the former DP and then the Justice Party was committed by the students led by the members of RPP-leaning university members. This trend would change however with the advent of the Worker’s Party of Turkey [*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, WPT]. Overtime, left-right cleavage would split the

⁵² Bilâ (1987) narrated that the party leadership sent a note to local organizations with İnönü’s signature stating that the maladies caused by the toppled government should not have caused sentiments of revenge (251). Please see for the document, (Kili 1976: 136-8). Cılızoğlu narrated that Kamil Kırıkoğlu talked against these allegations. After an internal review committee wrote a report denying the allegations of brutal manslaughter, İnönü responded according to Cılızoğlu (2017) as “No, you will not say that [event] does not exist, you will give the image that it exists” (119).

student movement and the left-leaning students would join the WPT-connected Federation of Idea Clubs [*Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu*, FIC]

Still, the most important item in the legitimacy-seeking junta was a new constitution. The elected members of the “Founding Assembly” [Kurucu Meclis], were consisting of members of The National Unity Committee [Milli Birlik Komitesi, MBK] and the Founding Assembly. The second was dominated by RPP influence and the potential links to former DP were excluded from the constitution-making (Emre, 2014a: 64). This fact offered the RPP new opportunities in policy entrepreneurship and further consolidation of its party change. However, the coup d’état and its aftermath also limited the RPP leadership in two ways, as they were forced to engage in its “regime guardianship” against the disgruntled officer’s core and a traumatized political bloc of parties that emerged from the former-DP parts of the party system. As I will argue, these developments absorbed most of the RPP cadres’ energy in terms of conducting meaningful politics for a large part of the electorate.

The regime building and changing political landscape also brought new challenges for the RPP. The new principles that were put into the RPP’s repertoire, as well as the “historical burden” of anti-communism, were extremely important for the days to come.

Another limiting factor was the coalitions with the right-wing parties between 1961-1965. After the initial ban on political party activities on the 27th of May 1960 was lifted on the 13th of January 1961, several parties were founded as the DP’s successor (Emre, 2014a: 68). These parties (but especially the JP) managed to garner significant electoral support, especially after the capital punishments of former Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, former Minister of Foreign affairs Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, and

former Minister of Treasury Hasan Polatkan, a month before the elections of 15th of October 1961. The result of the elections was the inability of the RPP to garner votes enough for a mono-party government (as expected by the army officers).⁵³

The result of the 1961 General elections was a series of coalitions mostly forced by the army officers (Emre, 2014a: 70). The RPP grassroots and local organizations pressured the party centrum to an extent that made the PA decide to declare the RPP to stay in opposition “no matter what” on the 22nd of October 1961. However, after İnönü and leaders of other parties signed a protocol stating that they were going to “strive for the working of the democratic regime” efforts to stop the RPP from participating in the “national coalition” were undone (Bilâ, 1987: 261).

During the coalition period, successor parties of the DP, the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, JP) and New Turkey Party (Yeni Türkiye Partisi, NTP), alongside the Republican Peasant’s Nation Party (Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi, RPNP) held the RPP back in its policy entrepreneurship per its contemporary programmatic ideas. One continuous issue was a potential amnesty for the former-DP cadres in jail (Emre, 2014a: 71). Another significant aspect of the three coalitions of the RPP with right-wing parties was the constant tug-of-war between the disgruntled officers and students, and significantly the former-DP cadres and the Justice Party.⁵⁴ The main discursive tool of the right at the time was anti-communism (Emre, 2014a: 66) in

⁵³ The 1961 General Elections used a d’Hondt system with regional thresholds. The RPP was the winner in the elections with 173 seats with 36,7% of the vote. The JP received 158 seats with 34,8%, RPNP 54 seats with 14%, and the NTP won 65 deputies with 13,7% in the National Assembly (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2012: 4; 12; 25). The turnout was 81.4% during this elections.

⁵⁴ On the 28th of January 1962, after it was heard that JP Deputy Nuri Beşer had slandered the army officers at a drinking table a manhunt against Beşer started in Ankara. The JP headquarters were also attacked by angry students. Beşer was later apprehended and tried. Please see: 32. Gün Arşivi, 12.03.2021, 12 Mart Belgeseli, Tek Bölüm RETREIVED FROM: <https://youtu.be/UcCKCx5G0dM?t=3444> . One of the later youth leaders of the RPP, Süleyman Genç, was among the War School Students who attacked the JP building (Genç, 2020: 169).

contrast to the rise of the left. This point will be especially important for the 1965 general Elections. However, the most pressing issue for the RPP at the time was the realization of its policy prescriptions. Only developmental planning and the bills of “collective bargaining and strike” were declared in the 1st İnönü Coalition of the RPP and the JP. The rest of the policy items in the RPP program was left aside (Bilâ, 1987: 262-3).

Arguably, the RPP leadership backtracked from decade-long policy prescriptions and identity change in a year, due to the effects of the 1960 coup d'état and its aftermath. Rather than engaging in a completely competitive goal, the RPP leadership chose to appease the successors of the former DP, as they were polarized with the disgruntled army corps and the student movement.

However, the real blow for the RPP in the 1961 General Elections was the hanging of two former DP Ministers and former Prime Minister Menderes due to the decision of the post-coup trials in Yassıada. Throughout the Elections, successors of the DP and the RPNP had been propagating against the RPP by linking it to the coup d'état the previous year. Therefore, results were disappointing for the RPP in the 1961 General Elections (Kili, 1976: 178).

Regime Building: 1961 Constitution and “Declaration of First Aims”

Immediately after the Coup on the 27th of May, the Junta arranged for several university professors in Ankara for guidance in the coming days. The decision was to work on a new constitution. After the initial preparations, a Founding Assembly was gathered in January 1961. The upper house of this assembly was the members of the NUC. The lower house was called the Assembly of Representatives and it was

dominated by either RPP members or those who were elected with the backing of the RPP (Emre, 2014a: 61-2).⁵⁵ Out of the 75 members who were elected in the provinces via a three-tiered system that was designed to block former DP affiliated from being elected, the RPP managed to snatch a majority (62-3). The RPP secured either 142 or 175 seats in the Assembly of Representatives (63).

The main point of demarcation regarding political prescriptions was between “İstanbul” and “Ankara” groups. On one hand, the professors of the İstanbul University Law Faculty with three additions from Ankara University drafted a text that had “doubts about universal suffrage and political parties” and proposed to weaken the executive branch of the government. On the other hand, the draft prepared by the Ankara University Faculty of Political Science [Mülkiye] had no such doubts (Emre, 2014a: 63). The result was a text produced under heavy pressure from an RPP majority in commissions of the Founding Assembly (64).

Emre compared the texts of the “Declaration of Primary Aims” and the 1961 constitution and found that resemblances were “remarkable”. Seemingly, it was the ideational efforts of a group of young policy entrepreneurs in the RPP that gave the new regime its principal inclinations (Emre, 2014a: 65). The constitution was important in guaranteeing “freedoms of thought, speech, press, science, consciousness, the legal right to strike, and objectiveness of the state broadcasting” (except for communism which was limited by Articles 141 and 142 of the Penal Law (123)), neutral head of state, effective and actual audit of the executive branch by the

⁵⁵ According to Emre, the membership to the lower house was “determined by quotas”, as follows: “President (10), National Unity Committee (18), Provinces (75), Republican People’s Party (49), Republican Peasants’ Nation Party (25), Bar Associations (6), Press (12), Former Combats Federation (2), Chambers of Craftsmen (6), Youth (1), Trade Unions (6), Chambers (10), Teachers’ Associations (6), Agriculture Associations (6), Universities (12), Judicial Bodies (12)” and existing ministers in the cabinet” (2014: 62).

legislative branch, two-house parliament, “a supreme council of judges”, proportional system in free and fair elections, new internal regulations for the parliament, and the right to prove (65). The 1961 Constitution gave the left an important vantage point for legitimizing itself and its policy prescriptions, throughout the 1960s. The main ideational background for this was the Declaration of Primary Aims which was provided mainly by the younger generation of RPP politicians at the time, under the authoritarian pressures of the DP (64). Bülent Ecevit later claimed that the Declaration was the initial step for the “left of center” and “for rejuvenation of the RPP, a more realistic approach to democracy, social quality to state and further enhance the principle of populism” (Fedayi, 2006: 164-5).

Meanwhile, some centrist figures in the RPP were critical of the new constitution. According to Şefik İnan, the new constitution had clauses that curbed private enterprise. Fevzi Lütfü Karaosmanoğlu, who joined the RPP after his tenure as chairperson in the Freedom Party, argued that the constitution could harm the landowners. Finally, Ferit Melen the new constitution did not put enough importance on foreign investment in Turkey (Bilâ, 1987: 253-4). The lack of a clear idea or ideology that encompassed the policy prescriptions of the RPP allowed for more prominent members who opposed an extensive application of the RPP’s programme to curb policy entrepreneurship.

Arguably, this meant that the left-leaning politics were now legal (with the significant legal limitation of Articles 141 and 142) and part of the political system. This was in tandem with the operation of a younger generation in the RPP. This point is related to internal resistance to further change of identity and application of requirements of such change within the RPP.

In terms of context, the 1961 Constitution was directly linked to the rise of left-wing politics in Turkey. The most studied and celebrated example was the Worker's Party of Turkey. The WPT was founded by union leaders in 1961, and this early founding was marked by inexperience and ideological fuzziness on the part of the founders. In 1962 Mehmet Ali Aybar was invited to the party and elected chairperson (Lipovsky, 1991: 95-96). Later Party leader Behice Boran observed that the party program did not have the word "socialism" in it. An initial slogan of the Party was the "non-capitalist" development path, which was later replaced with a call to socialist struggle (97). A later discourse was a "second war of independence" that was to be kept within the framework of the 1961 Constitution and won via the peaceful and parliamentary acquisition of power (98). Lipovsky observed that Marxist orthodoxy in terms of the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat was rejected (98).⁵⁶

The main contribution of the WPT to the Turkish left was, arguably, its shaping of the intellectual ground as a non-Communist Party of Turkey (Türkiye Komünist Partisi, CPT) related organization. The larger intellectual circles and student movement would flourish under the guidance of WPT instead of RPP: After 1965, The Federation of Idea Clubs (Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu, FIC, later renamed Dev-Genç, Türkiye Devrimci gençlik Federasyonu, Revolutionary Youth Federation of Turkey) would become the umbrella organization for far-left student movements. Of course, Doğan Avcıoğlu's *Yön/Devrim* circle was another attraction point for the far-left-leaning army officers and students. As for the WPT significantly after 1968, ideological divisions within that party and its contenders from other factions of the

⁵⁶ Still the WPT was closer to Marxist Orthodoxy than the RPP's left of center. It had other slogans and policy tracks: Aybar initially offered an étatism that meant nationalization and state ownership of all sectors except the unprofitable (Lipovsky, 1991: 96). The WPT's land reform proposal comprised of a limitation of max land mass to 500 dunams (500.000 m²) and transfer of the ownership to the landless peasants.

larger left (significantly NDR (National Democratic Revolution, Milli Demokratik Devrim)) started to curb the attention and ability of the WPT to provide a viable competitive left-wing alternative in the Turkish Party System.

Arguably, the rise of the Turkish left in the 1960s was tied to the party change in the RPP, as much as it was related to the will of the Turkish far-left to appear in the political system. The increasingly left-leaning economy policy sets of the RPP (then still understood under principles of étatism and populism), and citizenship rights were reflected in the 1961 Constitution (mostly due to RPP dominance in the Founding Parliament). However, the RPP was unable to bear itself to pursue the further realization of the prescriptions of the 1961 Constitution or procure new policies, during its tenure in the coalition governments period of 1961-65. This was due to external pressures from the disgruntled officer corps of the Turkish Armed Forces, and the limitations placed by the coalition partners of the RPP, as much as the internal resistance of the dominant ruling faction in the RPP in that period. To that end, whereas the left-wing policy track met with several internal and external limitations in the RPP, this brand of politics was taken up by the WPT, in this period.

Anti-communism and the 1961 Regime

Even with an opening created for left-leaning politics in the 1961 Constitution, anti-communism was still a reality of the Turkish polity at the time and in the foreseeable future. This had immediate results: Left-wing politics could not present themselves in pure naming conventions and had to subvert their discourses, and the constant political reactionary ground opened for the political right. The first point was most visible with the WPT. Especially in its early years, WPT leadership preferred politically-neutral-looking vernacular such as “non-capitalist development” (Ünsal,

2019: 151). Significantly, the word “socialist” was added to its vernacular only after the 2nd Extraordinary Congress of WPT in 1966, with heated discussions that raised eyebrows at the discursive preferences of its leader Mehmet Ali Aybar. In any case, the WPT’s ideology had been fuzzy in its discursive aspect (181).

Since the single-party period, the RPP was both an applicant of anti-communism as well as, a victim of it. Significantly on the far-right and the center-right, the RPP came under the accusation of “paving way for communism” due to its policies around laicism (Meşe, 2016: 91-2). With the multi-party politics, both the RPP and then the DP governments used anti-communist and anti-Soviet elements to rally support from the reactionary populace (115-6). The RPP’s position was since the mid-1940s a position both against “extreme left” and “extreme right”. To that end, the RPP kept its anti-communist attitude over time although it evolved. The RPP’s anti-communist tendencies moved closer to the “non-communist” European Social democratic parties’ “increasingly shedding Marxist tradition, increasingly nervous about the class struggle, and increasingly skeptical about transforming capitalism by revolution” (Eley, 2002: 314; in Emre, 2014a: 83). RPP leadership still kept their narratives of being a bulwark against the “extreme-left”. However, whereas the JP took anti-communism to its core against both the WPT and the RPP, significantly after the advent of Süleyman Demirel as its chair in 1964, İnönü “used a more cautious language” which prompted allegations of “tolerating the communists” (153).

With the 1960 Coup and the relative opening of the political system to the left, anti-communism became a significant aspect of the left-right divisions. The political right took anti-communism to its core (Emre, 2014a: 66). This sentiment and rhetoric

turned first on the WPT and then against the RPP. On a visit by Aybar to Prime Minister İnönü on the 22nd of December 1962, regarding the attack on the WPT by the political right. İnönü was displeased yet, vocal in stating that the WPT was a legal party and the government was tasked to protect legal parties. Until, early 1965 and the fall of the 3rd İnönü Cabinet, İnönü, and RPP kept their distance from the WPT. Only after that point and until the end of the 1965 elections two parties engaged in amicable relations. Apart from this somehow brief period, criticisms and competition was an evident part of the RPP-WPT relations (154-6).

There was a connection between the anti-communism of the JP and the civil-military relations in the aftermath of the 1960 Coup dé'état. Accordingly, the JP had been a sentinel of the establishment and its guarantor institutions such as the National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu). It was a means for the JP, as a successor of the former DP, to be a staunchly anti-communist and nationalist party, as well as orienting itself towards 'the West'. Therefore with the establishment of the WPT in 1961 and significantly with its entry into the parliament, the JP increasingly became starker in its stance on anti-communism (Cizre, 1993: 45).

During the 1965 Campaign, anti-communist propaganda and action saw a new light. President Cemal Gürsel had become an honorary chair of the Turkish Association to Combat Communism (Türkiye Komünizmle Mücadele Dernekleri, TACC). That allowed the heads of the association to legitimize themselves in the public eye, and pursue ties with various bureaucratic echelons of the state (Meşe, 2016: 142). The TACC soon engaged in attacks and provocations against both the WPT and the RPP (143). Ultimately, İnönü pressured the Ürgüplü government and Gürsel, to stop backing the TACC. At least on part of Gürsel, the pressure was effective, as he

publicly resigned from the honorary chair position (143). Still, throughout the election campaign period in 1965, both parties received attacks by anti-communist groups and JP leadership which drew the two parties closer for that brief period (155-6).

In the next section, I will bring the matter of the policy entrepreneurship of the RPP in power, and internal developments that took place in the RPP between 1961-1965, due to the very same predicament. Caused by a series of external pressures curbing party reform and internal resistance to reform efforts, the legacy of the former decade had a limited effect on the policy entrepreneurship of the RPP in power and made party change in the RPP much more questionable. At the same time, this caused significant factional strife within the RPP which had lasting effects for the rest of the decade. However, one very significant example of how to get around such limitations was the Law of Collective Bargaining, Strike, and Lock-out, which came into existence under the tenure of the Minister of Labor, Bülent Ecevit.

RPP in the Government 1961-1965

The First İnönü Cabinet or 1st Mixed Government came into power due to pressure from the Unity of Armed Forces and in face of organizational resistance from the RPP (Kili, 1976: 178; Bilâ, 1987: 261-2). It stayed in power between 20.11.1961 and 01.06.1962. On the 22nd of February, the Cabinet survived a rebellion by Colonel Talat Aydemir. During its almost half-year tenure, it had 12 members from the RPP and 10 from the JP.

The program of the 1st Mixed Government had significant concessions from the RPP and some from the JP. One contradictory notion was the phrase Atatürk Reforms

[Atatürk Islahatı] in the Cabinet Program rather than Atatürk Revolutions [Atatürk Devrimleri], as stated in the RPP program. Further concessions for the RPP were the opening of private health institutions and private schools. The proposed change over the petroleum law was dropped, and the efforts for a new labor law were not mentioned. As for the JP, the issue of the amnesty for the former DP ministers and deputies in jail was “postponed” as a request by İnönü. This matter was a significant area of contestation between the Army and the JP. It was also the cause for the breakdown of the coalition in 1962 (Kili, 1976: 182-3; Bilâ, 1987: 262-3).

There were three visible spheres of influence in the 1st İnönü Cabinet: The landowners personified by Cavit Oral, industrialists and traders represented by Fethi Çelikbaş, and the poor and the fixed-salaried masses personified by Bülent Ecevit (Bilâ, 1987: 262).

The 2nd Mixed Coalition came into existence nearly after a month after İnönü resigned as the prime minister. The Second İnönü Cabinet was comprised of 13 RPP, 6 NTP, and 4 RPNP ministers. The Cabinet served between 02.07.1962 and 02.12.1962. Similarly, with the First cabinet the RPP organization, resisted and urged İnönü not to take up the reigns of Prime Minister (Bilâ, 1987: 264-5). This coalition survived the Coup attempt on the 21st of May 1963 by Talat Aydemir.

The Second İnönü Cabinet took the legitimacy of the regime created after the 27th of May to the utmost level and declared that it will safeguard against any, and all moves against the regime (Kili, 1976: 188). Unlike the program of the First İnönü cabinet, the program openly used both notions of “Atatürk Revolutions” and “social justice”. However, this time private enterprise was appeased even more “in contrast to the RPP program” (189). Tax immunity for working agricultural land, vocational

training and education reform, and changes in petroleum law were not mentioned in the 2nd İnönü Cabinet program (ibid.). Meanwhile, the labor bill had special attention, and the inclusion of the workers in public sector factories, and getting a share of the profit was mentioned for the first time.

This cabinet had mostly spent its days dealing with preparations of the 1st Development Plan, the 21st of May 1963 coup attempt and its aftermath, and the developing Cyprus issue. It broke down after NTP and RPNP's loss of votes in the local elections that year (Kili, 1976: 190). On the 9th of December, the RPP group decided not to further participate in coalitions (Bilâ, 1987: 276). However, this decision was going to have no effect after the JP leadership failed to assemble a coalition

The 3rd Mixed Coalition was presented by İnönü as a “reform cabinet”. Turhan Feyzioğlu and a group connected to him tried to bring the JP to the coalition but failed. The same group also worked against a potential coalition involving RPNP (now without Osman Bölükbaşı and his faction). In the end, the RPP created a minority government with the backing of independents in the parliament. One significant member missing from the cabinet was Fethi Çelikbaş.⁵⁷ It served between 30.12.1963 (Kili, 1976: 190-2; Bilâ, 1987: 277).

The 3rd İnönü Cabinet had increased its focus on rural development while keeping the non-interventionist position towards markets and foreign investment. Both the roles of private enterprises and state enterprises were accepted in healthcare (Kili, 1976: 193). Ultimately the presentation of this government as a “reform cabinet” was

⁵⁷ Kili (1976) noted that Çelikbaş was instrumental in implementation of the existing Petroleum Law and Foreign Aid Law. He was also responsible for removal of the bureaucrats who worked for national ownership of petroleum from the Turkish Petroleum Incorporated (205).

due to displeasure in the RPP organization caused by the lack of policy entrepreneurship in the previous government in line with the existing programmatic texts of the RPP (except for labor law reform) and inability pursue social and economic reforms envisaged by the 1961 Constitution and the emergence of far-left WPT (192-3). In other words, after the situation with juntas in the army was resolved permanently, İnönü toned down the “regime guardianship” goal and primarily started to re-engage in vote-seeking.

One influential turning point in the RPP policy entrepreneurship took place during the rule of this government: the Johnson Letter affair. In the context of the Cyprus Issue, Lyndon B. Johnson sent a letter to İnönü on the 5th of July, 1964. The letter was ill-received by İnönü. This was a turning point in the US perception of the RPP leadership. Apart from refraining from any military action in Cyprus, this event also affected İnönü to start using critical discourses against the US in his articulations (Emre, 2014a: 190). İnönü spoke to *Time* magazine on the 16th of April, 1964: “I believed in the leadership of the US within the alliance [NATO]. Now I am paying the price for it” (Bilâ, 1987: 278). Significantly with the fall of the last İnönü government in early 1965, the RPP moved closer to the anti-imperialist discourses of the broader-Turkish left of the day. This however did not bring “a unified front policy” between the broader left and the RPP. Rather, the RPP moved toward adopting the policy prescriptions of “western social democracy” (198-9).

The 3rd Mixed Coalition fell on the 13th of 1965, as İnönü promised if its budgetary bill received less than 266 votes in the parliament. Two groups (without providing further detail) offered two paths: One group wanted to retreat to the opposition in the parliament with the frustration [eziklik] of not being able to realize the RPP’s policy

positions, and every problem of the last four years being placed on the RPP's shoulders. Another group argued that since the government did not receive a vote of no confidence resigning from the government would cost votes. Arguably, the lack of effort to realize the policy prescriptions in RPP's programmatic texts was due to the pressures from the disgruntled army, right-wing parties' influence in subsequent İnönü coalitions, and finally more conservative members of the RPP themselves. Apart from creating the image of two RPPs (one centrist and regime-preserving and another left-leaning and competitive), the inability to openly reflect its changing politics by the RPP paved the way for the far-left to enter the political system more strongly. After internal struggles, the RPP started to lose its appeal significantly to the youth (Bilâ, 1987: 274).

The trend of the RPP leadership backing down from the shift toward left-leaning policy orientation arguably started sometime between August 1960 and August 1961. In August 1960 an interview by İnönü and then General Secretary İsmail Rüştü Aksal which stated that the RPP was a party which is on the "left of center" appeared in the weekly *Akis* (Emre, 2014a: 89). The interview stated that the RPP, from that day on, was going to tackle issues such as housing, labor relations, land reform, justice in taxation, and social order, as freedoms and democracy were not going to be as heated issues as in pre-1960 Coup period (Koç, 2017: 42-3). Arguably at this point and time, the RPP leadership had some idea of cleavage shifting as the political environment was also in flux. The influence over the constitution-making process via the dominance in the Founding Assembly was also evident. Therefore the vote-seeking, policy advocacy, and regime guardianship goals were arguably active. However, towards the 1961 General Elections, the motivations of the RPP leadership seemed to have changed. Arguably one significant shock was the acceptance of the

1961 Constitution with only 61.7% of the vote on the 9th of July 1961. According to Kili, the RPP had spent significant effort to propagate a “yes” vote (Kili, 1976: 168).

Apart from the factional friction with Kasım Gülek and his followers during the 15th Ordinary Congress of RPP on the 24th of August 1961, one significant event, according to Bilâ was the overall retreat from the Deceleration of Primary Aims. In this congress, a document called Declaration of Fundamental Aims [Temel Hedefler Beyannamesi]. The document according to Bilâ (1987) was much more abstract in general and focused on “ending past grievances” and repeating the left-leaning policy prescriptions (258-9). Kili (1976) provided a much more detailed picture: According to the RPP the principles presented in the Declaration of Primary Aims were realized and the next set of aims was the end of past grievances, development, equality in public services, education, the welfare state, tax reform, land reform, reform for forest villages (168-9).

One significant move in the 15th Congress came from Bülent Ecevit: Ecevit’s motion on giving a (maximum) 15% quota for labor representatives, in provinces where labor and craftsmen were numerous was accepted. The motion gave the right to appoint MP candidates (with an acceptance clause for local RPP branch executive boards) to the party centrum. Bilâ (1987) also quoted Ecevit as saying “We in our program claim that, as a Party, we are populist, étatist and social party. Then we do not allow for the worker to bring his/her voice in the legislative body” (257-8).

However, this was not realized due to internal resistance from the RPP organization (Atılğan, 2008: 266). This retraction in part of the RPP caused a significant backlash on the part of the Labor representatives, prompting either backing the WPT or establishing a new party.

The 1961 Electoral Platform, according to Kili (1976) focused on the aforementioned issues and placed special importance on the idea of “planned development”, as a continuum of the policy preferences of the RPP in the prior decade. However, she also stressed that the 1961 platform placed the private enterprise in special regard, as well as foreign investment, aid, and petroleum production. These were either softer than the RPP’s positions on the matter compared with the 1954 platform or appeared as a means of appeasement towards the entrepreneurial groups or foreign petroleum companies (173-6). This point was linked to the issue of Turkey’s and the RPP’s relations with the USA, significantly due to the Cyprus Issue. The right-wing of the RPP was quite active in pushing for curbing the RPP’s policy entrepreneurship.

Kili’s (1976) analysis of the policy entrepreneurship in the RPP, during the three coalitions via the programmatic text, was stark. Coalescing with right-wing parties, 27th May’s aftermath, persisting military tutelage over the political system, and at least two rebellions by a militant faction of the TAF limited the RPP’s hand externally in pursuing its policy goals to a full extent. In other words, the RPP leadership, significantly İnönü started to act with a motivation to guard the regime. The primary aim of the RPP in government, according to Kili, was to establish a democratic constitutional system (195). İnönü articulated that point in 1962:

“We are a political entity that sees the administration of our country in a correct and good way, only with the application of a democratic regime.

“In our country, there are those who internalized democratic regime as the primary and only means of administration, and also against them who argue for, what we call, totalitarian or closed regime... After all this experience, establishing a democratic regime for administration of the country, to raise

our people to a status of self-government is our primary goal” (Kili, 1976: 196).

The regime building/guardianship efforts were also extended with the establishment of constitutional institutions such as the Constitutional Court, High Council of Judges, Council of State, and Military High Court, along with the legal expansion of constitutional guarantees for political and citizenship rights for the press, university, and radio (Kili, 1976: 196). The planned development efforts were also started but only two years of the first development program was implemented by the RPP (197).

Another policy focus had been the expansion of healthcare with the building of health stations [Sağlık ocağı] starting from the easternmost provinces of Turkey. However, the number of healthcare personnel was severely lacking at the time, therefore limiting the effectiveness of the expansion (Kili, 1976: 199).

Still, on other policy venues, the implementation of the social and economic reforms was curbed, and the RPP’s governmental performance between 1961 and 1965 had severe contradictions to its prescriptions in its programmatic texts. On Land Reform, RPP had left the land reform bill preparations to two right-wing parties and their ministers, Avni Doğan and Mehmet İzmen. Both bills were eliminated before being brought to the parliament due to respective resignations of the 1st and 2nd İnönü Cabinets. In the 3rd Cabinet when the new bill was brought to the floor, the RPP’s motion to create a special commission to faster the process (instead of passing the bill separately through eight different commissions) was not held up by the RPP group itself and was defeated by the opposition. Although the RPP PG started an internal investigation that proved unfruitful. The RPP PG itself was not united behind the notion of land reform. On Foreign investment and aid, whereas the RPP opposed

the foreign investment law back in 1954, evidence showed that the amount of foreign investment nearly tripled in the 1961-1965 period. On the Petroleum Law issue, the RPP's position on this law was in stark opposition to the law since 1954. However, the Minister of Industry in the 1st and 2nd İnönü Cabinets was, former DP and FP member Fethi Çelikbaş. Çelikbaş was pro-market and pro-foreign aid since his tenure in the DP and was influential in the expansion of foreign investment in Turkey at the time, as well as limiting the chances of the application of RPP's existing policy prescriptions. During this period perhaps the most important success story of the RPP's policy entrepreneurship (apart from the regime building/guardianship efforts) was the labor law (Kili, 1976: 199-202).

Dark Horse: "Collective Bargaining, Strike and Lock-Out Law" of 1963

Around 1953 and 1954, the RPP added labor rights to its programmatic texts and then subsequently expanded on them until 1960. After the 1960 Coup d'état and its aftermath, the preparation of new labor law was written into the constitution. The process was followed closely and challenged at times by the labor movement (Emre, 2014a: 104). The labor movement organized itself around the issue of new labor law and constantly made itself felt for both the military transition government and the elected government. Unionized workers criticized and resisted the labor bill drafted by Cahit Talas, the Labor Minister of the transition government. After the 1961 Elections, "128 direct actions" were organized by workers and among them, 16 strikes took place (106). The Labor Law of 1963 was the only major application of the RPP's programme. It was made possible by Labor Minister Bülent Ecevit's, efforts (with the support of İnönü) and the labor movement's persistence against

opposition from within and without the RPP. Therefore it was a “dark horse” that managed to be successful, while all other critical policy entrepreneurship failed.

On the RPP front, the labor movement initially could not find the representation it was looking for. In the 15th Ordinary Congress in 1961, Bülent Ecevit gave a petition that allowed for the RPP centrum to apply a parliamentary candidate quota for labor representatives. According to the motion, a 15% labor quota for locations with significant working-class populations was to be placed, and it was accepted (Yaşlı 2020: 39; Bilâ, 1987: 255). However, during the 1961 Elections, that decision was not implemented, and labor representatives were not placed on RPP lists. According to Ecevit, some conservatives and progressives of the RPP backed that decision for different reasons. The first reason was a feeling of pessimism about the RPP receiving the labor votes. The other reason was preventing the labor movement from having a strong factional presence in the RPP (Atılğan 2008: 266). The immediate result was a breakdown of the relations between the RPP and the main labor union of the day Türk-İş and looking for the creation of other alternatives.⁵⁸ Ultimately, Union officials who were members of the “Founding Parliament”, were also expected to be picked for the 1961 Elections as candidates for deputies. However, they did not become candidates: “For example, with the efforts of a branch of the RPP administration 15 labor leaders were going to be candidates however, with the resistance of the party organization none were placed as candidates” (266).

⁵⁸ One potential route, that was not taken, was the project of “Laborers’ Party” [Çalışanlar Partisi]. According to Atılğan, Yön movement of Doğan Avcıoğlu was the prime influence in the endeavor of such a party. Around 1960’s the labor movement had no clear party allegiance while it kept a safe distance to the RPP. For Atılğan, another reason was potential imbalance that a coalition with the labor movement would cause in the factionalism of RPP, curbing the *eşraf* power (Atılğan 2008, 264-5). The other was, the WPT (Worker’s Party of Turkey, Türkiye İşçi Partisi) and it’s existence and subsequent advent stopped Laborers’ Party from coming into existence. According to Öner (1976), Muammer Aksoy had proposed Ecevit as a potential leader for this party. However, Ecevit refused the offer (48). Another potential route was mentioned by Emre (2014a: 142): “Social Security Party” initiative [Sosyal Güvenlik Partisi].

Interestingly Ecevit's efforts on the labor rights issue at the forefront of the RPP were not enough reason for him to be picked for the Labor Minister in the 1st İnönü Cabinet automatically.⁵⁹ Still, his views and performance carried him to the cabinet as a minister with the considerable insistence of Turhan Feyzioğlu and others (Kili, 1976: 184).

The importance of the labor ministry rose in with the 2nd İnönü Cabinet. Ecevit at that point went, as far as taking the rights of the agricultural sector workers into the agenda and considering allowing for the experience and views of the worker in the public sector, and including them in workplace administration and sharing the profit with workers (Kili, 1976: 189-90).

To that end, Bülent Ecevit's Ministry of Labor had the significant accomplishment of the "Collective Bargaining, Strike and Lock-Out Law" of 1963. According to Ecevit himself, the bill was his most significant political achievement (Emre, 2014a: 99).

The bill would be accepted after changes in 1963. Yaşlı asserted that the changes were an accomplishment of the labor movement (Yaşlı, 2020: 46). Ecevit's account and Emre's research provided another side to the story. According to Ecevit, he established amicable connections with Türk-İş and arranged lobbying efforts in the Parliament (Akar and Dündar 2008: 104). Akar and Dündar provided accounts that showed Ecevit bargained or even refused several petitions of the industrialists to unite managers of private and public economic establishments (105-6). In the end, even some of the opposing JP members of the parliament voted "yes" for the acts (Emre, 2014a: 109).

⁵⁹ According to Emre (2014), İnönü initially considered Kemali Beyazıt, who was a medical doctor. İnönü had a view that regarded labor relations to public health and hygiene (110).

Furthermore, Emre (2013), argued that the bill itself was in one way an accomplishment of the ideational efforts of the RPP Research Bureau Days. Cahit Talas' initial plan for the bill had met the opposition of the labor unions. According to Emre, Ecevit left the Talas plan aside and started working on his plans derived from the policy prescriptions of the RPP Research Bureau (73). It seemed, that Ecevit pushed the draft of the 27th of May government aside, and engaged in a closer relationship with the labor movement, in comparison with the employers.⁶⁰ Both labor leaders and Ecevit worked together on the bill, which İnönü approved (Emre, 2014a: 110). In Ecevit's account, he rationalized his motives by limiting the radical left (Uyar, 2017b: 120) while the "Kavel strike" was influential in the passing of the bill (Uyar, 2017b: 106). That achievement was met with the hostility of some, in the cabinet. For example, Ferit Melen accused Ecevit of being "a leftist" (Akar and Dündar, 2008: 106). Ministers and labor representatives met together at 3–4-month intervals, starting with 1962 Summer, for the duration of İnönü Cabinets. Labor representatives also participated in the drafting of the 1st Developmental Plan (Kili, 1976: 197). It seems Ecevit opened up participatory channels with the labor movement much to the dismay of entrepreneurial classes, and some pro-market members of the RPP.

The social security measures were expanded to "even smallest workplaces", pensioner workers and immediate family members of the workers, and working women's pension age was lowered to 50 from 55. Principles of the participation of workers in the workplace administration and sharing profits of workplaces with workers up to 10% of the revenue were also accepted (Kili, 1976: 197).

⁶⁰ Employers were openly critical of Ecevit and one representative Şahap Kocatopçu called Ecevit "biased" and argued that he stood with the labor (Emre 2014a: 111).

However, there were also “deficiencies” in the new set of laws. In 1989 Ecevit underplayed the effect of the labor movement as much smaller and “negligible”. According to him three deficiencies of the laws were “denial of the right to strike to civil servants”, “working-class not taking a leading role in the society for the rights of others”, and lack of “industrial democracy”, as workplace participation of workers to “administration, profit, and responsibility” was limited. Ecevit claimed that those deficiencies were the results of “the conservative wing in the RPP and the conservative coalition partners” of the RPP (Emre, 2014a: 117).

Ultimately, Ecevit’s claim for the achievement of the set of labor and social security acts provides only an incomplete picture. Rather it seems from the literature that the newly organized labor movement and Ecevit worked together to get a better (but still not fully beneficial for workers) set of rights, by working together and lobbying their way into the parliament. This was not taken well by the conservatives in the RPP. Still, it was an achievement that gave Ecevit the outlook of a sentinel of labor rights for the rest of his political career. All in all, it was a collective effort on the part of young civil society and politicians working on the potential of the parliamentary democracy, collectively to a shared victory. This episode was perhaps the clearest behavior of “policy entrepreneurship” on part of the RPP leadership although with internal resistance to it at times.

Factional Disputes and Internal Opposition

The RPP had carried over one factional strife to be resolved from the 1950s: İnönü-Güleç strife. Other members of the “young guard” have played some role in the revitalization of this rivalry. However, starting with the first coalition governments period of the Republican history, along with the existing weight of the transitional

regime building period, neither the RPP party organization nor the ordinary citizen did not have their wishes fulfilled dynamically and satisfactorily, in the subsequent governments. At the same time, accomplishments of the Party were being transmitted to neither the party grassroots nor the electorate clearly (Kili, 1976: 140).

After the 1961 Constitutional Referendum, Gülek and his faction made themselves felt in the internal politics of the RPP. Gülek spent the two years after his dismissal due to the “Fens Letter Affair” organizing in the local RPP ranks. In March 1961, leading members of the RPP centrum engaged in “wide visits” to local RPP branches. There were also reported fistfights. Significantly, Gülek won the congress in his hometown and important agricultural center of Adana (Bilâ, 1987: 254-5). The apex of Gülek’s activity took place in the 15th Ordinary Congress of RPP on the 24th of August 1961. That day Gülek’s daily *Tanin* named İnönü’s coalition as “Neo-RPPians” [Neo-CHPliler] (Tanin, 1961). This was perhaps emblematic of the ongoing change in the RPP. Gülek’s group was aware of the changes and tried to present their position as a claim for reflecting the greatness of the “old RPP”. Two prominent factions in this congress were the “Pashaists” and “Gülekians”. In this Congress, İnönü managed to outmaneuver Gülek via his personal charisma. His speech was understood in the Congress as “either me or Kasım”, and the majority put their support for İnönü (Kili, 1976: 140). The fact that Gülek’s news outlet called İnönü’s leadership coalition the “Neo-RPP” was telling in terms of the party change in the last decade.

After the “disappointing” result of the 1961 General Elections (Kili, 1976: 141), the clientelist network started to fail as the new principles declared to the public caused a contradiction between the Party organization and the Party leadership, and

throughout the coalitions period local RPP branch meetings turned into meetings of “presentation of complains” and defense of several members (142-3). When faced with requests for local services such as “work, road, water, electricity, education, healthcare” from the RPP grassroots, the party centrum responded with “let’s not engage in partisanship” (Bilâ, 1987: 142-3; 263; 266). Arguably, İnönü had left “vote-seeking” behavior aside to guard the regime. The height of the arguments between local RPP branches and the party centrum arguably took place during the “little congress” on 20-23 July 1962. Upon hearing complaints of “the things we had to bear while in opposition were not enough, so we still have to bear” İnönü responded:

“There are complaints about we are unable to find remedies to old problems and pains. There are complaints about loyalty and solidarity being unrealized. I am sure you are the utmost targets of such complaints. (...) The seat of power that the RPP sits on today is a seat of compromise. The resolution of complaints depends upon compromise, the patience of citizens, their understanding of the country, and appreciation of good relations” (Bilâ, 1987: 267).

Arguably, contradictions between the party centrum, and local RPP organizations fed into further factionalism. Between the 15th Congress in 1961 and the 16th Ordinary Congress in December 1962, İnönü had to tighten the leash of party discipline, due to rising voices from local organizations, and members of the young guard. According to Bilâ, one case was striking: A month after the “small congress” mentioned above during a PA meeting Ferda Güley argued that:

“There is a belief that İnönü is the guarantee of the regime. My proposal is this: İsmet İnönü, should resign from the chairpersonship of the RPP, after the most pressing laws and the development plan is accepted. Then, someone whom everybody accepts should be brought to the helm of the RPP, while he is alive. After that, İnönü should resign as the head of the government and should stay out of government as a guarantee and force of the regime” (Bilâ, 1987: 268).

When former Minister of State, Avni Doğan said that “İnönü only wants something from the party organization and does not give anything back”, he was scolded by İnönü, and immediately resigned from the PA. After the RPP missed votes in Autumn 1962, at the amnesty bill voting, several deputies were sent to the Disciplinary Committee [Haysiyet Divanı] (Bilâ, 1987: 268).⁶¹

Between October and December 1962, İnönü responded to rising factionalism, due to personal friction between him and others in the RPP, via an offensive against those “engaging in democratic or anti-democratic plots”. Those words were aimed at Nihat Erim, who was blamed for serving the DP after 1954 and Avni Doğan and Kasım Gülek who were accused of pursuing connections with the “Fourteens” (exiled members of the NUC), Talat Aydemir, and his junta (Bilâ, 1987: 269).⁶² After the accusations of İnönü, Gülek, Erim, Doğan, and Turgut Göle criticized İnönü publicly and pointed at the role of İnönü’s son-in-law Metin Toker, and his weekly *Akis*.

⁶¹ Bilâ noted that Kasım Gülek, Sabri Vardarlı, Şükrü Koç, Necip Mirkelamoğlu, Abdurrahman Altuğ, Şükrü Yüzbaşıoğlu and İsmail Ertan (Bilâ, 1987: 268).

⁶² The memoir of Aydemir (2017: 130; 139), showed that Avni Doğan connection was there, and he participated in at least one “coordination meeting” of the 21st of May coup attempt. Osman Deniz (2018) also confirmed Avni Doğan and Kamil Kırıkoğlu, in his memoirs first hand. He also claimed that Aydemir had connections with Nihat Erim, Turgut Göle, Selim Sarper and Kemal Satır (110). Yalta (2020) confirmed the meeting Aydemir mentioned, and added at least one meeting taking place in Doğan’s house in Ankara (533-4). He also provided more context about the involvement of Kırıkoğlu in the junta (468-9; 490).

General secretary of the time, Kemal Satır joined the fray on İnönü's side (Bilâ, 1987: 269-71).

There were three factions in the 16th Ordinary Congress of RPP on the 14th of December 1962: Party centrum, Gülek-Erim faction, and "Third Worlders" [Üçüncü Dünyacılar]. İnönü pushed for banning his major dissidents from the party for a year and said in the commission with a personal appeal: "My body is unable to bear all this mentally and physically. I would be grateful if I am excused" (Bilâ, 1987: 271-3). On the 19th of December, Satır was elected as General Secretary by the PA, and on the same day, Kâmil Kırıkoğlu resigned from the RPP (274).

Breakouts and "wide purge" [geniş temizlik] continued in the aftermath of the 16th Congress. İnönü removed 6 more parliamentarians from the party, along with Doğan and Gülek for good to suppress factionalism in the RPP, using connections with the Aydemir's junta. Gülek made a final bid for the RPP chairpersonship in 1966, however, he could not be effective, and resigned from the RPP for good in 1967 (Bilâ, 1987: 274-6).

The 17th Ordinary Congress of RPP which convened on 16th October 1964, did not see a significant factional dispute. Rather Congress approved a declaration called "A Progressed Turkey is Our Ideal" [İleri Türkiye Ülkümüz]. The declaration was in contradiction with the 1961 Consitution on two issue areas: Rural development and the role of private enterprise, and Nationalism (Kili, 1976: 153-9).

Such factional conflict did not originate from ideational issues. These frictions were rather an opportunistic bid to use unhappiness in the RPP organization to grab chairpersonship (Kili, 1976: 145). An overview of the factional friction between

İnönü and the “young guard” supported this comment and appeared to be an extension of the rivalries of the prior decade. The sides did not produce an ideational critique of each other. Rather several figures made a bid on the chairpersonship and ruling positions of the RPP.

Apart from the Gülek’s Faction and other members of the “young guard” such as Göle, Erim, and Doğan, there was growing disgruntlement in the RPP party organization. The problem arose from RPP Centrum's refusal of “patronage”, and inability to bring about its programmatic policy prescriptions to reality for the most part, for her the problem was, in reality, a matter of representation in RPP.

Throughout the İnönü period, İnönü believed that the CAC should not interfere with the issues of the government and the Parliamentary Group (henceforth PG).

Simultaneously, he was effectively using the rifts between the Party Center and the PG to balance each other and control the RPP. Kili correctly argued that in a democratic party it is not possible to sever the ties of the party organization’s representative in delivering requests, and complaints of its grassroots to its PG (Kili, 1976: 144). She concluded that in this period the RPP was not an “organization party” that could deliver its policy requests and ideas through the necessary institutions of the party. This was partly due to a fear of turning into the “party of Union and Progress Central Committee” which held all the reigns in its hands authoritatively. However, she found this fear unfounded and further argued that it was a problem caused by a lack of knowledge regarding the internal processes of political parties as modern political institutions (144-5).⁶³ A rift grew between the

⁶³ In the 15th Congress in 1961, one opposing view towards İnönü’s handling of the party came from his townsman Nüvit Yetkin. According to him, the RPP Center, and the Government, was seen as united by the party organization. For Yetkin, the responsible counterpart was the Government. He argued that everybody in the party agreed that RPP was a democratic party that did not adhered the

RPP Centrum, and especially the younger members of the RPP. Arguably, the RPP leadership refrained from engaging in “vote-seeking” and “office-seeking” behavior due to the context of appeasing a rebellious army and the DP’s successors simultaneously. Only after the fall of the last İnönü Coalition, did İnönü switch his discourse towards a more reformist tone and re-engaged in “vote-seeking”.

The coalitions with right-wing parties were significant in two interconnected ways: The entrenchment of the centrist faction of the RPP and the curbing of the left-leaning policy track of the party program. Emre reported that the centrist figureheads in the party assembly reacted against the application of the left-leaning policies brought in by the RPP Research on grounds of anti-communism. Consequently, any internal friction between potential “progressives” and “centrists” were kept in check by İnönü until 1965 (Simav 1975: 77-83; Emre 2014a: 147).

Another wave of criticisms over policy prescriptions and their application took place with the 1st İnönü Cabinet and continued in the 2nd. Two consequent waves of opposition in the RPP regarding the government performance of the party. The first wave began two months after the beginning of the coalition in November 1961. Stark opposition to the handling of the governments rose within the RPP.

“The party has become a collective company [şirket] Group supervision is not allowed to proceed. Deputies who bring any main issue to the [Parliamentary] Group are met with İsmet İnönü and issues are put aside by saying, motherland, nation, sacrifice...

CUP-style central committee politics. “The RPP is a democratic party that is governed from bottom to top, not top to bottom” (Kili, 1976: 143-4).

“Deputies are made into robots. Group decisions are binding to all, voices are drowned, and issues are left in dark” (Bilâ, 1987: 263).

On the 6th of February 1962, 77 members of the first wave of opposition due to poor governmental performance became public.⁶⁴ Until May 1962, 63 among the group continued to pressure the RPP via motions to prioritize “resolution of national issues [milli davalar]” and then the matter of amnesty for the former DP members (Bilâ, 1987: 264). The last move by 31 deputies among the 63, voted “no” for the 2nd İnönü Cabinet at the RPP Group meeting (266).

The second wave of criticisms was made via members of RPP youth branches. On the 4th of January 1963, CAC member Kemal Anadol and some Youth Branch chairs resigned from their posts. Their criticisms according to Bilâ were concessions from Atatürk’s and RPP’s principles, not placing an effort to re-establish People’s Houses and Village Institutes, and damaging the principles of Populism and Secularism. Existing RPP branches responded to this wave of criticism by making their counter declarations and denying that there were “concessions”. This wave of intra-party criticism was short-lived (Bilâ, 1987: 274-5). The Youth branches took an ideologically dual stance, between a majority staying within the line of the RPP centrum, and those who defended the idea of socialism, during this period.⁶⁵ On the road to the 2nd Ordinary Congress of the RPP Youth Branches in 1962, a report by the İstanbul Branch stated that they “found the notion of the national coalition “dangerous and purposeful” (Kaya, 2021: 38-40).

⁶⁴ Bilâ (1987) reported some prominent names: “Mustafa Şükrü Koç, Fenni İslimyeli, Kemal Demir, Nadir YAVUZKAN, Hüdai Oral, İsmail Ertan, Fahir Giritlioğlu, Cevat Dursunoğlu, Gıyasettin Karaca, OrhanEyüpoğlu, Suphi Baykam, Vefa Tanır, Muammer Ertem, Ali Rıza Ulusoy, Ahmet Şenerü Ali Rıza Uzuner, Kenan Esengin, Mehmet Ali Pestilci, Oğuz Oran, Coşkun Kırca” (264).

⁶⁵ Two names noted by Kaya (2021), were Kemal Anadol and Necati Atasay (121).

The organization of RPP had severe problems with the Party Centrum's handling of the coalitions and policy entrepreneurship. However, as presented by the example of the younger members in the Youth Branches the internal opposition was slowly gaining ideational characteristics. Left-leaning ideas were turning into a matter of defending left-leaning policy prescriptions in the RPP's programmatic texts and showing the first glimpses of a leftist identity forming. The RPP went to the 1965 General Elections in such a complicated situation. Before the elections, significantly after the fall of the last İnönü Coalition, İnönü had engaged in pushing for a left-leaning reformist tone in the RPP's policy prescriptions. However, the JP had activated polarization via the left-right cleavage and accused the RPP (and the WPT more so) of allegations of communism.

RPP's Identity between 1960-1965 and "Left of Center"

By 1960 the RPP was experiencing change from being a founding and developmental single-party which was absorbed by the state apparatuses to a competitive political party that situated itself against the authoritarianism of the DP and adhering to an increasingly left-leaning programmatic solution that included citizenship rights, social security, labor rights, and land reform. However, these inclinations did not have an utterance until August of 1960. Even then, the RPP leadership struggled to move towards a clear-cut articulation of their changing position. However, after fourteen years of change, there was finally a prescription for RPP's place on the political spectrum. It was the usage of the phrase "left of center" by General Secretary İsmail Rüştü Aksal and İnönü (Emre, 2014a: 89; Koç, 2017: 42).

The following phrases in the weekly *Akis*, on the 31st of August 1960, were informative of the Party leaderships motive for the future:

“...However, the issue of what was the RPP’s stance on important problems of the country had to be presented clearly. The RPP was going to build its election propaganda on such a case. In the previous elections, promising freedom, voicing imprisoned journalists’ troubles, showing grievance over the issue of the economy, and rising against corruption cases had been enough.... Shortly, what was the party going to do on the topics called “Fundamental Issues”, when it had the rule?

“First and foremost, a point was rightly made. The RPP was the party, among all parties, that had adopted [benimsemiş] contemporary mode [bugünün modası], socialism. Etatism was one of the six principles, and, for example, the DP had championed liberalism and the free market for its opposition between 1946-1950. After its tenure, however, all those discourses had vanished, leaving only opportunism yet, there was no doubt that the RPP was the party that kept the welfare of large masses of people and opposed the accumulation of capital in certain hands. Now that path was going to be kept a bit clearer, the resolution of the country’s problems was going to be taken into consideration with a socialisant [sosyalizan] view. That did not mean that the old party had any ich for being socialist [sosyalistliğe heves ettiği]. Only, things were going to get cleared crystal [*mettre point sur les i, i’lerin üstüne nokta konacaktı*]. The RPP was going to be at the degree of the Democratic Party in America on the left of center. Of course, there was always the

possibility of other parties being founded even more on the left of the RPP...”

(Akis, 31.08.1960: 26).⁶⁶

The above text showed that the RPP’s leadership at the time was taking the idea of “being on the left” into consideration. This was perhaps a reflection of bringing an expansion of the vernacular of the RPP. The above text also shows that the phrase “left of center” [ortanın solu] came into being, as a floating phrase, within the RPP ranks as a self-location and self-identification on the left-right axis in a party system that was evolving away from the two-party system (Sayari, 1978). İnönü saw the discursive change so far as a matter of continuing his age-old policies. There was nothing to be alarmed about, at least from the cold war perspective. Still, the Party would adhere to a modernized form of étatism concerning the social justice principle. Application of the principle of social justice was not going to be so easy for its adherents in the policy-making world. Then, perhaps it was not taken into consideration seriously enough: The use of the phrase “contemporary mode”, and openly declaring to take “a socialisant view” into consideration, while being on the “left of center” was merely linked with a rephrasing of one of the six principles of RPP. It was good old étatism with a modern twist. Güneş Ayata (1995) interpreted the “left of center” usage of the RPP in the context of the 1965 Elections, however, it is still explanatory for this initial usage: The usage of the term “left of center” did not present an ideological shift for the RPP or changing its program. It was to “redefine existing views of the party with fashionable terms in the post-1960 coup d’état.”

(82). However, in the context of the post-coup developments, 1961’s electoral

⁶⁶ According to Kalkan (2017), first reference to any usage of “left of center” in Turkish was done by Nadir Nadi Abaloğlu in *Cumhuriyet* on 31st of July, 1945. In a column titled “Which Socialism” Nadir Naid quoted Franklin Delano Roosevelt as saying “I am neither on the left or on the right. I am standing on the center, leaning slightly to the left” and then called this position as “left of center”. This usage was in line with the utterance of İnönü and Aksal, and later Nihat Erim. (160).

blunder, and subsequent coalition governments the term “left” was entirely put aside by the RPP leadership.

As discussed above during the factional struggles in this period between 1960 and 1965 there were disparate voices that called for left-wing politics in the lower echelons of the RPP. 1961 constitutional referendum and General Elections were also emblematic of the advent of the centrist faction in the RPP which pursued market or private enterprise-oriented economic policies, as well as the side-lining of left-leaning policy prescriptions in an environment that required the energy and attention of the RPP leadership and particularly İnönü in keeping the political regime together working against a DP-reaction or the Army action.

Between 1961-1965 only some individual references by the RPP appeared in the press.⁶⁷ Koç (2017) referenced two: Nihat Erim stated that he was on the “left of center” in April 1962 in weekly *Yön* (45).⁶⁸ Another reference belonged to the teacher’s representative and then RPP parliamentary deputy, Mustafa Şükrü Koç. He stated that the RPP with its revolutions and philosophy was “a party on the left of center” (ibid.).

One publicized discussion regarding the RPP’s identity on the left took place in 1962 during a PA meeting. Turan Güneş, Bülent Ecevit, and İbrahim Öktem argued that the RPP had undergone problems to attract youth for membership and was losing the

⁶⁷ Other two documented instances were from 1962 and 1963. In an article on NUC in weekly *Akis*, members of the TAF were compared with other countries and it was stated that whereas “in other countries many armies believed in conservative ideas and took a path of right of center, TAF is progressive, reformist and on left of center” (Akis, 1962, 7). The other instance was documented by Atılğan (2008) and it was a usage by Abdi İpekçi on how the newly founded Socialist Cultural Association [Sosyalist Kültür Derneği] was parallel to socialist and labor parties in their ideas which were deemed “left of center” (277). I would like to thank erit Salim Sanlı for pointing to these sources.

⁶⁸ Erim stated that he believed in individual enterprise in economy, while thinking that social justice was equally needed. Therefore he thought himself as being on the left of center (Koç, 2017: 45).

attention of the youth to the WPT on the left. They asked for the party to turn to a new “way” [yön]. The majority of the PA, however, including Emin Paksüt, Ferit Melen, and Atalay Akan attacked the trio due to semantics and raised suspicions of communism (Güneş, 2009: 67).⁶⁹ Remembering Kili’s (1976) observation on the continuous debates in local and national congresses (142-3), it could be argued that the post-coup context curbed the efforts of the “young Turks” in the party towards meaningful change, unlike in 1958-9 period.⁷⁰ Güneş, later claimed that that event was emblematic of the divisions in the RPP members who were part of the former FP, such as Emin Paksüt and Fethi Çelikbaş (Simav, 1975: 77). Güneş also claimed that İnönü was not present in the meeting, and the head of the meeting Aksal took to the middle ground which prompted the “conservative” majority to defeat their proposal (84). The left-leaning minority in the RPP PA took the potential challenge of WPT and the birth of socialism in the Turkish political system. However, the right-wingers in the administrative bodies immediately struck back, signaling a trend.

The next cluster of usage of the term “left of center” in the context of the RPP appeared in the context of the fall of İnönü cabinets. Right before the end of the 3rd İnönü Cabinet on the 13th of February, 1965, 28th of January issue of weekly *Kim* magazine, then owned by Orhan Birgit, presented Prime Minister İnönü’s speech in the 4th Labor Assembly. The journalistic narrative of İnönü’s speech⁷¹ was presented as “On the left of center” by Kim in a subheading. The article argued that the Prime Minister’s speech was an articulation of “the Republican People’s Party having an

⁶⁹ Yön was the name of an influential socialist news magazine run by Doğan Avcıoğlu.

⁷⁰ Weekly Akis, run by İnönü’s son-in-law Metin Toker, published a piece on “electoral geography” of Turkey on 9th of March 1960, two months before the coup d’état. The cover of the issue presented a picture of an overwhelming majority of CHP on a map of Turkey. Editorial piece of the article also mentioned the RPP as a party getting closer to seat of power with each passing day (Akis, 09.03.1960).

⁷¹ Please see Ulus, 26.01.1965, “Köylümüz de sosyal güvenliğe kavuşacak”, 14865, 1; 7.

identity of a party that economically and socially on the left of center, and defending democratic regime” and then the RPP was likened to the British Labor Party. The article mentioned those who wanted “such an air [of left of center]” were in a struggle against “a great front of resistance”. The article then turned its criticisms on “those fluttering with dogmatic views, showing aggressive behavior on extreme-ends” (Kim, 28.01.1965: 5-6).

In the same issue of *Kim* two letters by Bülent Ecevit and WPT Science Committee member İdris Küçükömer, and one article by Ecevit appeared. Letters by Ecevit and Küçükömer revolved around their interaction during a panel session in Ankara Medicine Faculty on the 9th of January, 1965. Küçükömer in his letter corrected a misspelling in his words as appeared in the previous issue of *Kim*. Ecevit’s letter, however, presented a polemical interaction.

“Küçükömer told in such a way, that people and institutions could not change, therefore İnönü could not change and therefore he could not realize necessary reforms, and ended his words as ‘İsmet İnönü is dead’.

“I, in my response to Mr. Küçükömer, told that İnönü was a person that could renew himself in the face of changes in social life and a leader in many new things... And I said ‘Such a person is not dead. In reality, some intellectuals who are blindly stuck to doctrines born a hundred, two hundred years ago, but died fifty years ago are dead’”. (Kim, 04.02.1965: 25)

Ecevit’s response carried over to his article in the said issue, titled, “Defeat of Dogmatism”. In this article Ecevit, based his argument on the “17-month-old Collective Bargaining order”. According to Ecevit, it was impossible to revoke the

current regime without revoking democracy, as it was a complementary part of the democratic regime and constitutional requirement. Ecevit designated two poles that might have wanted to revoke the labor regime: One pole was of those who wanted to establish and sustain “a feudal order or tutelage or lordship over a society industrializing in democratic regime” to sustain their interests. For Ecevit, figures on that pole used to blame those who argued for unionism and the right to strike as communists, or “being loyal to a regime that did not recognize any of those rights”. The other pole was a group that “reckon that without all economic activities were taken under state monopoly, freedom to the enterprise was annihilated, society was put through a period of class conflict, and established social and political order was fundamentally collapsed, social justice could not be provided and workers’ rights could not be protected”. According to Ecevit, that second group was so dogmatic, that any reforms and guarantees to develop “class cohesiveness” [sınıf kaynaşması] with recognition of state and private enterprise was seen as a hindrance to themselves. For Ecevit, those opposites worked to collapse the new labor regime which was akin to those in western democracies and nowhere to be found in communism (Kim, 04.02.1965: 8-9).

This instance of verbal friction and its subsequent appearance in Kim was important. Ecevit, later in 1965, stated that in that panel session in Ankara medicine Faculty, he brought up “left of center” (Emre, 2014a: 89; 264). The Ecevit-Küçükömer encounter could be seen as an instance of WPT-RPP competition.⁷² It pointed at meaningful ideational aspects of the differences between two left-wing figures. In

⁷² The words “now slightly on the left of center” was used regarding the RPP by an editorial piece in the daily *Akşam*, nearly a year before 1965 General Elections, on 30.11.1964 (Akşam, 1964). *Akşam* was increasingly connected to the WPT between late 1964 and 1966, primarily due to two names: Çetin Altan and Doğan Özgüden. Özgüden (2007) described his editorial ascendance in *Akşam* and stated that with Altan’s columns and Özgüden’s guidance made *Akşam* a newspaper that supported electoral campaign of the WPT (670). At that point editorials of *Akşam* were written by Özgüden.

addition, it was a rare instance of identity formation on the part of left-leaning members of the RPP. The discussion was presented in such a way by *Kim* that it pointed provided a stance both against right-wing and far-left elements in the Turkish party system at the time. This theme was a staple of RPP's ideas and was constantly repeated by carriers in the RPP.

The second instance appeared in the next issue, on the 4th of February. According to *Kim*, RPP's Eminönü District Chairperson Nermin Neftçi arranged for a series of seminars "to find itself and its place in a way that is closed to interpretation". In the first seminar, Coşkun Kırca argued that although the RPP was a party "on the left of center" (Kim, 04.02.1965: 14). The third article on the 11th of February stated that the RPP Party Assembly declaration on the previous week redeclared the RPP as a party on the "left of center" as a "clarification" (Kim, 11.02.1965: 10).

Still, the identification of "left of center" was mostly used by RPP members who were not considered at the leadership level. At the same time, the term did not carry enough ideational potential before the 1965 elections to point at an organized movement in the RPP. The reappearance of "left of center" at the leadership level was going to take place several months later during the campaign for the 1965 General Elections.

As for Berman's fourth question, the demarcation line between the social democrats in the RPP, and socialists in the WPT was drawn before the 1965 General Elections campaign. The difference was articulated over anti-dogmatism and refusal of orthodoxy in left-wing thinking. The difference between the RPP and the WPT was also clear on several issue variables, such as the role of the state economy, land reform, and redistribution (Erdem, 2012: 337-9). to think that "left of center".

Therefore it is impossible to deduce the ideas of the RPP from another party actor's ideational variables within the same polity, namely the WPT.

1965 General Elections

The road to the 1965 General Elections had been rocky for the RPP. Towards the 1965 General Elections campaign, its identity crisis had reached its zenith. WPT managed to appear as a strong competitor on the left. After a leadership change that gave control of the party to a group of left-wing intellectuals, the WPT became a new venue for the larger intellectual circles and university youth to gather (Lipovsky 1991: 95-7). That meant the RPP lost its appeal as a progressive political institution in the eyes of some supporters, even though it still adhered to left-leaning policy prescriptions such as land reform, social justice, and development of individual capacity in its election manifesto (Kili 1976: 154-8). On the other hand, the main center-right party and the DP's prominent successor Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, JP) assembled anti-communist "civil society" organizations to meet that perceived threat.

Famously, on the 25th of July 1965, during a scheduled visit to RPP Beşiktaş District Branch in İstanbul, prominent journalist Abdi İpekçi asked İnönü, whether the RPP could be considered as a party on the left of center in the political spectrum following its policy prescriptions. İnönü responded positively to that question (Emre 2014a: 89).⁷³ İnönü's further attempt at clarifying RPP's policy track and the political place was the climax of intra-party strife and public image problems for the 1965 campaign

⁷³ İnönü's initial take on the "LoC" was delivered to public in two separate interviews. First was published in the *Milliyet*, and other one was published in *Kim* in August. In *Milliyet* İnönü quoted Erim, and argued that RPP had to operate outside "normal working conditions" which were a "quality of left of center" and policies such as "development plan, fiscal reform, land reform, nationalization of petroleum etc." were requirements of such extraordinary times. İnönü also reiterated his étatist position since the advent of the republic, and refuted claims that the RPP harbored extreme-left and argued the WPT was constitutional (İpekçi, 1965).

of the RPP. Apart from the experience of three coalition governments and intra-party friction regarding its governmental performance, several linked factors shaped the RPP's electoral performance in terms of discursive preferences. One was the effect of the rise of the left in the party system, and the other one was the political rights response to the rise of the left: anti-communism. I will argue that it was the latter factor that shaped the experience of the RPP members in 1965 rather than the rise of the left.

Simultaneously, members of the RPP organization and especially prominent figures in the public eye were almost completely confused or not ready to embrace the new identity, except for a minority of younger, and peripheral figures in the RPP, such as Ecevit, Neftçi, and Topuz. More centrist or even conservative members of the RPP did not refrain from using anti-communist discourses against those who embraced "left of center". Meanwhile, the WPT's competition from the left attracted the RPP's disillusioned voter base. For the RPP the 1965 Elections were a perfect storm, from which the party emerged shaken.⁷⁴

Throughout the election process, the RPP members faced raised eyebrows from the electorate and accusations of communism from the JP. The JP's famous slogan of the 1965 Elections was a wordplay on RPP's articulation of its position: "Left of Center, Road to Moscow" [Ortanın Solu, Moskova Yolu]. The anti-communism campaign of the JP started to target the RPP, although the primary target was the WPT. Whereas the RPP's party platform did not include the term "left of center" (Cumhuriyet Halk

⁷⁴ The 1965 General Elections saw "National Remainder System" which favored smaller parties in the elections. The JP was the winner with 240 seats with 52.9% of the vote. The RPP received 134 seats with 28,7%, RPNP took 11 seats with 2.2%, the Nation Party of Osman Bölükbaşı took 14 seats with 6,3%, the NTP won 19 deputies with 3.7%, and the WPT got 14 seats with 3.0% of the vote in the National Assembly. The turnout was 71.3% during this elections. (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2012: 4; 25)

Partisi, 1965), the RPP members took to the defense and used “Left of Center”, as the main slogan for the 1965 Elections in various ways (Kili 1976: 213-4).

Ultimately, the term served as the salt for the wound of the anti-communist discursive attacks of the JP against the RPP.

Topuz’s (2011) narrative was informative on the detrimental effects of the allegations of communism on both the RPP members and the voter base. For the RPP member base, he provided an encounter during a meeting with citizens in a neighborhood in the Üsküdar district of İstanbul. On that day the delegated visitor from the RPP Centrum was the Deputy Secretary and *Ulus* editor Cihat Baban.

According to Topuz, along with topics such as “communism, Ankara agreement with the European Economic Community (currently renamed as European Union), nationalization of petroleum” and receiving questions regarding “Left of Center” and communist poet Nâzım Hikmet from the audience, Baban made a long and unrelated speech. After his speech, Baban shortly answered questions such as “left of center is just a word”, and “Nâzım Hikmet is a close friend of mine”. Topuz provided alternate answers stating that “left of center” was more than words and refused any connections between Hikmet and the RPP, causing a small confrontation with Baban (285-6). In addition, Ecevit’s narrative on the matter stated that the primary focus of some members during campaigning was to explain that the “left” was not that bad. Those articulations were based on examples such as a person's heart being on the left, or when one was mounting a horse, they would use the left stirrup first (32. Gün Arşivi, 2019). These narratives could be indicative of the confusion and lack of ideational preparation on the part of the RPP organization regarding the identity, ideas, and articulation regarding “left of center”.

A final example of lack of internal cohesion regarding “left of center” suggested a continuity in the power of the centrists in the RPP, and their resistance to left-leaning discourse albeit being anti-communist. According to Turan Güneş talking to Simav (1975), İnönü “was not saying anything new”. However, Ecevit had taken İnönü’s utterance seriously, and he was permitted to talk on the national radio during allocated propaganda hours for the RPP “to coop up workers”. Before the speech was made, Ferit Melen and Fethi Çelikbaş wanted the text to be reviewed in the PA and blamed Ecevit for communism (86). Ecevit’s speech was based on labor rights, gains of the recent Labor Law, how the RPP was pro-market in terms of supporting the small businesses, but against “extreme proprietary of the few” which curbed the rights of the peasants, and the JP was the reason communism was a threat due to their prevention of workers obtaining the right to participate in decisionmaking in the workplaces and creating inequality (Ulus, 01.09.1965: 1; 7).

Topuz’s second example was regarding the effects of the JP’s propaganda over the voter base. According to Topuz in a shanty (Gecekondu) neighborhood of Üsküdar near Ümraniye, Ferah neighborhood, local RPP organizations’ efforts to win votes were seemingly fruitful as they gathered many new members to RPP. However the number of votes from that area “did not reach the quarter of our member count”. He retold events to Bilâ:

“We sent word to the neighborhood and met with residents in the regular coffeehouse. The coffeehouse was full to the brim, just like the campaign period. We were confused. I thought ‘Residents of this neighborhood always surprise us’. They received us with great hospitality and enthusiasm, but a sense of embarrassment could be read on their faces. I said that we came for a

friendly visit and we were surprised by the election results, but did not feel remorseful and just wanted to ask why, and if we were at fault.

“Our friend whom we took as the leader of the neighborhood answered: ‘We feel shamed towards you. After we said goodbye to you on the last day of the campaign, we made an evaluation. We evaluated that we were going to vote for the RPP, but which party could win the elections and create a government. We decided that the JP will win and Süleyman Demirel will become the Prime Minister. In such an event we thought “What will happen to us a newly founded neighborhood which voted for the RPP?” Mister, we refrained that “Those [JP] will desolate us, punish us”. With heavy hearts and unwillingly we went and voted for the JP...’”. (Topuz, 2011: 287)

1965 General Elections and Left of Center

The suggested explanatory factor was that the rise of the left, as in WPT, appeared as the primary reason for the leftward move of the RPP in the mid-1960s. In the first half of the 1960s, the RPP was losing the students, intellectual attention, and votes to the WPT (Uyar 2017b: 104). For Ahmad, the usage of LoC in 1965 was mainly a ruse against the WPT (Ahmad, 2015: 254) According to Emre (2014a) the leftward move was due to the effects of the broader advent of the left as presented by cases of the *Yön* Movement and the WPT (136-46). Kili (1976) stated that the open advocacy of the left-policy prescriptions by the WPT pulled the youth towards itself. With that effect according to Kili, the RPP leadership started to take up the “left of center” slogan, as an attempt to win back the loss of support due to the rise of the socialist-leaning WPT (211). This view is also expected in (apart from Ahmad’s take) the

discrete change literature, as smaller contesting parties often affect larger established parties.

A review of the RPP's contemporary sources suggests that WPT is only partially explanatory. On the one hand, according to Emre (2014a), İnönü's and the RPP's leftward move or İnönü's attempt to "restructure the RPP with a more reformist and radical discourse" started after the fall of its last coalition government in January 1965. To that end, the RPP, accepted three members of the fourteen exiled radical members of the NUC (İrfan Solmaz, Orhan Kabibay, and Orhan Erkanlı (265)), ten Air Force officers related to İrfan Tansel (İnönü, 2020: 694), and one member of Talat Aydemir's Junta (Mustafa Ok) in 1963 (Emre, 2014a: 87).⁷⁵ The RPP was also going to be supported by the Social Democratic Party of former NUC member Sıtkı Ulay. Emre also noted that the most significant items in the new discourse were the land reform and the "National Oil campaign" (88). On the other hand, TWP has visible effects according to the members of local RPP branch cadres. The RPP's then Eminönü district chair Nermin Neftçi claimed "WPT had taken a lot of votes from us. This had an effect in Eminönü, and the RPP vote percentage was lowered" (Neftçi, 1997: 70-1). As Emre (2014a) noted, the "more radical, reformist, and left-wing voters of the RPP" could swing their votes to the WPT (90). Whereas Emre correctly pointed out how anti-communism ended the discursive competition of the RPP and the WPT with regards to larger left votes for the duration of the 1965 Election Campaign (156), the electoral competition of both parties was present on the ground. RPP İzmir Deputy Şeref Bakşık (2009) wrote in his memoirs that "The RPP

⁷⁵ Emre (2014a) noted that the WPT also admitted one of the fourteen radicals of the NUC, Muzaffer Karan (129). According to memoirs of Ok (n.d.), Süreyya Koç, then General Secretary Kemal Satır and İlhami Sancar invited him to the RPP with the former fourteen members. Ok had refused and after a few days of delay, was personally drafted by İnönü to the RPP on 9th of May, 1965 (n.d.).

was also against communism, and it had the idea that it could be prevented via social measures. The WPT had also targeted our party, and they aimed at carrying some of our votes for themselves. However, only with civil and cultivated discussions, measures could be taken against them” (225). Bakşık’s narrative is important in showing the RPP member’s confidence that given the chance for free and fair ideational discussion they could easily compete against the WPT.

As for the second point of the effects of the anti-communism by the TACC and the JP, there was quite a stark picture for the RPP, as well as the WPT.⁷⁶ Emre (2014a), wrote that the JP and its leader were using anti-communism as the focal point of their 1965 Electoral Campaign discourse (128). According to Kili (1976), the move away from the US-aligned foreign policy and a cultural agreement with Soviet Russia was extensively used against the RPP during the campaign period (208). 1965 was the first election in which the left-right cleavage was activated vis-à-vis “civil society” and the public.

Only after months of accusations by anti-communists, İnönü did bring the term “left of center” to the forefront on the 25th of July.⁷⁷ Between June 1965 and that date, the RPP’s semi-official *Ulus* took the discursive offensive of the JP and Demirel to its headlines. On the 10th, 14th, 15th, and 21st of June *Ulus*’ headlines carried messages of the RPP against allegations via its Common Parliamentary Group, its General Secretary Kemal Satır, and figurehead Turan Feyzioğlu. In July, headlines intensified. On the 1st, 5th, 7th, 8th, and 9th messages of İnönü and Satır against

⁷⁶ WPT had received the brunt of the violence of the TACC. Significantly in Akhisar, Bursa, Eminönü, Aydın, Adana, Turgutlu, and Silifke WPT received TACC-organized attacks. Police also got involved and pressured the WPT. These attacks were condemned by Gürsel and Ecevit (Emre, 2014a: 128).

⁷⁷ This point is further supported with one entry in Nihat Erim’s diaries (2021). Erim noted after the elections: “Among a hundred problems some condense it to utterance of ‘Left of Center’. İnönü had told it in June against the propaganda that RPP was taking it to communism” (818).

allegations of communism over the RPP's social policies were published. On 14th of July, İnönü visited Prime Minister Suat Hayri Ürgüplü over "elections" and provision of "security" (Ulus, 15.07.1965: 1). He demanded President Gürsel's resignation from TACC there.⁷⁸ His words to Ürgüplü appeared on the 23rd of July in *Yön*:

"The RPP is being accused of atheism and communism. The campaign is being carried out by the Turkish Association to Combat Communism which was established by members of the Justice Party. This is an SS organization. Moreover, the president has strengthened their venture by accepting the honorary presidency of the Association. The president should leave the chair of this SS organization. The necessary inquiry about the Association should be done. Clearly, we will consider the government responsible for the situation rather than the irresponsible persons of associations" (Emre, 2014a: 90).

On the 17th, Nihat Erim wrote an article in *Ulus* titled "Left of Center". Erim referenced Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal as also attacked as if it was communism. In reality, according to Erim, the New Deal "saved the markets from failing" (Erim, 1965). On the 23rd and 24th of July *Ulus* continued covering the matter on its front page. On 25th İnönü made his famous use of the term. Later in August in the *Kim* interview İnönü stated that "We mean the same thing when we say we are étatist for forty years. That was why I said that we were on the left of center.

⁷⁸ In his journal İnönü noted that he informed Prime Minister Ürgüplü that he wanted President Gürsel's resignation to be declared publicly until Friday (16th of July). He also informed Ürgüplü that unless Gürsel resigned he would go public in the Parliament. On 16th Gürsel's resignation was declared at the public radio, İnönü spoke in the parliament anyway, and pointed at the involvement of the JP (İnönü, 2020: 694; Ulus, 18.07.1965: 7).

In fact, if we are on the left of center since we said we were secular. You are on the left of center if you are populist [halkçı]" (Bila, 1999: 214).

Still, the efforts of Erim and İnönü were not fruitful in clarifying the meaning of the "left of center" and the RPP had been harmed by the efforts of the JP further with the implementation of the slogan "Left of center, the road to Moscow" [Ortanın solu, Moskova yolu].

Outcome

The period between 1960 and 1965 showed a regression of the RPP in terms of pursuing organizational and ideational change that started in the previous decade. As the reigns of the party went back at the hands of the "young guard" more securely, left-wing policy tracks would be sidelined, except for the labor reform. To that end, the usage of "left of center" appeared as a floating concept that was used internally (and sometimes publicly) to designate the ideological positions of several RPP members.

On the other hand, the sheer amount of domestic and international problems, the enmity between the Army and the JP, the necessity of the coalitions, issues regarding the Cyprus Affair and Aydemir's coup attempts, as well as the internal resistance in the RPP to left-leaning policy prescription pushed İnönü a politics of balancing the sides both internally and externally. That meant a retreat from the reformist discourse of the 1960 and the program of the RPP. Yet as the İnönü's 3rd coalition collapsed before the 1965 Elections the RPP found itself between a rock and a hard place: On one hand, the Cold War was raging and the left-wing politics was frowned upon by the "young guard". On the other hand, the RPP was losing most of its grassroots

among students and intellectuals to the openly leftist WPT, while the young guard struggled at best, to keep its clientelist network afloat.

Between *Akis* article in 1960 and *Milliyet* article in 1965, RPP continued its ideationally backed left-leaning policy prescriptions, in a quite impaired way. So much so, that chunks of the electorate, the youth, and the intellectuals turned their attention elsewhere. From an ideational perspective, intra-Party friction was affected by differing ideas about anti-communism, and left-wing politics within the Party organization and Government. Narratives suggest that some former RPP Research Bureau members spent a lot of energy defending their policy prescriptions or even the usage of words. The ideational change of the RPP was on pause during that period. However, after the collapse of his last Government İnönü, at a joint session of the upper and lower houses of the Parliament in early May argued that a “Closed, monastery-like party has no future. We must be a progressive [ilerici] party”. (Uyar 2017b: 180). By 1965 the party change in the RPP was at an impasse. İnönü after taking vote-seeking as his primary aim, re-articulated the need for the RPP to keep changing.

Several inferences could be made from this chapter of the RPP’s history. A series of external shocks and pressures of external actors (mostly army officers) pushed RPP leadership to turn their attention to regime guardianship rather than pursuing competition with other parties in the parliament. This was significant as the democratic regime in Turkey was unconsolidated.

İnönü focused on keeping the democratic regime intact between 1960 and 1965. To that end, he focused on keeping a balancing act in the RPP that favored more conservative members of the RPP. That meant that the RPP leadership favored a

“regime guardianship” goal over other party goals, and aimed at appeasing a disgruntled officer corps, and bitter successors of the DP.

Whereas the left-leaning policy prescriptions were present in the programmatic texts of the RPP, such policies were unapplied (except for labor reforms). This was due to both interference from coalition members from the right, and more conservative members of the RPP.

Internal opposition to the leading coalition of the RPP was either based on personal grievances or ideational opposition was too disorganized to prompt further internal reform. At least one proposal in 1962 was defeated.

By 1965, apart from a vocal minority RPP’s presence on the left side of the party system was non-existent. Rising competition on the left acquired a significant part of the attention of the youth. The ideational activity was limited to certain members.

The RPP’s identity was not clear enough to withstand allegations of communism, and at the same time sustain its competitive capacity. In other words, the RPP was not able to meaningfully engage in “vote-seeking” behavior, with a clear and well-articulated set of ideas.

3.3 Party Change in the RPP: 1965-1973

This subchapter takes the history of party change in the RPP between the Electoral defeat of 1965 and the 5th Extraordinary Congress of the RPP in 1972. I take three external shocks in this chapter: Electoral Defeat of 1965, Electoral Defeat of 1969, and coup-by-memorandum of 1972. This chapter is significant for presenting the main argument of the dissertation that ideas are effective in political party change as roadmaps, coalition magnets, and catalysts of change. The “left of center” was such

an idea that brought together a coalition of actors, who challenged the leadership of the RPP at the time and gradually took over the party after 1966. They started reform initiatives in accordance with their idea of “social democracy” in the RPP, trying to give it a new identity, making new alliances with the labor movement, and extending the RPP’s ideological influence to the university campuses.

The electoral shock in 1965 ended with a shift in the factional balance of the RPP in a year (after resistance from the leadership coalition and other factions). The electoral shock of 1969 was not perceived as a serious stumble but as a glimpse of a better future by the ruling bloc of the RPP, while other factions or groupings placed their opposition. However, a year after the 1969 shock administrative bodies of the party were further dominated by the faction of the existing General Secretary in the 1970 Congress. The final external shock was the result of the March 12th, 1971 Coup-by-memorandum. In a short while, the RPP saw two new general secretaries, and a movement rose to challenge the existing chairperson. Next year, in 1972 party Chairpersonship changed hands.

Although this picture was true for the account of party chairperson İnönü, as it could be called in Aytürk’s term “factional juggling” (Aytürk, 2021: 105) or “balancing act”. However, a review of the primary sources such as memoirs, diaries, and public ideational discussion suggests that it was incomplete. Frictions between certain key members such as Bülent Ecevit, Turhan Feyzioğlu, Nihat Erim, and others rested on issues regarding the RPP’s principles and ideas as accounts and intra-party discussions show. That did not mean that personal or interest-based conflict did not take place. Some factionalism was precisely about interests and competition for

prominence in the party. As Kili observed, friction caused by different ideas was central to party change in the RPP between 1965 and 1972.

In this subchapter I have the following observation: The utterance of “left of center” by the Chairperson of the RPP coincided with an external shock in the form of a series of electoral defeats that broke down the dominance of the ruling coalition of the RPP in 1965. Differences over party goals (regime guardianship, vote maximization, office-seeking, intra-party democracy, and policy entrepreneurship) or in other words electoral strategy, party identity, and alliance-forming behaviors quickly surfaced over the discussions of what was the left of center. Soon three factions, “Left of Center Faction”, “Right-Wing” and “Centrists”, organized and competed for the control of the RPP. The Chairperson’s efforts in sustaining a factional “balancing act” or factional juggling to retain his overall control of the party affairs, was also a key path deciding factor over the party change and kept it to a factional change until 1972.

With a series of congressional competitions, the left-wing coalition of the RPP captured the party administration and the support of the party organization. This had started to limit the extent of the Chairperson’s balancing act.

The external shock of the 1971 Coup-by-memorandum proved to be a path-breaking external shock that led to a leadership change in a year. After the leadership change, the Left of Center Faction had come to an end. A new ideological split was looming on the horizon: “social democracy” versus “democratic left”.

By 1965, RPP appeared to the electorate as a state-backed and somehow archaic political machine in the Turkish party system. Its leader, İsmet İnönü was 81, and

RPP under his chairpersonship was seen as an unchanging bureaucratic apparatus that was responsible for the coup d'état in 1960. Still, it was going through an organizational evolution since the transition to multi-party politics in 1946. The party change was influenced to a great extent by the 1950 and 1954 electoral defeats. By 1957 the RPP had attracted a new generation of politicians to join it in parliament and proven resilient enough for a comeback. However, the coup d'état in 1960 did not prove fruitful for RPP electorally. Although it was able to shape the new constitution, which was accepted in 1961, to the most extent, the RPP leadership had serious issues when it come to the implementation of the clauses of the new constitution and the party programme.

In this subchapter, I will talk about the organizational change in the RPP between 1965 and 1972. I will do this in three sections: Sections 1965 and 1969 covers the first external shock and its aftermath. 1969 and 1971 cover the 1969 electoral defeat and subsequent rise of the Left of Center Faction to dominance in the RPP. Finally, the section considering 1971 and 1972, will cover the breaking out of the Chairperson and the General Secretary in 1971, and the change of leadership in two consecutive congresses in 1972. The aim here is to provide a general history of the party change in the RPP between 1965 and 1972.

1965 was the official introduction of the “left of center” to the party vernacular. The 1965 election campaign of the RPP showed a change in its identity, RPP being on the “left of center” famously uttered by its chairperson, İsmet İnönü. By 1966 “left of center” movement was founded and won the competition in the 1966 Congress. 1967 Congress, in a year, marked the first wave of resignations from the RPP as a reaction to ideational and dominant faction change. 1969 Elections provided an example of how the leadership coalition could mitigate the potential effects of an electoral shock.

1971 was crucial as it was the breaking point of the new factional equilibrium around the “Left of Center”. Arguably, other critical junctures were also important but do not constitute a clear break of internal party balance during the formation of a new identity of RPP: 1966 Congress marked the rise of a new movement in the RPP challenging the existing leadership coalition in the party centrum however its effects were solidified in 1967. 1969 was important as both the “Reconciliation with Bayar” and the 1969 General Election defeat took place. 1970 congress after that shock showed results further solidification in terms of ideology and local cadres, therefore dominance of the “Left of Center Faction”. Lastly, the 1971 Coup-by-memorandum led to a leadership change in a year, which was very significant in terms of party change in the RPP.

Shock, Factional Change, First Breakouts: 1965-1967

Contextually, the RPP received 28.7% of the total vote in the 1965 General Elections. This was an “intolerable” electoral shock for the RPP cadres. After the electoral defeat, heated internal discussions took place in the RPP Party Assembly. These discussions “softened up” the hold of the ruling coalition at the time. There had been at least three rounds of discussions in different echelons or party institutions: Immediately after the elections, General Secretary Kemal Satır had meetings with the parliamentary deputies in five groups (Öner, 1976: 19).⁷⁹ The second round took place at the PA between the 19th and 27th of November 1965. On the 27th, Satır and the CAC stepped down. After this initial change only three

⁷⁹ Öner (1976) wrote that he talked for two hours during this meeting and delivered a case that local RPP members had faced at times deadly pressures of the DP for a decade and did not receive the attention of RPP deputies. Requests for services by them had been denied via arguments of non-partisanship or waiting in line for planning, which had been detrimental for the local prestige and vote-capturing power of the local RPP branch leaders. According to Öner he also claimed that whereas the RPP left application of central plans to “partisan bureaucrats of old era” which further deprived areas that were left poor by the DP (19-20).

members out of ten, and Satır had kept their seats in the new CAC (Uyar, 2017b: 203-4). In the month between the election day and PA meetings in November İnönü and other figures continued their defense of the “left of center” (Uyar, 2017b: 197-200). The third round of expanded meetings took place via the parliamentary group of RPP in December.

İNönü’s initial response on *Ulus* about the negative results of the elections stated that the RPP stood “firm, unshaken”. When asked about whether “left of center” had cost a lot of votes among RPP followers, he told that “Who says this? They will say such things.. It is unimportant. We have our program, ideas, principles, and then there is the constitution. We concluded and defended it”. When asked about “abuse of religion” [din istismarcılığı] he avoided the question and noted that the feelings of service were above all else (Ulus, 12.10.1965: 1).

On the 13th and 14th of October, the RPP PA convened. General Secretary Satır told the press about the matter that the RPP will persist in defending its ideas (Ulus, 14.10.1965: 1). The same discourse was kept until the beginning of a longer series of PA meetings in mid-November. As noted by Uyar (2017b), during İnönü’s visit to the Ankara Youth Branch of the RPP⁸⁰, after the elections, he said that the reason for the defeat was due to the people could not understand the principles of the RPP, as much as resentments in the RPP, and some errors made by the RPP during the campaign period. İnönü also stated ominously, that they were not going to retract ideas to capture votes and there could have been people in the RPP who did not agree with his ideas if so, there would be a split (199-200). Whereas the RPP leadership tried to keep an outlook of unison, the internal discussion proved heated. One topic that appeared in the background was İnönü stepping down as party chairperson.

⁸⁰ According to *Ulus* the visit happened on 15th of November (Ulus, 16.11.1965: 1).

Some journalistic and narrative sources provided a picture of the discussions in the PA. An immediate picture was provided by the left-week weekly *Yön*. İnönü was presented as saying that the RPP was not going to drop “left of center” as new generations were excited by it and some members of the older generations understood that fact. In *Yön*’s iteration of the discussions, on one hand, one significant topic was the problem of defending the “left of center” while keeping a predominantly affluent and well-connected *eşraf* and business connections, as well as the influence of the groups with property over others in different locales. Esat Mahmut Karataş, Doğan Araslı, Sırrı Atalay, Turan Güneş, Muammer Erten, Rıza Işıltan, Kemal Demir, Şefik İnan, Turan Şahin, Ferda Güley brought this issue up, and stated that there were significant losses over the local notables. On the other hand, certain figures (while some stating that they were on the “left of center”) openly found the usage of the term detrimental to the RPP, such as Turhan Feyzioğlu,⁸¹ Ekrem Özden, Mehmet Hazer, Rıza Işıltan. Others felt that the RPP had to push forward with left of center such as, Zarife Koçak, Suphi Baykam, Lebit Yurdoğlu, Turan Şahin, Ferda Güley, İhsan Kabadayı, Turan Güneş, and Bülent Ecevit. According to the correspondence of *Yön* (26.11.1965: 4-5), Güneş’s words on the matter were this:

“Left of Center is said as an articulation of an idea rather than propaganda.

That did not bring us any gains. If it did it was the acquisition of the term left.

“Even if left of center does not bring votes in the short run, I think that it will be beneficial for us in the long run...” (*Yön*, 26.11.1965: 5)

⁸¹ Neftçi (1997) claimed in her memoirs that it was told that Feyzioğlu did not take sides. For her before the 1965 Elections Feyzioğlu appeared to them as a “reformist” and he was known as such (82-3).

Yön's narrative was interesting since it was owned by Cemal Reşit Eyüboğlu who was a member of the RPP PA. According to some others in the PA, the *Yön* narrative was one-sidedly presented (Uyar, 2017b: 204).⁸²

Uyar's (2017b) work focused on daily *Milliyet* and provided a slightly different picture. According to his representation, İnönü stated that Turkey was moving towards the extreme left, and the left of the center had been a precaution. Against those who wanted a congress or those who blamed the defeat on the left of center, he stated that he was stern in his conviction. General Secretary Kemal Satır argued that "left of center" was not the main reason for defeat. The problem was that the articulation of the slogan should have been told clearly. He also stated that primaries, the inaction of the RPP organization, lackluster efforts of the ballot watchers, and apathy of RPP membership in some localities were the reasons for defeat (200). Senator from Urfa Esat Mahmut Karakurt said that it was not possible to place all blame on the "left of center". For İstanbul Senator, Ekrem Özden. RPP was already étatist and there was no need for a separate articulation. For him, the direction of the party had to be decided by Congress (201). İnönü responded to that, as he had been on the "left of center", since the foundation of the RPP (ibid.). Muammer Erten claimed that one of the reasons for defeat was the efforts of the landlords and talked for the left of center. Emin Paksüt argued against the notion of "left" altogether (202). Aydın Yalçın openly called "left of center" outdated and presented it as "the RPP competing with communists". Turhan Feyzioğlu argued for unison in the party and better articulation of RPP's principles (203).

⁸² Uyar (2017b) noted *Yön* often portrayed Gülek and Feyzioğlu negatively, while occasionally writing positively about Ecevit (204). However, in my opinion the presentation of the RPP PA on 26.11.1965 was not part of this trend that Uyar saw.

Erim's (2021) diaries had two entries on the 21st and the 24th. Entry on the 21st stated that Paksüt and Feyzioğlu tried to lip-service those who argued that left of center was the reason for defeat. After Paksüt was ridiculed by İnönü, Feyzioğlu made a more moderate speech according to Erim. On the 24th Erim wrote that he did not talk in the PA. According to him, the "RPP was on the left of center, the moment it was founded." He also wrote that the upper echelons of the RPP were in disarray, as there were at least five people who wanted to be candidates for chairpersonship after İnönü (818).

Öner's (1976) narrative provided a further point. It argued that in the subsequent declaration of the PA, it was stated that there was nothing radically new in "left of center", nothing to worry about for the existing leadership coalition, which "happily" declared that the RPP was "on the left of center", with its program, Declaration of Fundamental Aims, Declaration of "A Progressed Turkey is Our Aim", 1965 Platform and "its reformist attitude". For Öner, the majority of the PA was against the RPP "to take a new path", and "believed that talking so much of the left of center was going to be detrimental for the party". İnönü could have been placed under pressure during the meeting (24). That final observation of Öner was perhaps right. Birgit (2005) later called the message of the PA a "rejection of past" [redd-i miras] (391). İnönü (2020) noted in his diaries that after making his offer on the 26th, he was not going to attend the PA meeting anymore (714). The declaration of the PA was also not satisfactory for those who opposed any mention of "left of center". Şevket Raşit Hatipoğlu, Sedat Çumralı, Fethi Çelikbaş and Sırrı Atalay placed their opposition to the declaration (Bilâ, 1987: 294; Güley, 1990: 378).

İnönü's motive was to balance the factions and spot potential contenders for the chairpersonship of the RPP. On the 19th of December he noted in his diary he noted:

“Feyzioğlu responded to my request for a general meeting by saying that I have entered the greatest depression of my life. Feyzioğlu is sly [sokulgan], his group is wild”. The next day he met with Erim, Melen, and Feyzioğlu, who according to İnönü defended the goodwill of those who criticized İnönü, and then on the 25th he noted meeting with Satır and Nüvit Yetkin from his group (İnönü, 2020: 716-7). Whereas he was wary of PG Deputy Head Feyzioğlu, İnönü nevertheless kept him close. In the end, apart from a small change in the CAC and some back and forth on the part of the left of center, he managed to close the case on the left of center, as the RPP’s official position. At the same time, İnönü ultimately gave way to the “conservatives” the party assembly put a tacit embargo on the usage of “left of center” as a slogan for party propaganda (Öner, 1976: 60; Neftçi, 1997: 91; Göğüş, 2008: 145). The “Left of Center Movement” or the “new movement” [Henceforth LoC Movement] at the same time started to have meetings on their own, discuss the “left of center” as an idea, and publish articles.

Formation of the Left of Center Movement

After the defeat of 1965 and the extended talks in November 1965, the RPP Parliamentary Group saw heated discussions. However, with the end of the second round of discussions factionalism rose, and several groups started to come together in each other’s houses or social clubs (Öner, 1976: 40). It is possible to somehow grasp the types of groupings from several narrative sources. At least two groups were mentioned. These groups and existing factions fought over the path the RPP was going to take with ideas in the Parliamentary Group sessions regarding the electoral defeat of 1965.⁸³

⁸³ One group, that gathered around the same time period between the 1965 Electoral defeat and the 1966 Congress, and considered extra-parliamentary forms of politics and tried to form a civilian group

Perhaps the most prominent development in the days to come was the founding of the “Left of Center Movement” (LoC Movement). The very first meeting took place in Bülent Ecevit’s house in the Bahçelievler neighborhood of Ankara on the 2nd of December 1965 (Öner, 1976: 38; Ok, n.d.; Neftçi, 1997: 83).⁸⁴ On that day İnönü (2020) noted in his diary that the Parliamentary Grup Meeting was delayed for a week (716). Öner (1976) noted that İnönü knew of the existence of these “left of center” meetings organized by Ecevit, but the names of participants were not disclosed to him. The initial invitations were made by Erten (2010: 147). Participants were Bülent Ecevit (although unmentioned in memoirs, Raşan Ecevit), Murat Öner, “[Selahattin Hakkı] Esatoğlu, Şükrü Koç, Orhan Birgit, M. Kemal Yılmaz, Hayrettin Uysal, Kemal Palaoğlu, Mahmut Bozdoğan, Seyfi Said Pencap, Turgut Altinkaya, Nazif Aslan, Mustafa Ok Nermin Neftçi... Muammer Erten, Hüsnü Özkan, outside the parliament Muammer Aksoy, İzzat Sedes, and Özcan Ergüder” were present.⁸⁵ Neftçi (1997) noted that there was no structured agenda of the meeting but they talked about “left of center” and “To be together and as one” (83). Öner’s (1976) take was more detailed: Ecevit with a notebook in his hand explained that “left of center” was “standing as an empty mold”. The idea was to “fill it” with “discussing, writing and assessing. The aim was not factionalism but “creating, adoption and diffusion” of left-wing policies. Publishing a magazine or founding an association could be ideas but nothing was decided yet. These meetings with this core group (39) persisted at least until the 18th Congress on the 18th of October 1966. According to

to support a military junta. Öner (1976) claimed that he attended to one these meetings. There were also two (out of seven total attendees) from those who attended the LoC Movement’s meetings. Öner thought that this group aimed to ultimately took over the RPP to support a new “single-party” rule. After that instance he claimed that he decided to untangle himself from that group (40-5).

⁸⁴ Neftçi (1997) remembered the venue as Seyfi Sadi Pencap’s house in Bahçelievler (83).

⁸⁵ Ok (n.d.) claimed that there were ten to twelve people: “Bülent Ecevit, Şükrü Koç, Mustafa Ok, Murat Öner, Yılmaz Alpaslan, Seyfi Sadi Pencap, Yaşar Akal, Nazif Aslan, Mustafa Kemal Palaoğlu, Selahattin Hakkı Esatoğlu”. Turan Güneş had been missing in those narratives. He had been in Europe for a while and mostly spending time on his academic work (Simav, 1975: 88).

Öner, meetings took place in a different house each time and a different member hosted that meeting. The host acted as the chair of the meeting. Talks were made in an orderly fashion, and many took notes. Most detailed notes belonged to Ecevit (39-40).

After the initial debates over the left of center, the fledgling left-wing LoC group started to feel the pressures of the right-wing and centrist elements in the RPP. Öner (1976) claimed that he was warned by Coşkun Kırca over the text of his Budgetary talk speech in the parliament to not lean too much to left. Öner noted that Kırca felt openly pressured into censoring Öner's speech, and Kırca mentioned that Ferit Melen was pressuring him (45-6).

Perhaps this situation prompted the LoC group to pursue further connections and expand. One means of doing that was seeking new members, and making local visits throughout Turkey (Öner, 1976: 49). The matter of elite-level connections was perhaps resolved, first and foremost, by informing İnönü. In the LoC meetings, it was made known that İnönü was aware of the group (Neftçi, 1997: 91). Another example in this early period was connections with Turan Güneş. Öner claimed that he ran into Güneş in Kızılay, Ankara. Güneş, was informed of the group's existence but kept away for the while (Öner, 1976: 50-1).

The LoC group engaged in publishing articles and carrying their platform to an ideational ground. The creation of a publication venue for the LoC Movement was resolved as the weekly *Kim* then owned by Orhan Birgit (Öner, 1976: 51), declared in an editorial in early February, "And finally, 'Kim' is going to work to help the RPP -as it is only political institution that could realize secular Turkish Democracy-

on the way to reach the idea of ‘Left of Center’ to reach better clarity and openness...” (Kim, 02.02.1966: 2).⁸⁶

Lastly, the issue of leadership also came to the agenda. The issue arose as a reality as the 18th Congress approached, and probably close to the 1966 Senate Elections in June. Among the growing LoC group only three, Ecevit, Erten, and Suphi Baykam were members of the PA, and only Erten was in the CAC. Erten argued that the LoC group should aim to be elected to the PA to take control of the RPP (Öner, 1976: 46-7). According to Öner, Pencap raised the name of Ecevit. Three figures raised their concerns: Erten and Koç argued it was early for picking a leader. Ecevit refused the bid and argued that Feyzioğlu should be offered the leadership of the LoC (47; Neftçi, 1997: 91; Ok, n.d.). Öner wrote that although that offer was not accepted, Ecevit was allowed to carry the message to Feyzioğlu.

At that point, Feyzioğlu carried a lot of prominence within the RPP. As discussed above he had caught the eyes of İnönü as a potential contender for chairpersonship of the RPP. Until the 1965 Elections, Feyzioğlu had been known as one of the reformists in the RPP (Neftçi, 1997: 82). and openly endorsed the left of the center during the campaign period. However, after the elections, Feyzioğlu started having cold feet about the left of center. Neftçi claimed that Nizamettin Neftçi and Tarhan Erden upon visiting Feyzioğlu on the 2nd of December 1965, learned that Feyzioğlu

⁸⁶ Next month, on the 9th of March, the first article (in two parts) of the LoC group by Bülent Ecevit appeared in Kim (09.03.1966: 5-6; 16.03.1966: 8-9). Starting with Ecevit’s article seven other articles appeared in Kim between February and Senate Elections in June. Five of those were by LoC group members: Öner (23.03.1966: 5-6), Ok (5.04.1966: 16), Pencap (13.04.1966: 5-6), Bozdoğan (27.04.1966: 5-6), and Koç (17.05.1966: 8-10). Two other articles were by M. Kemal Palaoğlu (20.04.1966: 8-9) and Principal of Private Fırat High School Vecihi Timuroğlu (03.05.1966: 16). The last two stand out from others as there were no apparent connections with the LoC group. At least one such article appeared in *Ulus* on the column “Letters to the Reader” by Kamran Evliyaoğlu on the 24th of February 1966. None of the articles by the LoC group in this in *Ulus* had open references to left of Center.

thought that the “left of center” discourse had harmed the RPP, and there was no way of agreement with some of the figures in the PG (83).

Certain figures in the LoC also shared distrust for Feyzioğlu probably due to his stance in the PA and PG meetings since the 1965 Electoral Defeat. In any case, “if Feyzioğlu wanted to become the head of the new movement in the party, he would be the strongest leader” (Neftçi, 1997: 91). The offer to lead the LoC movement was brought before Feyzioğlu sometime before the 1966 Elections. Feyzioğlu had refused the offer to lead the LoC group. Different narratives provided a similar ideational refusal by Feyzioğlu: He either found left of center too fuzzy as a category and preferred “democratic socialism” (Öner, 1976: 47). Feyzioğlu did not accept to lead the LoC group due to his ideational differences.

That further reinforced the perception of Ecevit as a leader in the eyes of some members of the LoC group (Ok, n.d.). Members such as Aksoy and Güneş, also knew that Ecevit was a de facto leader. However, newcomer İbrahim Öktem had made a warning that the only leader was İnönü. Öner noted that others only saw Ecevit as, a “club administrator” or “moderator” (Öner, 1976: 48-9). This perception was perhaps a requirement to be legitimate in the eyes of chairperson İnönü. To that end, the LoC group had refrained from appearing as a proper faction at least until the 18th Congress (Koloğlu, 2000: 77). Ecevit’s appearance was even more tentative. Neftçi (1997) narrated an encounter between two RPP deputies, around the time of discussions after 1966 the Senate Elections: “Have you placed Ecevit as a leader?” The friend who stayed loyal to Ecevit until the end said “Hush, do not voice it. We pushed him with great hardship... If [Ecevit] hears this, he will go back on [leadership]” (92). In any case, unlike Uyar’s (2017b) claim that Ecevit was among

candidates or those willing for İnönü's post at the end of the 1965 Campaign period (222) seems unfounded. Ecevit's rise was situational, and due to pursuing ideas of the LoC group to provide the RPP with a clear set of ideas.

1966 Senate Elections and its aftermath

In the 1966 Partial Senate Election campaign, İnönü campaigned even in his old age (Uyar 2019b: 208). This campaign was perhaps the apex of the effect of the Feyzioğlu-Kırca faction that dominated the RPP PG. In the previous months, İnönü had expressed his concerns over the pressures of the JP over the opposition. He presented the conflict over progressives [ilericiler]-reaction [irtica] cleavage on the 20th of March and accused the JP government of wanting to remove the opposition from the parliamentary bodies by changing the National Remainder System as a first step, and then removing the opposition altogether via allegations of communism (Ulus, 20.03.1966: 1). Deputy head of the PG Feyzioğlu (Ulus, 01.04.1966: 1; 07.04.1966: 1; 7),⁸⁷ general secretary Satır (Ulus, 14.04.1966: 1), and İnönü continuously claimed that the JP had been pressuring the opposition rather than “resolving the problems of the country” over April. The RPP PG issued a declaration on the 19th of April and asserted the same position (Ulus, 17.04.1966: 1). In May, RPP PG accused the JP and its chairperson, Demirel, of wanting to revert to pre-27th May conditions (Ulus, 05.05.1966: 1). İnönü, a few days later told the parliament, “What we expect is placing efforts to save the future of the National Assembly, the senate, and the regime. This is our primary goal today...” (Ulus, 07.05.1966: 1). The period in the wake of the Senate Elections saw polarization between the RPP and the JP over issues of democracy, and regime guardianship. The RPP leadership and the

⁸⁷ Feyzioğlu called for the JP to turn its attention back on economy and argued that the RPP believed in freedom and democracy, refusing both communism, fascism, and all authoritarianisms. He also underlined that the RPP believed in right and freedom of conscience (07.04.1966: 7).

RPP PG had also used accusations of reactionism, which implied a polarizing strategy on secularism-religiosity cleavage. 1966 Partial Senate Election campaign started in this context.

İnönü's speeches were also revolving around the same themes of economy, regime, reactionism, abuse of religion, and accusations of communism (Ulus, 23.05.1966: 1). In Niğde, İnönü openly polarized with the JP voters blaming them for the wrongs of the government against the regime (Ulus, 24.05.1966). In June polarization over reactionism as embodied by “*Nurculuk*” in İnönü's speeches reached its peak.⁸⁸ In Tekirdağ, on the 1st of June, he asked Demirel whether he was going to be “caliph of Said-i Nursi” and also accused the JP of “seeking the blame of civil war” (Ulus, 02.06.1966: 1; Milliyet, 02.06.1966: 1).⁸⁹ İnönü (2020) sincerely believed that Demirel was a representative of the *Nurcus*. However, during the campaign, he felt uncomfortable about the selective usage of *Nurcu* discourse: “In Diyarbakır, they told me not to mention Said-i Nursi, but to target the *Nurcus*. In the west, they used to say defend the *Nurcu*, and blame Said-i Nursi. *Nurculuk* is there as the symbol of a reactionary [mürteci] administration” (735).

Another highlight of the disappearance of “left of center” from the speeches of the RPP members except for Ecevit (Kili 1976: 222). Ecevit went against the tacit

⁸⁸ İnönü's utterance of *Nurculuk* was perhaps not out of context. Soon after İnönü's campaign Chief-of-Staff Cemal Tural and Head of High Court of Appeal [Yargıtay] İmran Öktem raised their concerns over *Nurculuk*.

⁸⁹ Some left-wing members of the RPP were against such polarizing attitude. However, they were unable to make their voice heard by the party leadership. Öner (1976) claimed that in a conversation attempt to warn İnönü and talked to Kemal Demir. Demir had prevented Öner from talking to İnönü: “-Our chairperson is claiming that Demirel is the “sheikh of *Nurcus*”. This is not true. In fact his own party's [JP] leadership documented him as a member of Mason lodges. In reality these are not the issues that the people want to hear from Pasha. -Pasha's speeches, Demir said, were finalized by the CAC beforehand. After we started campaigning Satır reminded the decision that *Nurculuk* and obscurantism (gericilik) issue should be used. Pasha places importance on this (53).

ensorship and managed to circumnavigate the party censorship and propagate “left of center” (Öner, 1976: 62-3; Göğüş, 2008: 145).

The Partial Senate elections on the 5th of June 1966 resulted in the JP receiving 35 senators with 56.9% of the vote and the RPP receiving 13 seats with 29.6% of the vote. Turnout was 56.2% (Kili, 1976: 222; Uyar, 2017b: 208). İnönü’s initial response was that wanted the elections to serve as a lesson and in return, he was taught well. He reasserted his position on the threat of reactionism and abuse of religion and also claimed these did not cause any negative results for the RPP in the elections. When asked about reverting from “left of center” he responded that he did not see any criticism on the matter and “left of center” had caused allegations of communism by those against the RPP (Milliyet, 08.06.1966: 1; 7).⁹⁰ On one hand, İnönü appeared confident. On the other hand, election results served as a new external shock and prompted a new wave of discussions in the ruling bodies of the RPP. This time factional differences were much more pronounced, and the reason was “left of center” (Kili, 1976: 222). Öner (1976) claimed that there were two main voices in the RPP PG. One argued that leftists and their propaganda were the reason for the defeat, and they had to be removed from the RPP, and others argued that censorship of the “left of center” was the reason for defeat (56). This was a second wave of discussions that “softened up” the hold of the ruling coalition of İnönü and Feyzioğlu followers over the RPP.

⁹⁰ When asked to clarify İnönü told *Milliyet* that he wanted to tell the country and voters that *Nurculuk* was a danger, both due to its nature and the governments relation to it, and he saw that it was wider and more rooted (Milliyet, 16.06.1966: 7).

In the RPP Group meeting on the 16th of June, heated debates started. Almost over for three weeks, the discussions continued publicly. In the end, LoC Movement⁹¹ had articulated its position and the majority in the PG had supported the continuity of the “left of center” either sincerely or after İnönü had placed his weight behind the notion. The right-wing opposition had pushed for making İnönü say “The RPP is not a socialist party”. (Ulus, 18.06.1966: 7; , 28.06.1966: 1; 7; 29.06.1966: 1; 7; 02.07.1966: 1; 7; 05.07.1966a: 1; Kim, 22.06.1966: 8-9; Uyar, 2017b: 209-12; Öner, 1976: 92-3).

In the RPP PG meeting on the 16th of June, heated debates took place following the defeat of the 1966 Senate Elections. Ecevit had gone against a *de facto* ban on usage of “left of center”. This prompted a division of ideas.

Niğde deputy Ruhi Soyer claimed that there were jarred noises [çatlak ses] and criticized the left of center (Ulus, 18.06.1966: 7).⁹² Ecevit spoke for the LoC Movement. He claimed that some thought that since the utterance of left of center caused the 1965 defeat, leaving it aside would have solved all problems. He added, “In fact, a word, will neither win nor lose an election. But turning from a word would cause a lot of loss”. He claimed that it was about declaring what the RPP was and making the people believe in its sincerity. The majority of the voters had lost faith in the RPP, as its members could not end discussions about their positions and bring them to the voters in unison. Ecevit claimed that developing the RPP’s identity meant pursuing reforms for the benefit of the people and losing those with interests against those reforms. Conceding to those with interests would have caused even

⁹¹ In the previous week, allegations over a new faction in the RPP and 41 names were published in *Akşam*. On 30th of June 1966 Muammer Erten had refused allegations in *Akşam* over a separate 41-member group in the RPP (Ulus, 30.06.1966: 1; 7).

⁹² Uyar (2017b) based his narration on *Milliyet*’s reports and wrote that Soyer was beaten (208-9). However, the RPP PG declared next day that the reportage on a fight was wrong, but Soyer indeed said that there was a jarred noise in the RPP and received much complaint (Ulus, 18.06.1966: 1; 7).

more lack of belief against the RPP. For Ecevit, it was not the jarred noise but the real noise of the RPP that would stop such empty tactics. He told: “The voices that should be quieted, taken measures against are who accuse those who try to realize the documents [Declaration of Progressed Turkey and 1965 Electoral Platform of the RPP] we are bound by, with communism” (Kim, 22.06.1966: 8-9; Uyar, 2017b: 209-12). Further discussions revolved around this initial duel. On the 27th Mehmet Hazer, Kemal Yılmaz, and Kazım Hazer made a speech that criticized Ecevit’s speech and mainly opposed the usage of left of center (Ulus, 28.06.1966: 1; 7). On the 28th Coşkun Kırca claimed that RPP was not a socialist party. Mustafa Ok and Hasan Ünlü spoke in favor of the left of center. Ünlü claimed that the left of center was a bulwark against communism, while Ok claimed that there was no need to retreat from the left of center or “social justice and social democracy movement”, and deemed those as the last incarnation of Atatürk’s revolutions. Suphi Baykam argued that without İnönü’s defense of secularism and speeches on *Nurculuk*, the lack of left of center in the RPP vernacular would have further hampered the RPP’s image. Baykam presented the RPP’s situation under three groups: Those against the left of the center both in name and content, those against the name tactically, but agree on its content, and those who adopt left of center, Baykam included. Baykam called for the latter two groups to work together to create a long-term process (Ulus, 29.06.1966: 1; 7).⁹³ The PG meeting continued into July. On the 1st of July Kamuran Evliyaoğlu and Orhan Birgit defended the left of center as a movement. Hüsnü Özkan claimed that the party grassroots asked for renewal. Türkan Seçkin told that the RPP needed to see the missing point in its propaganda and go a new way. Reşit

⁹³ In the previous week, allegations over a new faction in the RPP and 41 names were published in *Akşam*. On 30th of June 1966 Muammer Erten had refused allegations in *Akşam* over a separate 41-member group in the RPP (Ulus, 30.06.1966: 1-7).

Ülker claimed that the RPP was not a socialist party (Ulus, 02.07.1966: 1; 7). On the 4th Satır made a speech stating that the RPP was a party that was on the left of the center with its progressive and revolutionary characteristics, while also stating that it was not a socialist and class conflict-based party (Ulus, 05.07.1966a: 1). Over the week, the left of center was adopted by most members as a position of the RPP.⁹⁴ However, a majority in the PG did not support adopting the left of center as a new ideological movement (Öner, 1976: 93). Feyzioğlu took to the defense of the left of center and said that there could be no retreat from that position (Ulus, 06.07.1966: 1; 7). Although not appeared as such in *Ulus*' correspondence, Öner (1976) claimed that during his speech Feyzioğlu yelled "We are against the Banguoğlu of the right and Banguoğlu of the left". When asked if he meant Ecevit, feyzioğlu clarified that he did not mean Ecevit (84). Kasım Gülek argued that the RPP did not need new designations while its "Six Arrows" were there. Ahmet Üstün argued that existing principles were enough for the RPP and "fantastical words and idiom that confuse the people are not needed". Former General Secretary İsmail Rüştü Aksal condemned those who tried to present RPP as having regressive and progressive wings and warned that those who wanted to adopt or move closer to the WPT were in misjudgment [gaflet]. Ecevit then retook to the post and told that neither anyone meeting that defended the left of center, argued to add a seventh arrow to the "Six Arrows", made differences of regressive-progressive in the RPP, nor did not even imply making the RPP a doctrinarian party, but there were such accusations in the meeting. and reasserted his position in his previous speech. Feyzioğlu responded to Ecevit and repeated his position on the RPP not being a socialist party (Ulus,

⁹⁴ Meanwhile, on the 5th of July İnönü (2020) noted in his diaries that the right-wing of the RPP was organizing (738). Öner (1976) noted this would be the beginning of a movement called "76'ers" [76lar] (78). A group of 76 RPP deputies had prepared a text for acceptance of the PG. This text was amended in accordance with İnönü's position (Ulus, 08.07.1966: 7).

07.07.1966: 1; 7). On the 7th, İnönü came to the speaker's post and explained that he did not use left of center to avoid slander by the JP in the Senate Elections. He reasserted that the RPP, with its program and action, was a party on the left of center in the eyes of science, and there was unison in the RPP, on this position. Immediately after his speech, İnönü was asked a question by Vefa Tanır and Arif Ertunga: “Is RPP a socialist party?”. Öner (1976) retold this moment dramatically and considered this as a ploy by the right wing of the party. İnönü came back to the post with “empty eyes” and said that the RPP was the RPP and it was not a socialist party (92-3; Ulus, 08.07.1966: 1; 7).

As presented in detail Ecevit’s articulation of the “left of center” on radio against an untold ban, even if it was close to İnönü’s original conception caused a stir when combined with the disappointing results of the Elections. (Öner, 1976: 62-3; Göğüş, 2008: 145). In his radio speech, Ecevit kept mostly in line with the CAC’s themes and accused the JP and Prime Minister Demirel with his twist. Ecevit mentioned that the JP lied to the people by presenting the RPP land reform bill as communism, working against the RPP’s egalitarian tax reform bill, and using “left of center” to claim that the RPP members were Muscovite communists (Ulus, 03.06.1966: 1; 7).

Feyzioğlu group's persistence in pushing constantly to state that “RPP is not a socialist party” continued until the 4th Extraordinary Congress in 1967. This had a dual goal. The first was to show the difference in ideas between the LoC Faction and the rest of the RPP. The second was to use this image to remove the LoC Faction from the RPP.

The first split in the RPP was both due to an ideational difference and perception of a conflict of interests regarding leadership between Chairperson İnönü and Feyzioğlu.

Most Centrists who seemed to agree with the “left of center” did not agree with the ideas of the LoC Faction but rather kept in line out of loyalty to İnönü. Öner (1976) argued that he was a “coalition” (176-7). This meant that ideational differences persisted in the RPP after 1967. The LoC Faction who took administration of the party (except for chairpersonship) had to operate within that environment and still pushed for its ideational road map. For the most part, they were able to push for their own decisions, as they kept a majority in the PA.

The PG made a declaration on the 10th of July stating that the “left of center” discussion was primarily aimed at creating an illusion of division within the RPP, that it was “a vague sign”, and more importantly the RPP was neither a liberal-capitalist or socialist party as proclaimed by Atatürk back in the day (Kili, 1976: 222-3). Discussions around the “left of center” were fixated on whether the notion or, in general, the RPP was open to socialism or not RPP was not a socialist party (229).

The discussions in PG in 1966 were significant for a few reasons. After the rounds in December 1965-January 1966, the leadership coalition of the RPP had been shaken again by a new group on the left wing of the RPP. Uyar (2017b) noted that the fact that discussions took place publicly in the PG meetings was a new development and a new phase of renewal for the RPP (214-5). İnönü’s position was reasserted and officialized while this meant a step back for the group who did not want the left of center to be uttered. The majority of the RPP PG did not support taking a new path for the RPP. Still, they felt the need to add a sentence stating that the RPP was not socialist to the official declaration of the PG. Thus, LoC Movement members, at the time were growing in numbers and started to present their ideas to the public in *Kim*, and sometimes *Ulus*, felt unease. Öner (1976) thought that those against LoC Movement were in majority, and İnönü did not support its position (93). For Neftçi

(1997), disagreements in the PG had grown and the press had exacerbated them. Left of center and İnönü had both been stopped by the 76'ers and it was accepted in the PG declaration "moderately". The shape of debates in the PG moved Ecevit, then leader of the LoC Movement, to turn his attention towards local congresses which had started (92-3). The 18th Congress was on the horizon, and the LoC Movement was adamant about giving the RPP a new path.

The showdown between organizing right and left-wing members continued throughout the rest of summer and early autumn. Right-wing members who were against the usage of left of center organized and tried to push declarations that accused the LOC movement. The LoC Movement and Ecevit had started visiting local congresses (Uyar, 2017b: 217; Öner, 1976: 94). According to Kim's correspondence recent with Eskişehir local Branch, congress was a significant morale boost for the LoC Faction.⁹⁵ Right-wing members such as Arif Ertunga, Mustafa Uyar, and Cemal Yıldırım had been arranging meetings (Kim, 27.07.1966: 9). A group also presented İnönü with a memorandum that represented 83 deputies with 50 signatures. İnönü considered this a "show of force" (İnönü, 2020: 742).⁹⁶

⁹⁵ According to Öner (1976) Satır, Feyzioglu and Ferit Melen had invite Ecevit to the RPP Centrum building before the Ankara Central District Congress on 24th of July. They had used the argument that 24th of July was the anniversary of Lausanne Treaty. Therefore, Ecevit and his friends should keep the peace and not mention left of center in the local congress. Ecevit made no such promises saying that he should talk with his friends first. In the congress, Satır, told in his speech that there were no good in trying to split the RPP for personal interests. Aksal also mentioned there were external efforts to present the RPP as differences of view among its members. LoC members took such words as slander, (95).

⁹⁶ In the memorandum, it was stated that the RPP was a party that refused class divisions. LoC Movement members were also accused with disseminating their doctrinarian views in the local congresses (Öner, 1976: 99). According to Kim's correspondence signatories were "İzzet Birant, Sait Erdiñ, Arif Ertunga, Hilmi İncesulu, Himmert Erdođmuş, Hayri Başar, Selahattin Kılıç, Ekrem Özden, Mustafa Kemal Çilesiz, Şevket Raşit Hatpiođlu, Necip Seyhan, Muzaffer Şânilođlu, Cengiz Nayman, Adil Toközlü, Metin Cizreli, Kâzım Kangal, Ahmet Demiray, Mustafa Dinekli, İsmail Çatalođlu, Mustafa Uyar, Aslan Bora, Muammer Obuz, Bahri Yazır, Niyazi Özgüç, İbrahim Asyay, Sedat Çumralı, Ahmet Üstün, Cemal Yavuz, Gıyasettin Karaca, Enver Bahadırılı, Mahmut Çe[sic], Sakıp Hatunođlu, Fehmi Alpars[sic], [sic]seyin Avni Akın, Ahmet Onar, Nejat Sarlıcalı, Mehmet Pırlılı, Süleyman Onan, M. Öztekin, Selçuk Çakırođlu and Şevket Adalan" (Kim, 17.08.1966: 3).

Right-wing members tried to push for their views in the PM meeting that took place between the 9th and the 13th of August 1966.

The PM convened to decide on the date of the 18th Congress and the 18th of October was designated. The meetings were heated and members who wanted not to repeat left of center “too much” were in majority (Erim, 2021: 834). LoC Movement members such as Mustafa Ok and Murat Öner were accused by Şevket Raşit Hatipoğlu with allegations of being socialist in the meeting. When Ecevit provided the necessary records of his friends’ speeches in the local congresses acquitting them, İnönü’s opinion was swayed towards the LoC Movement (İnönü, 2020: 742; Öner, 1976: 99-100).⁹⁷ Meanwhile, right-wing members in the PM such as Ferit Melen, Mehmet Hazer, Fethi Çelikbaş, and Ekrem Özden tried to remove the term left of center. Fehmi Alparslan and İhsan Kabadayı went as far as they would also consider changing İnönü in the next congress (Öner, 1976: 100-2; Uyar, 2017b: 217).

Feyzioğlu and Kırca had taken to an extremely pragmatical position that argued since the RPP was a “mass party”⁹⁸ wealthy and landowner elements in the RPP and their votes should not be alienated (Öner, 1976: 102-3). İnönü was stressed due to the pressure of the right-wing elements questioning his position on the left of center. However, with the energetic responses of Ecevit and his friends outside he stepped in and started to prepare a draft declaration for the PM (102; 104). He declared that those who defended left of center would have not been sent to disciplinary committees. He also made warnings against Feyzioğlu, by stating that there were “antipathy and distrust” towards those who defended left of center and said that

⁹⁷ According to Öner (1976), Ecevit had left out contacted his friends who were also waiting in the Beşiktaş RPP District Office. Ok had made a fast trip to İzmir and Manisa and acquired the local congress reports (99).

⁹⁸ This was a discourse, and a misnomer, that was used by the RPP elite that meant RPP had its own cadres.

“Every RPP member will defend left of center. If they wanted, they would have done so with passion and love. RPP’s programme and the platform are evident. We will not accept any claims going beyond that” (104-5; Kim, 17.08.1966: 4). İnönü wrote the PM declaration for that meeting in his line on the left of center. Right-wing members resisted but their efforts proved futile (İnönü, 2020: 743).

The LoC Movement members considered PM meetings in Beşiktaş in mid-August 1966 as the turning point for them (Öner, 1976: 104). İnönü appeared to back the LoC Movement openly. Erim, while advising İnönü to stay impartial to the left and the right-wing arguments a few days ago, visited İnönü on the 19th of August and stated that energy and youthfulness were needed in the RPP leadership and Ecevit could be considered for the post of general secretary. For Erim, Satır, Aksal or himself were too old. Feyzioğlu and Ecevit were younger. Erim had observed that İnönü started to lose trust in Feyzioğlu (834-5; Erim, 2018: 132).

İnönü showed his supporting position on the left of center in general at the local provincial congresses in İstanbul, Ankara, and İzmir. In İstanbul, he presented a short history of the term left of center and his reasoning about it. He spoke of pressures from the far-left and the JP and said:

“Our party will be an element of balance against all extreme currents, extreme-right and extreme-left, and a beacon of hope for all the progressives in our country. There could be hesitation due to misunderstanding this. Those who even if they understand it well, do not want to understand it because they are against the required economic and social reforms in our programme and platform will lose their roles in the party body. Pretending that there is word left in the left of center to situate themselves by those who do not accept

those reforms in our programme and platforms could never be tolerated”

(Uyar, 2017b: 219-20; Kili, 1976: 224).

İnönü persisted in his message in Ankara and İzmir Congresses tipping the balance for the favor of the LoC Movement (Kili, 1976: 224-5). In İzmir, the opposition was stronger to the left of center and İnönü had to make a second speech outlining why he made his position on *Nurculuk* but not on the left of center, during the 1966 Senate Elections campaign (Uyar, 2017: 223-4). Other members of the leadership coalition such as Akasl and Satır kept to the middle ground and stayed on course with İnönü’s position. Satır’s speech about Congress preparations on the 21st of September however, warned against those who wanted to take the RPP to extreme ends, told they would be removed (218).

Feyzioğlu kept his “unificationist” attitude and went as far as saying that he would “rip the mouths of those calling Ecevit a communist” while criticizing those who claim there are regressive elements in the party in the RPP Youth Branch Congress in October (Uyar, 2017b: 224). However, one day before the Congress he joined a meeting of the 76’ers and openly showed his support for this group (241; Kili, 1976: 231). According to Erim, Aksal and Melen were also among the leaders of this faction (Erim, 2021: 839). Other names that attended the meeting of the 76’ers were Orhan Öztrak, Sedat çumralı, Turgut Göle, Vefa Tanır, Coşkun Kırca, Arif Hikmet Onat, Şeket Raşit Hatipoğlu, Kemali Beyazıt and Emin Palsüt. (Uyar, 2017b: 228-9). Right-wing members of the RPP were still adamant in their position. Ruhi Soyer was noted saying the RPP could not be on the left of center (Kim, 14.09.1966: 4). Tayfur Sökmen went as far as distributing a pamphlet that claimed that “İnönü was hand in hand with the WPT” (Uyar, 2017b: 229, see: Perek, 1967).

The LoC Movement on the other hand continued their own work in the congresses (Kili, 1976: 225). They preferred presenting their ideas rather than directly seeking to appease individual delegates that are going to vote in the 18th Congress (Topuz, 2011: 296). Apart from various district and provincial congresses, for example, the LoC Movement was heavily presented in the 4th Congress of the RPP Youth Branch on the 13-14th of October 1966. Hayrettin Uysal, Turan Güneş and Muammer Aksoy made speeches in the congress. Overall congress process of the Youth Branch had seen heated competition between those who supported left of center and those who did not. Erkin Topkaya who supported the left of center was elected as the chair parson of the RPP Youth Branches (Kaya, 2021: 161-73). According to Kaya, İlhan Keser and Nermin Abadan Unat had been influential in the coming 18th Congress in rallying the youth and women branch delegates to support left of center (174). One final move was to invite and discuss the ideas and candidates regarding the congress and PM lists with Provincial RPP organization chairs (Öner, 1976: 147). With that, the LoC Movement was able to keep close communication lines with the local RPP branches.

On ideational front LoC Members, Ecevit, Öner, Ok, Selahattin Hakkı Esatoğlu, Orhan Birgit, M. Şükrü Koç, and Muammer Aksoy wrote articles in *Kim* and *Ulus* on their positions from August until mid-October. In the issue of *Kim* on the 19th of October 1966, a list of the LoC movement members was published (Kim, 19.10.1966: 3).⁹⁹ However, the main document of the LoC Movement was a small

⁹⁹ The list of names presented as attendees of the initial LoC Movement meetings were “Bülent Ecevit, Necati Akagün, Yaşar Akal, Turgut Altinkaya, İsmail Arar, Tahsin Argun, Nazif Aslan, Hüseyin Atmaca, Şeref Bakşık, Suphi Baykam, Orhan Birgit, Mahmut Bozdoğan, Mehmet Delikaya, Muammer Erten, Selahattin Hakkı Esatoğlu, Kenan Esengin, Kamran Evliyaoğlu, Ali İhsan Göğüş, Ferda Güley, Fikret Gündoğan, Nazif Kurucu, Muslihittin Yılmaz Mete, Nermin Nerftçi, Mustafa Ok, İbrahim Öktem, Murat Öner, Hüsnü Özkan, Kemal Palaoğlu, Seyfi Said Pencap, Kemal Sariibrahimoğlu, Türkan Seçkin, İhsan Topaloğlu Saffer Ural, Hayrettin Uysal, Hasan Ünlü, M.

book called “Ortanın Solu” [Left of Center] written by Bülent Ecevit. On one hand, the book consisted of several articles which also appeared in *Kim* over the last months and represented internal discussions of the LoC Movement.¹⁰⁰ This book was a significant achievement of the LoC Movement, as it was a first in the RPP’s history in terms of providing an ideational treatise for a faction competing in a congress. On the other hand, it was a personal hit for Ecevit who was elevated to the level of the *de facto* leader of the LoC Movement in the public eye, which still tried to present itself not as a faction, but as an ideational club (Koloğlu, 2000: 77-8). Still, this group did not feel completely secure about the potential results of the congress. They aimed to achieve a majority in the PM to give the RPP “a new way” via dominating the PA: “The RPP had to go to the people” (Kili, 1976: 228). The book was nevertheless an ideational treatise that diverged from İnönü’s and the RPP’s leadership coalition’s position on the left of center. While Ecevit placed his arguments on the RPP’s modernization experience of Turkey, he did not refrain from providing a critical account of the cadres with different understandings of party principles (227): “That internal criticism in the RPP, is arguably a brave and determined event of exposing contradictions and inconsistencies of İnönü’s years of party rule to the party members and the public. This had been started by left of center movement, by its leader and cadre that owned it, for the first time” (228).

The final round of contention was regarding the PM report that was going to be presented to the 18th Congress. The nexus of discussions was “socialism”. The report was prepared by the CAC and argued that no one in the RPP rejected being situated

Kemal Yılmaz, Lebit Yurdoğlu, Muammer Aksoy, Fikret Ekinci, Cemal Reşit Eyüboğlu, and Turan Güneş” (Kim, 19.10.1966: 3).

¹⁰⁰ Öner (1976) wrote: “Ecevit had been keeping extended notes of the talks in meetings, more than any of us. One day he picked up the draft of ‘*Ortanın Solu*’ book, which he mentioned writing with benefiting from our discussions, and read şn our meeting. It was open to our criticism” (163-4).

on the left of center. It argued that the negative results in the 1965 and 1966 elections were due to RPP voters not voting in the elections, reformist governments lowered the votes,¹⁰¹ the RPP's coalition partners attacked revolutions, the 27th of May, worked against the RPP by claiming that it was disorderly and communist (Öner, 1976: 132). Both LoC Movement and the right-wing members criticized the content of the report and it was amended by a committee containing Aksal, Fezioğlu, and Zamangil (135). LoC Movement members Turan Güneş and Suphi Baykam placed their open opposition to the PM report (Uyar, 2017b: 233). Güneş refuted the PA report's claim that voters were to blame and argued that there was a problem with leadership. He thought that the idea of left of center was rounded in the declaration. According to him, daily moderacy [*idare-i maslahatçılık*] was the greatest of evils as Atatürk said. Trying to appease old *eşraf* allies by not uttering left of center while making the reforms was futile. The RPP should have thought of votes that would come due to reforms (Simav, 1975: 91). Ecevit had also asked İnönü to include CIA operations in Turkey to be notified in the report, however, İnönü had said "it's not its time" (Öner, 1976: 136-7).

The right-wing members also pushed for their position. Kırca asked to add the sentence "the RPP is not socialist" to the report. For Kırca it could be argued that if the RPP existed in Europe with its program, it would be a "humanist socialist" party, but in the local context it was fruitless to declare it (Öner, 1976: 134). İnönü was also going to use this sentence in his 18th Congress opening speech. However, Erim intervened in the report meeting on the issue of socialism. (Erim, 2021: 839; Öner, 1976: 139-40). Ecevit also was very unhappy due to İnönü using "the RPP was not socialist" (İnönü, 2020: 749). Both Erim and Ecevit's complaints had moved İnönü's

¹⁰¹ According to Öner (1976) this had an implied underpinning of "reformist do not get votes" (132).

hand to alter some parts of his speech. But he still said that the RPP was not socialist. That statement carried a risk for the LoC Movement. If Congress found them as socialists they could have been cast out from the RPP. The fear of expulsion due to their ideas was a significant motivation for the members of the LoC Movement.

18th Ordinary Congress of the RPP

In the 18th Congress, the LoC Movement achieved success. The success did not come easy. Whereas the primary aim of the movement was to win via discussing ideas, they had to engage in factionalism. They invented two new means of doing so: Providing a book to clarify their ideas in public and inventing a new means of a competitive tool called the “key list” [anahtar liste]. Three lists of three factions had raced in the Congress for the PM: List of the LoC Movement, List of Party Centrum, and List of 76’ers (Uyar, 2017b: 240).

Firstly, the LoC movement had engaged in fierce debates regarding what the left of center meant, both in party bodies and in local RPP branch congresses since the summer of 1966. Secondly, the right-wing of the RPP which had opposed the left of center altogether had organized and placed serious opposition that also brought İnönü under their fire. İnönü’s support for the LoC Movement had been invaluable (Kili, 1976: 230). However, they still had to sway the Congress delegates. The problem revolved around one issue: the PM candidate lists. LoC Movement placed itself in the *Forum* magazine office. For the duration of the Congress, this office was nicknamed, “555 F”.¹⁰²

On one hand, the LoC members strived to balance both RPP Centrum and local branches. Initial problem was to get İnönü’s approval for their list. İnönü wanted

¹⁰² Abbreviation stood for: Büyük İş Hanı, 5th Floor, Door number 55, *Forum* Magazine.

names of prominent members of the RPP to be added to the list, such as Erim, Satır, İlhami Sancar, Kemal Demir, Feyzioğlu and Orhan Öztrak (Birgit, 2012: 21), Aksal and Tahsin Bekir Balta (Neftçi, 1997: 99). LoC list was also negotiated with “around 40 Provincial RPP Branch Chairs” (Öner, 1976: 147).¹⁰³ On the other hand, there was personal mistrust between prominent LoC Movement members or attempts by other factions to enter the list. One significant example was Hüsnü Özkan and Orhan Kabibay coming to “555F” to demand former high-rank officers Kabibay, Orhan Erkanlı, and İrfan Solmazer’s names appear on the LoC Movement List (155). Even with the personal differences, the magnet of “left of center” was able to keep this group together, and resist outsiders who tried to influence them.

The second problem was getting elected. Up until that point the RPP Congresses had a tradition of issuing “sheet lists” [çarşaf liste] which contained all the candidates’ names to the PM. Delegates used to vote by adding crosses to their preferred forty candidates out of more than a hundred names. This method favored RPP Centrum members who had better name recognition. However, most of the LoC Members were unknown figures for the RPP delegates. Increasing the number of the already known RPP members was going to decrease the chance of those who had “ideational dominance” to be elected to PM (Öner, 1976: 109-11; 156; Birgit, 2012: 20). “LoC

¹⁰³ According to Öner (1976) only 18 of the initial LoC Movement made it into their PM list. Others were either written with the reference of some members, or at İnönü’s request. M. Şükrü Koç had been vetoed by İnönü. The list was: Bülent Ecevit, Yaşar Akal, Muammer Aksoy, Turgut Altınkaya, Nazif Aslan, Suphi Baykam, Orhan Birgit, Mehmet Delikaya, Muammer Erten, Selahattin Hakkı Esatoğlu, Cemal Reşit Eyüboğlu, Turan Güneş, Fikret Gündoğan, Nermin Neftçi, Mustafa Ok, İbrahim Öktem, Murat Öner, Hüsnü Özkan, Kemal Palaoğlu, Seyfi Said Pencap, Saffet Ural, Hayrettin Uysal, Hasan Ünlü, Kemal Yılmaz. Apart from these initial LoC members or associates Tahsin Bekir Balta, İhsan Topaloğlu, Kemal Sariibrahim, M. Yılmaz Mete, İlhami Sancar, Kenan Esengin, Nihat Erim, Kemal Satır, Ali İhsan Göğüş, Ferda Güley, Hüdai Oral, Lebit Yurdoğlu, Kamuran Evliyaoğlu, Kemal Demir, Orhan Erkanlı, Turan Şahin. These were either famous names or latecomers to or supporters of the LoC Movement (150-156; 172). Only discrepancy between Öner and Birgit’s accounts appear to be Feyzioğlu and Öztrak.

Preparation Committee”¹⁰⁴ came up with a solution regarding the usage of a separate “key list”. The first option of the LoC Movement was to put a motion to Congress asking for the usage of separate lists in the elections. However, if needed “key list” method was to be used.

In the 18th Congress of the RPP, the “key list” method invented by the LoC Movement was used for the first time (Kili, 1976: 230-1; Uyar, 2017b: 240). This was an achievement that would be a staple for RPP factionalism and congressional competition in the future. The list was implemented with the help of Aksoy who was elected as the Congress Chair on the first day. Aksoy won with 640 votes against the candidate of “76’ers”, Sırrı Atalay, who received 566 votes (Uyar, 2017b: 229). On one hand, Aksoy had created problems in putting the motion to have separate lists for the PM. On the other hand, primarily İstanbul Branch Members had refused such a motion on the grounds of “unity” (Öner, 1976: 166-7). Consequently “key list” plan was put into action. Erol Ünal in the Congress Chair Committee provided a copy of the list numbers of the delegates in the “sheet list” to Lebit Yurdođlu.¹⁰⁵ These list numbers would allow the LoC Movement to create their “key list” and show the delegates the necessary list numbers (Birgit, 2012: 20). Two hiccups took place regarding the usage of “key list”. First was the interception of the key list by another group. At least two student groups visited the “555F” office to collect and distribute the “key list” copies. The first group was loyal to Aksoy. The second group was close to Hüsnü Özkan. At the end of some of the “key lists” numbers of LoC

¹⁰⁴ This committee consisted of “Gündođan, Esatođlu, Koç, Ok, Birgit, Öner” and reported to Ecevit (Öner, 1976: 109).

¹⁰⁵ According to Birgit (2012) Ali Topuz had provided them with the list numbers of LoC Members. Topuz (2011) however, provided an alternative account. He was responsible for the printing of the “sheet list”. Topuz refrained from giving Birgit a copy of the numbers, but he quickly created the “key list” while the list of candidates’ names was read aloud in order. Erol Ünal however appeared as complicit to Birgit in Topuz’s narrative (301-2).

members Murat Öner and Fikret Gündoğan “crossed over” along with Nermin Neftçi and Orhan Birgit from İstanbul receiving fewer votes. Although this second intercepted “key list” had limited effect it showed a great shortcoming in this method (Öner, 1976: 167-8; Neftçi, 1997: 99-100) Ecevit later affirmed the interception and disagreement over certain candidates of the LoC Movement’s “key list” (Öymen, 25.01.1975: 4). The second problem was İnönü’s negative reaction, upon learning of the usage of the “key list” in the PM elections.¹⁰⁶ When asked who was responsible for this idea Lebit Yurdođlu stepped forward and saved Birgit and Ünal from İnönü’s wrath.¹⁰⁷

Two interesting events in the 18th Congress were the “questioning” of Ecevit at the Main Issues Commission meeting during the Congress, and Gülek’s final debut as a contender to İnönü in the chairpersonship post. On one hand, Gülek lost by a large majority.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, Aydın Bolak and Ferit Melen had openly questioned Ecevit and tried to show him in contradiction to İnönü’s position on the left of center. Ecevit, upon being asked if his words in the *Ortanın Solu* were in line with the RPP programme then why did he further insist, “It was a problem of cadre. If we are absolutely set on and believe in making reforms, we need to put those who believe in them to work” (Öner, 1976: 165).

Out of 38 total posts in the PM were elected among the 19 members of the LoC Movement. 11 were elected from the list of “76’ers”, and 8 were from the list of the

¹⁰⁶ According to Neftçi (1997) she was responsible for İnönü learning about the “key list”. She claimed that she thought İnönü had approved the “key list” and showed it to Kemal Demir. When he missed his name on the list Demir took the issue to İnönü (99).

¹⁰⁷ Kili noted the creator of the “key list” as Lebit Yurdođlu. However, Birgit’s narrative creates an alternative view to the story (Kili, 1976: 230).

¹⁰⁸ İnönü received 929 votes of 1200 delegates. Gülek received 230 (Birgit, 2012: 21).

RPP Centrum. The final two members came from Youth and Women's branches.¹⁰⁹

This was a "coalition" according to Öner (1976: 169). The new PA was a mix of LoC movement members, prominent RPP Centrum veterans, right-wingers, and former putschist officers who were instrumental in the 1960 coup d'état. With these results, one further item appeared on the list: Who was going to be the new General Secretary?

According to the by-laws PM was going to elect the new General Secretary. Majority of the LoC Movement members wanted Ecevit to put his candidacy for the General Secretariat if they won (Öner, 1976: 156-7). As a majority of the PM was won by the LoC Movement, that possibility became a reality. İnönü, however, called Ecevit and told him Satır was going to be the new General Secretary. He thought that it was early for Ecevit to assume that post and wanted him to become Satır's deputy.

Earlier, Satır had refused İnönü's request. İnönü also offered the post to Erim on the 23rd of October. However, Erim also refused and "recommended Ecevit with persistence".¹¹⁰ That night Ecevit had gone to İnönü around midnight and said that he was going to be the General Secretary. İnönü accepted Ecevit's move and accepted that he was going to be the new General Secretary of the RPP (Öymen, 1975: 4; Birgit, 2012: 22; Öner, 1976: 170-173; Erim, 2021: 839-840).

The period between the 1965 Electoral defeat and the 1966 Congress started a very pronounced case of factional party change prompted by ideas in the RPP. After one

¹⁰⁹ The elected PM in the 18th Congress was "Nihat Erim, Orhan Erkanlı, Kemal Demir, Turhan feyzioğlu, İlhami Sancar, İsmail Rüştü Aksal, İhsan Topaloğlu, Bülent Ecevit, Muammer Aksoy, Hüdayi Oral, Turan Güneş, Kemal Satır, Coşkun Kırca, Ali İhsan Göğüş, Muammer Erten, Ferit Melen, Turan Şahin, Tahsin Bekir Balta, Orhan Öztrak, Lebit Yurdoğlu, Şefik İnan, İbrahim Öktem, Mustafa Ok, Orhan Kabibay, Kâmrân Evliyaoğlu, Ferda Güley, Kenan Esengin, Suphi Baykam, Orhan Birgi, Salâhattin Hakkı Esatoğlu, Cemal Reşit Eyüboğlu, Cahit Zamangil, Mehmet Delikaya, Süreyya Koç, Kemal Sariibrahimoğlu, Emin Paksüt, Yaşar Akal, Fehmi Alpaslan, Hüsnü Özkan, Turgut Göle, Nermin Abadan, Kemal Ataman" (Ulus, 24.10.1966: 1).

¹¹⁰ According to Erim, Feyzioğlu, Melen Demir, Şahin, Süreyya Koç, Kırca and Öztrak visited Erim to convince him to be the new General Secretary. Erim persisted in his decision (Erim, 2021: 840).

major and one minor consecutive electoral defeat, a new movement in the RPP organized itself and made its ideas heard in the representative bodies of the RPP. While reading their positions as shaky, and ever aware of a vengeful right-wing presence in the RPP the LoC Movement members managed to provide their ideational accounts, as well as their knack for factional competition in novel ways. Henceforth they were able to achieve positions that could start a meaningful party change in the RPP both in terms of its cadres and policy ideas. This is in stark comparison with the earlier attempt of Güneş, Öktem, and Ecevit to give the RPP “a new way” in 1962, which was a decisive success. The “new movement” or the Left of Center Movement managed to bring together a loose coalition (Öner, 1976: 177) that was both able to challenge ideationally and offer loyalty to the chairperson when he felt threatened by the competition of right-wing members of the RPP. Starting with its leader becoming the RPP’s General Secretary, the LoC Movement thought of dissolving itself. However, facing continuous pressure from Feyzioğlu’s right-wing opposition in the PG, the LoC group reorganized. Soon, LoC Movement increasingly appeared as a faction in the RPP and started to slowly but surely dominate the RPP organization with new cadres and ideational impetus.

The rise of an organized, younger, and organized left-wing group, making itself into a faction, had implications for the existing leadership coalition of the RPP. İnönü’s initial utterance of the left of center position had received backlash from the right-wing members who started to rally around a potential contender for his position: Turhan Feyzioğlu. Trying to balance out the left and the right-wing members in the PM and PG, after the 1965 Electoral defeat, İnönü laid low on the left of center. However, the results of the 1966 Senatorial Elections prompted a new wave of internal discussion. Upon facing increasing pressures from the right-wing factions,

seeing the energy of the left-wing members in the ruling bodies, and receiving positive feedback regarding the figureheads of the LoC Movement from prominent RPP figureheads, such as Erim, İnönü responded to persisting intra-party factional friction by shifting his position to support towards Ecevit's candidacy to General Secretariat. Still, he was not keen to hand the reigns of the RPP organization to the hands of the Ecevit and his movement completely. The fact that he was still looking for a General Secretary candidate that was a member of the existing "centrist" ruling faction of the RPP was a sign that he was going to have veto power on party rule and policy prescriptions. The party change in the RPP had taken the outlook of a factional change and not a leadership change in 1966. Arguably for İnönü, establishing a coalition over the idea that the RPP needed change and an overhaul of its older local cadres was an accepted fact. Still, he also aimed to keep the RPP intact and keep a balance between the three main factions.

Overall, the 18th Congress in October 1966 started a new chapter in the RPP, as almost half of the new PA (16 members) were new figures (Öner, 1976: 174). Its local branches, Youth and Women's Branches, and left-wing elements formed a loose coalition that had the agenda of realizing the RPP to pursue its programmatic ideas on social justice, redistribution, and representation to the full extent. However, this actor formation faced serious resistance from the right-wing members of the RPP, who dominated the PG. In return, the former leadership coalition that dominated the Party Centrum, in a balancing act by the RPP Chairperson, İsmet İnönü, felt the pressures of the right-wing faction and chose to adopt the new coalition in the party. The next few months, from October 1966 until April 1967, were the period of a tug-of-war between the LoC Faction which had a majority in the

PA, due to the backing of İnönü, and the right-wing members who dominated the RPP PG.

Left of Center and Resistance to Change: Aftermath of 18th Congress

On the 24th of October, the new PA convened to elect the new General Secretary and the new CAC. Erim and Satır declared that they were not going to place their candidacy and Ecevit was elected with 31 votes in favor out of 43 (Uyar, 2017b: 240).¹¹¹ New CAC was consisting of İbrahim Öktem and Lebit Yurdođlu, Orhan Birgit, Mehmet Delikaya, Muammer Erten, Salâhattin H. Esatođlu, Ali İhsan Göğüş, Mustafa Ok, Hüdai Oral and İhsan Topalođlu (Ulus, 25.10.1966: 1).¹¹²

After Ecevit was elected, he declared that LoC Movement was an intra-organizational movement in the RPP and it was going to be a “popular democratic movement” in the three years until the 1969 Elections. For him, this movement would not be a philosophy of ivory tower but was going to be popular philosophy [halk felsefesi]. And it was not going to be brought to the fore in private rooms or clubs but coffeehouses and open squares (241). The new CAC and General Secretary Ecevit started extensive visits to Aegean and eastern-Anatolian provinces in Turkey to inform the public and to acquire views of the RPP organization on programme and principles (Ulus, 26.10.1966a: 1; 7).

¹¹¹ 11 members had voted abstention. Öner (1976) claimed that those were “Feyziöđlu, Kırca, Melen, Şahin, Öztrak, İnan, Zamangil, S. Koç, Paksüt, F. Alpaslan and Göle” (173). One vote which belonged to Ecevit himself, was for Satır (Simav, 1975: 93)

¹¹² Party tasks were shared as such: Yurdođlu and Öktem assumed posts of two Deputy Secretaries. Organizational and electoral issues were taken up by Erten, Oral, Ok, and Delikaya. Propaganda and Ulus audits were Göğüş and Birgit. Topalođlu became the member responsible from the Trades Committes and accountant. Esatođlu was responsible for Legal Issues and Reuquests Bureaus. Öktem also assumed the coordination role between the party centrum and Research Bureau, and the PG (Ulus, 26.10.1966b: 1; 7). Ok, claimed that İnönü initially tried to prevent his election to the PA but later agreed under the guarantee of Ecevit (Ok, n.d.).

Meanwhile, with its leader becoming the RPP's General Secretary, the LoC Movement ended its private meetings to avoid creating a new "Central Committee" [Merkez-i umumi] and dissolved itself with the motion of Palaoğlu (Öner, 1976: 175). However, soon after facing the resistance of the right-wing in the PG, the LoC Movement rebranded itself as an "auxiliary force" [yangüç] (182).

The right-wing of the RPP organized itself in the PG: National Assembly Group Deputy Chairs became Turhan Feyzioğlu and Hilmi İncesulu. In Senate Group Ferit Melen and Fehmi Alpaslan became the Group Deputy Chairs (Ulus, 02.11.1966: 1).

On the 24th of December 1966, the CAC provided the PA with a report. The report claimed that the RPP's left of center position was going to be taken well, due to the apathy of the JP to economic and social problems, and it was going to be a guarantee of the regime and the revolutions (Ulus, 25.12.1966: 1). Discussions regarding the CAC report in the PA continued until the 31st. Erim (2018) noted that Feyzioğlu, Melen, and Paksüt had been on the offensive against the LoC Faction. On the 25th arguments and even a verbal fight took place between Feyzioğlu and Akal (845). The matter quickly came to the topic of İnönü's succession and Feyzioğlu's group had been implicated in seeking a leadership change. Melen claimed that Ecevit was a socialist. Ecevit perhaps expected the kind of Spanish Inquisition from Melen and argued back by saying that there was no need for skepticism in the Party Centrum. He also mentioned how LoC Faction's social democratic perspective was accepted by U.S. Political Consul in İstanbul. İnönü kept calm and tried to keep discussions under control but ultimately, he said that he was a populist [halkçı] and etatist in the last 40 years and if those were leftist, then he was a leftist too (Uyar, 2017: 243-51).

The main goal of the Feyzioğlu's group in the PA was to add "the RPP is not socialist" to the PM talks' resolution and portray Ecevit and the LoC Factions as

socialists which were also acknowledged by İnönü (Kili, 1976: 233). On 31st PA voted to support the CAC and General Secretary and published a resolution.

According to that, the RPP refuted the idea that a democratic regime would not work in Turkey. It considered “the claims and methods of extreme-left and extreme-right currents an open intent against our country”. Acceptance of the left of center was reaffirmed in the press release. The PA declaration reminded and hoped for harmony and mutual work between the CAC and the PG (Ulus, 02.01.1967: 1). 8 members placed their opposition to the resolution of the PA.

In 1967, Feyzioğlu’s opposition in the PA was called “the Eights” and the PG group was nicknamed the “63’ers” (Kili, 1976: 232). The Eights went public with their claims that there were certain members in the PA who claimed that they were socialists and wanted the RPP to become a socialist party, hence they had to raise their opposition. This group had received minor support from the local RPP branches (233-4).¹¹³

The clash of the LoC and the Eights factions spilled over to the public in a series of publications of the PA records and declarations.¹¹⁴ The CAC called for the “Little Congress” to convene on the 5th of February 1967, which consisted of the provincial RPP chairpersons on the 4th of January. On one hand, the Eights persistently used their dominance in the RPP parliamentary group and tried to state that “the RPP is not and will not be a socialist party” in the official party declarations. On the 10th of January, the RPP PG declared its support for the Eights and argued that the RPP was not a socialist party (Ulus, 12.01.1967a: 1; 7). On the other hand, İnönü and Ecevit

¹¹³ Kili referred to a survey made by daily *Milliyet* which asked 66 provincial RPP Chairs their position on the act of the Eights. 5 Adana, Bilecik, Tekirdağ and Urfa Chairpersons approved. Bingöl Chairperson openly refused the left of center. Maraş and Van chairpersons refrained from answering the question. 60 others disapproved the Eights (Kili, 1976: 234).

¹¹⁴ The PA meeting records were published in the *Ulus* in great detail between January and April 1967. See: (Ulus, 03.01.1967; 04.01.1967; 16.03.1967; 17.03.1967)

continued their efforts towards the RPP organization to keep the backing of the local cadres, throughout January and until the 15th of March.¹¹⁵ On the 12th of January, a declaration of İnönü was published and stated that Ecevit and CAC's actions were within the limits of the decisions of the 18th Congress (Ulus, 12.01.1967b: 1). On the 4th of February in the "Little Congress", İnönü criticized Feyzioğlu and his groups to portray the left of center as socialism arguing that repeating that "the RPP was not socialist" would ultimately be detrimental to the reform program of the party. He further argued that there was a clash of two ideas in the RPP (Ulus, 05.02.1967: 1; 3). Feyzioğlu's talks were not approved by the majority of local RPP Chairpersons (Kili 1976: 234-5; Uyar, 2017b: 259-61). In Ankara on the 4th of March, İnönü in a speech to the Ankara RPP branch told that the PG was acting as if it was a separate entity from the RPP and claiming that there was a Marxist current in the RPP. He told that "The path of reform, progress and answering the social needs that we opened with the left of center, is the exact opposite of communism. And all the civilized world defeated communism on this path. Assuming struggle against communism as a path of political abuse, and path of policing is an extremely lacking and broken path" (Ulus, 05.03.1967: 3). The Eights also started to visit different

¹¹⁵ According to *Ulus'* correspondence in this period Ecevit visited İzmir (15.01.1967), Adana, Hatay, Gaziantep, Maraş, İçel (21.01.1967) and their districts. In March Ecevit went to Konya (03.03.1967), Bolu, Sakarya and İzmit (09.03.1967), Eskişehir, Uşak, Kütahya (18.03.1967), Bursa, Balıkesir, Çanakkale, Tekirdağ, and Edirne (26.03.1967). CAC Members Ok, Erten and their teams went to Bursa, Balıkesir, Çanakkale and Samsun, Ordu, Giresun respectively (03.03.1967). In April Ecevit went to Ordu, Samsun, Tokat, Sivas and Yozgat (03.04.1967). Satır, Demir, İlhami Sancar and former military-officer Erkanlı visited İzmir, Aydın and Denizli (08.04.1967). Ecevit later narrated a conversation between him and İnönü regarding his visits. Even in winter he was able to rally large groups of local populace in different places: "I told that the party organization had started to support the new movement at an unbelievable pace and majority. İnönü: - There is nothing to be surprised here, your method is the cause of this change. I asked him since I could not understand what he meant. İnönü said: -As far as I understand when you stop at some place you follow a different method. You do not visit the party organization first and then the people. You talk in front of a mass of people and then convene with the organization. İnönü's observation was correct... I asked him what the benefit of that was. -Here is the benefit... The organization sees that how ready the people is to accept the left of center. Seeing this, they meet with you after they lose their doubts about people may be afraid of the left of center... Therefore, they can accept the new movement easier" (Öymen, 1976: 4)

locales. The most dramatic visit took place on the 22nd of April in Adana, where Feyzioğlu and his group protested at the entrance of the RPP Local Branch Office and Feyzioğlu could not even make a talk (Uyar 2017b: 265-6). Youth Branches of the RPP also arranged for a meeting of their own (Ulus, 27.04.1967: 1; 7) and raised their voices against the Eights in a small booklet (Kaya, 2021: 157-8).

On the 15th of March, the İnönü called for the 4th Extraordinary Congress to Convene on the 14th of April (Ulus, 16.03.1967). Later the date was revised to the 28th due to İnönü's health problems. İnönü called for a change in the by-laws (Ulus, 12.04.1967: 1). This was going to be the first round of the by-law changes regarding the RPP organization in this period.¹¹⁶

Between the 18th Congress in October 1966 and the 4th Extraordinary Congress in 1967 the LoC Movement persisted and managed to work with the former leadership coalition or the Centrist Faction as a new leadership coalition. The energetic attitude of General Secretary Ecevit and his CAC had been taken well by Chairperson İnönü and other centrist figures. The largest motivation for this was the opposition over the ideological position of the RPP by the right-wing faction. İnönü still kept the reigns firm and stopped hardliner requests on the Eights by local branch Chairpersons such as İsmail Hakkı Birlir (Birgit, 2012: 32). He preferred to work with the official bodies of the RPP.

4th Extraordinary Congress and First Factional Exodus in 1967

The 4th Extraordinary Congress of the RPP solidified the coalition of the LoC Faction and the Centrists. In his 4th Extraordinary Congress opening speech İnönü

¹¹⁶ Second round took place at the 19th Congress in 1968. According to Neftçi (2007) some like Turan Güneş wanted radical changes in the disciplinary structure of the RPP. Güneş argued that a single Central Disciplinary body should suffice rather than delegating disciplinary committees to each party body. A middle ground was preferred at the end (110).

designated “a new identity”: “Left of Center is a progressive movement of ideas and a move forward. It is the short description that summarizes our revolutionarism, étatism, and populism by the requirements of our [party] programme and needs of the contemporary times”. İnönü asserted to party cadres that RPP was going to left-wing party that opposed what he deemed the “extreme-rightists”, and the “extreme leftists” (Kili, 1976: 237). İnönü also provided a report to the two commissions, detailing the events leading up to the 4th Extraordinary Congress and wrote about the Eights: “You do not recognize the Congress. Not the Chairperson or the Party Assembly. You interpret [tefsir edeceksin] the programme, by-laws, Congress decisions, where in the world, this, is seen?” (İnönü, 1967a: 23). İnönü also made a talk at the Intra-Party Issues Review Commission incriminating the Eights with “casting a shadow” over the principle of *halkçılık* [populism] (Kili, 1976: 239; also see Uyar, 2017b: 266-8). The right-wing Faction of Feyzioğlu indeed used the argument that the LoC Movement was “socialist” than Atatürkist (Perek, 1967).

The Congress saw dramatic events. After the two commissions were completed and provided that the CAC was in order with the 18th Congress decisions and the Party Programme, as well as providing a motion that was accepted which would have enabled to send the Eights to disciplinary bodies. When Feyzioğlu made a speech, following the decisions, “that means to imply the congress as well” he protested. When he tried to leave the Congress, a fight broke out between Feyzioğlu and his friends, and the RPP youth. Alpaslan even took his pistol out, but it was taken away (Ulus, 30.04.1967a: 1; 7). Neftçi (2007) provided an emotional account: “[Feyzioğlu] was a close friend of both me and Nizam. When [the Eights] walked through delegates in line, I was paralyzed in my place with the sorrow that grabbed my heart.

Friendships are different in politics. I saw tears in his eyes. If I wasn't ashamed of it I was going to cry then and there" (111).

The next day on the 29th of April Feyzioğlu and his group resigned from the party. This was going to cause a wave of resignations from the RPP as 33 of the RPP MPs and 15 senators followed Feyzioğlu's suit (Güneş-Ayata 2002: 104; Kili 1976: 240).¹¹⁷ They soon established the Reliance Party [Güven Partisi] which presented itself as an Atatürkist party (Uyar, 2017b: 269).

The LoC Faction found itself at the helm of the PA. The new members of the PA were Enver Ziya Karal, Besim Üstünel, Selim Sarper, İlyas Seçkin, Mustafa Kemal Palaoğlu, Nazif Aslan, Turgut Altunkaya and Hayrettin Uysal (Ulus, 03.05.1967: 1; 7). New Deputy Chairs for the Assembly Group were elected as Kemal Satır and Nihat Erim.¹¹⁸ The Senate Group Deputy Chairs were elected as Fikret Gündoğan and Muhittin Kılıç (Ulus, 10.05.1967: 1). The efforts of İnönü and Ecevit to prevent any defections from the RPP organization to Feyzioğlu's new party were largely successful.¹¹⁹ However soon after the 4th Extraordinary Congress, a new wave of factionalism started to take hold in the RPP.

The events between the 18th Congress and the 4th Extraordinary Congress show the importance of ideas in factional competition. On one hand, The Feyzioğlu group

¹¹⁷ Among them were, Ferit Melen, Fehmi Alpaslan, Nurettin Ardıçoğlu, Kemali Beyazıt, Fethi Çelikbaş, Şevket Raşit Hatipoğlu, Hilmi İncesulu, Fenni İslimyeli, İhsan Kabadayı, Zarife Koçak, İrfan Solmazer, Ruhi Soyer and Mustafa Uyar (Uyar, 2017b: 267-8). For the full list of resignations from the RPP please see: Ulus, "İsyancılar Cumhuriyet Halk Partisinden ayrıldı", 01.05.1967, 15670, 1, 7.

¹¹⁸ There was possibility of a resistance to Erim and Satır and by proxy to Ecevit in the PG elections by the LoC Faction. Güley (1990) claimed that at the Assembly Deputy Chair elections some members of the LoC Faction placed the candidacies of Esatoğlu and Güley. They were not elected. However, their motive was to make a show of force in the PG. They also wanted to send a message to Ecevit. According to some in the LoC Faction, who were "deeply loyal to Ecevit and [the aim of] the RPP coming to a social democratic party line", Ecevit was adhering too much to İnönü's balancing act in the party (394). However, Öner's (1976) narrative suggest there were no such alternative candidacy to Satır and Erim. Still there were a disgruntlement towards Ecevit for adhering to İnönü's balancing act within the LoC Faction (256; 260).

¹¹⁹ For one narrative on Relance Party/RPP division in Kayseri, see (Avşargil, n.d.: 59-61).

tried to portray the LoC Movement as being against the RPP's own ideology, "Kemalism". The LoC Movement, on the other hand, garnered the support of the Chairperson and the other prominent members of the RPP. For the most part, the coalition was made to suppress the risk of Feyzioğlu gaining power in the party. However, the ideational differences over the left of center were an undeniable factor in the factional difference between the LoC Faction and the Feyzioğlu group. The competition took place over an idea that was ultimately about how vote-seeking should have been made by the RPP.

Party Reform and Resistance: 1967-1971

The aftermath of the 1967 Congress was the beginning of the new "balance" created by İnönü. The LoC Faction, which governed the RPP and served as its representative in the public, for the most part, engaged in a series of reforms that started to change the power balance of the party ruling institutions via by-laws, addressing the need to reorganize the financial sources of the RPP, due to revocation of state aid to political parties by the judiciary, adapting the youth branches to the needs of the day, forming new alliances with the labor movement, picking new and younger leaders for local RPP branches, education of party cadres, and reformulating policy prescriptions, strategy and propaganda tactics of the RPP with new slogans towards 1968 Local and 1969 General Elections.

On one hand, the period until the 1969 General Elections saw increased competition on the left between the WPT and the RPP (Uyar, 2017b: 286-91). On the other hand, the RPP kept competing with the JP on the right. The RPP was constantly on alert due to the pressures of the JP on the opposition. On the 1st of March 1968, the JP

revoked the National Remainder System. This was a major blow to the smaller parties.¹²⁰

The RPP also showed its hand by increasing its competition against the JP and also tried to feed its internal cleavages. The largest move of İnönü, with the support of Ecevit, was to support the political amnesty bill for the former DP leadership in May 1969. İnönü met with Bayar to show his open support. However, this also caused great disgruntlement in the RPP, among the intellectuals and the TAF. The problem was so great that Ecevit was banned from attending official state ceremonies. Several figures close to the LoC Faction such as Muammer Aksoy, and Nermin Abadan Unat left the movement.

Meanwhile, the LoC Faction had to contend with increasing opposition from the Centrist-wing of the RPP. This wing had been bolstered with the leftovers from the former Feyzioğlu faction (Kili, 1976: 240). The Centrists around Satır started to place their resistance to the LoC Faction and aimed to take control of the PA. Satır and Centrists did not wage open opposition to Ecevit and CAC but rather tried to undermine them with allegations of extreme-left people existing in the RPP (Kili, 1976: 242; Uyar, 2017b: 291-2).¹²¹ Especially when it came to electoral propaganda and tactics Centrists still acted according to their conventions for some part. One symptom of this was exacerbated divisions within the LoC movement. Muammer

¹²⁰ During the proceedings of the Election Law amendment, LoC Movement had acted with the Nation Party and WPT, and left the talks in protest. Some RPP MPs had initially stayed in the Assembly during the proceedings. However, on the 1st of March during the voting both the RPP and the WPT deputies had left the Assembly Hall (Öner, 1976: 273-4; Uyar, 2017b: 294).

¹²¹ Öner's (1976) narrative detailed the frictions between Satır and the LoC Movement. One issue was the amount of speech times dedicated to the RPP in the Assembly. Especially during the 1967 2nd Development Plan proceedings Satır had been successful in dividing up the allocated time between himself, Erim and Ecevit. On the other hand, he was unable to stop Ecevit from representing the RPP in the Budgetary Proceedings in February 1968. This speech was a milestone in Ecevit's career and published as *Bu Düzen Değişmelidir* (Ecevit, 1968). Another matter of friction occurred because of Esatoğlu's article on *My fair lady* musical at the State Theaters. Esatoğlu had written a leftist critique in *Ulus*. But it was used against him in the PA. Ultimately Esatoğlu had stopped his columns in *Ulus* (Öner, 1976: 246 ; 251-5; 269-70).

Erten and Hüdai Oral had retracted their support from the LoC Movement and started to act with Satır after December 1969 (Kili, 1976: 313).

Satır and Centrist Faction increased their factionalism towards the LoC Faction after the 1969 Elections. Erim had also openly joined them. The Centrist Faction made a coalition with many of the former soldiers in the RPP in their factionalism and tried to undermine the LoC Faction via support of the extreme-left youth organizations. In the 20th Congress in Summer 1970, LoC Faction defeated the Centrists and asserted itself as the dominant faction in the RPP by asserting its own PA candidates list to İnönü. Starting with this, Ecevit and İnönü's relations started to sour as İnönü tried to counterbalance the LoC Faction in its actions, yet he lacked control in the Party Centrum. However, even with the factionalism that rocked İnönü's balance, Ecevit and İnönü worked their relationship until the 21st of March 1971. The external shock of the Military Memorandum on the 12th of March was the reason.

Starting with this external shock, after an initial joint stance against the memorandum, İnönü and Ecevit's paths diverged, and severe internal friction started over the support for the interim military rule. This started a process that initially brought successive changes in the ruling bodies of the RPP and then in 1972 a leadership change.

1968 Local/Senatorial Elections and 19th Congress

In the broader context, the year 1968 saw the beginnings of radicalization of the youth movement on the left, mobilization of the political Islamist movement and Türkeş's Idealists (Aydın and Taşkın, 2017: 158-9; 160-1), and a subsequent wave of violence in the streets, as well as increased parliamentary friction with the JP on the right and WPT on the left.

In the 1968 Local/Senatorial elections The RPP appeared as gaining a 1% vote even with the Feyzioğlu group leaving (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1968: 24-5; Ulus, 04.06.1968: 1). This allowed Ecevit to present the results as a minor success (Uyar, 2017b: 296). In Istanbul Orhan Eyüboğlu and Union representative, Bahir Ersoy had lost mayoral and parliamentary elections respectively, while the RPP gained the upper hand in the Provincial General Assembly (Topuz, 2011: 316).¹²² In Ankara Ges-İş Chairperson Osman Soğukpınar was nominated as mayor. This was not well-liked by the centrists however, some of the district RPP Chairs of Ankara supported the candidate (Ulus, 02.05.1968).¹²³ İnönü had a majority of the radio speeches but did not campaign in person. Ultimately RPP's new outlook and strategy did account for losses to the Reliance Party of Feyzioğlu and WPT. However, the politics of the LoC Faction ruled centrum and the party organization was not synchronized yet according to a voice in the LoC Movement (Güven Partisi – RP, later National Reliance Party - NRP) (Öner, 1976: 282-3; 285; Birgit, 2012: 44).

The rest of the summer until October had been a problematic period for the LoC movement. On one hand, Satır, Kabibay, and Erim had started to convene with İnönü and pressure the LoC Faction in the PA.¹²⁴ On the other hand, LoC Movement's internal discussions had started to leak to the press, and it was heard that Muammer Aksoy pressured Ecevit to ask İnönü to leave. Ecevit emphatically refused (Erim, 2021: 878; Öner, 1976: 289). In the PA meetings between the 3-8th of July, İnönü

¹²² For the cases of the RPP Provincial Branch on the Local Elections report, see: *CHP İstanbul İl Kongresi, Doğruluk Matbası*, 1968.

¹²³ Erim (2021) noted on 26.04.1968: "Party Assembly convened. Our Ecevit team wanted to nominate unknown union official worker named Osman Soğukpınar for Ankara mayoralty. Just to get votes from the workers! What are the other classes going to say and how will they vote?" (874).

¹²⁴ Although, the main topic was the results of the 1968 Local/Senatorial Elections, after meeting with Satır and Erim, Kabibay had also brought information to İnönü, about a LoC Faction meeting in the Winter of 1967. To that end İnönü had talked with Saffet Vural to pursue Kabibay's allegation. Its content was related to RPP PG but further information is not present. (İnönü, 2020: 795; Erim, 2021: 877). Satır and Erim continued their efforts to get İnönü's support to stop the LoC Faction until PA Meeting on 14th of September 1968 (878-879).

asserted his position on NATO and blocked discussion of a potential vote on Turkey leaving NATO.¹²⁵ After a month of student protests, clashes with the police, and a “reactionary uprising” against students in Konya, the RPP PA convened on the 28th of July. The report had been a matter of discussion, but Ecevit’s “harsher” stance was accepted in the PA (Erim, 2021: 878).

On the one hand, public polemics of Satır against the LoC Faction continued until the 18th Congress in October. On the 18th of August wrote a piece in *Milliyet* and claimed that there were many affluent landowners and businessmen on the left of center and wanted a clear limit for the left of center (Satır, 1968). There were at least two other such pieces that appeared in the press that Satır (and also Erim) denied the contents of these (Ulus, 14.08.1968; Ulus, 15.10.1968). However on the 9th of September Satır claimed, that some wanted to use left of center to start a “race for left with no end” and they would be thrown out of the RPP, in his press release for RPP’s 45th Anniversary (Ulus, 09.09.1968: 1; 7). On the other hand, Aksoy published an article on his own criticizing Satır (Kili, 1976: 246). The LoC Faction-dominated CAC published its declaration on the 1st of September, stating that İnönü and the 18th Congress had already drawn the limit of Left of Center. The CAC declaration also stated that it was needless and unjustified to make divisions between “extreme-leftists” and “centrists of center” [ortanın göbekçileri, literally “bellyists of center”] (Ulus, 01.09.1968: 1; 7). As the Centrists and the LoC Faction fought, İnönü found the mood in the upper echelons of the party “depressed” and tried to get a hold of the situation (İnönü, 2020: 803-4).

¹²⁵ According to Güneş, İnönü also made a similar assertion on the same topic in February 1968, during preparation of Ecevit’s Budgetary Proceedings Speech (Simav, 1975: 104).

In the PA meeting between the 14th and 17th of September in İstanbul, Kartal brought up the issue between Satır and Aksoy (Erim, 2021: 880; Bilâ, 1987: 314). During the meeting, Satır had renewed his claim that the left of center's boundaries should be defined. Aksoy had accused him of promising to the business and media elite that Ecevit would cease to be General Secretary.¹²⁶ İnönü used this polemic to assert his dominance over both sides, scalded Satır and said that he was the one and only leader in the RPP (Öner, 1976: 290-3; Birgit, 2012: 39, Erim, 2021: 880; İnönü, 2020: 806). The PA published a press declaration that tried to soothe the feelings in the party organization.

In the month until the congress the LoC Faction and Centrists organized themselves. On one hand, Satır, Erim, Demir, Cihat Baban, Nüvit Yetkin, Turgut Göle and Orhan kabibay met to organize. Erim informed İnönü of a text called the "Goal of the RPP" that belonged to the LoC Faction. They tried to sway İnönü's blessing but failed. (Erim, 2021: 881). Before the congress, the İnönü asked "Goal of RPP" to be retracted and Ecevit accepted (İnönü, 2020: 810). In return, he was initially successful in gaining the blessing of İnönü on the PA Candidate List. Ecevit had removed Cemal Reşit Eyüboğlu and Kenan Esengin, while adding Şükrü Koç. The list still contained figures from the Centrist side. However, upon learning İnönü's agreement with Ecevit, Satır and Erim intervened and stopped Ecevit's addendum of Koç (Erim, 2021: 881-2).

In the 19th Congress of RPP, on the 18th of October 1968, İnönü claimed that there were neither "far-left" elements in the RPP nor "party officials who did not support

¹²⁶ İnönü notes show that Aksoy informed him of his allegations one day before the PA meeting on the 14th. The names written were Vehbi Koç, Falih Rıfki [Atay] and Bedii [Faik Akın]. On 21st of September he wrote: "...Vehbi Koç and H. at lunch. He knows the party assembly talks. He refused (Just as close and gregarious as Satır)..." (İnönü, 2020: 806-7). On 24th October, a few days after the 19th Congress, Vehbi Koç met with Erim and said "CHP won't work [CHP'de iş yok]" (Erim, 2021: 882)

LoC”. On the second day of the 19th Congress Ecevit told that the RPP was going to be on the offensive. Two lists were competing for control of the PA. İnönü was pressured to declare that he did not support either (Kili 1976: 242-3; 245; Ulus, 20.10.1968). Congress made a declaration that stressed the homegrown “developmental” aspect of the left of center and the RPP tradition. Declaration reiterated the RPP’s commitment to land reform, credit reform, redistribution, equality in education, social security, and inclusive administrative reform (Kili, 1976: 243-5; Uyar, 2017: 310-1).

In the end, the PA list elected by the congress was a mixture of Left of Center Faction, Centrists, and former members of the 27th of May Coup.¹²⁷ In total there were five lists. After Satır and Erim published their own list. However, younger LoC Members had crossed over some names in the Centrist list. 35 names in Ecevit’s lists had entered the PM. Seven others who were not on Ecevit’s list that made it to the PA were İlyas kılıç, Osman Soğukpınar, Cemal Reşit Eyüboğlu, Şefik İnan, Mehmet Yüceler, Alp Kuran and Mukbil Özyörük (Kili, 1976: 245; Uyar, 2017b: 311-2).

After the Congress İnönü intervened in the CAC and Assembly Group Deputy Chair elections after Erim voiced his concerns about the potential new CAC. The new CAC was elected days later after the Congress: Besim Üstünel and Erten became the new Deputy Secretaries. Öktem was vetoed by İnönü as Deputy Secretary and became the CAC rapporteur. Güneş, İlyas Seçkin, Göğüş, Şeref Bakşık, Ok, Birgit, Yüceler,

¹²⁷ In order of decreasing received votes: “Bülent Ecevit, Muammer Erten, Nihat Erim, Hüdai Oral, İhsan Topaloğlu, Turan Güneş, Muammer Aksoy, Ali İhsan Göğüş, Kemal Satır, Besim Üstünel, Osman Soğukpınar, Hayrettin Uysal, Kemal Demir, Tahsin Bekir Balta, İbrahim Öktem, Ferda Güley, Turgut Göle, Mustafa Ok, Hıfzı Oğuz Bekata, Kamran Evliyaoğlu, İlhami Sancar, Çit Zamangil, İlyas Kılıç, Fikret Gündoğan, Orhan Erkanlı, İlyas Seçkin, Mehmet Delikaya, Cemal Reşit Eyüboğlu, Şeref Bakşık, Enver Ziya Karal, Mehmet Yüceler, Lebit turdoğlu, Mukbil Özyörük, Alp Kuran, Orhan Kabibay, Yaşar Akal, Şefik İnan, Orhan Birgit, Selahattin Hakkı Esatoğlu, Turgut Altınkaya”. Nermin Abadan and Oya Tezel were elected as Women’s branches and Youth Branches representatives (Ulus, 22.10.1968: 1).

Oral, Uysal, Güley Esatoğlu received various positions and tasks. In the Assembly Group, the LoC Faction had mostly left the elections to the Centrists.¹²⁸ İnönü had tried to balance out the factions. Still, some Centrists like Cihat Baban were not happy with the messages of the Centrist towards “working together” with the LoC-dominated CAC (Erim, 2021: 882-3; Ulus, 01.11.1968a; 01.11.1968b). The intense factionalism had been slowed down for a while since the RPP was going to prepare for the next elections. Still, some issues fed into factional strife in the RPP in 1969, such as İnönü’s support for amnesty of the former DP leadership in May, the preparation of the electoral platform, and primaries.

Road to 1969 Elections

The period until the 1969 General Elections had been an immense polarization period for Turkey. Rising left-right conflict and radicalization on both sides were one issue. On the right political Islamists and Idealists started to clash with the leftists in the streets and campuses (Aydın and Taşkın, 2017: 163-7; Uyar, 2017b: 314-5). The RPP’s own SDA’s tried to resist the pressures with “no to arms” slogans however, they too had fights with the radical left. The left-wing student movement except for SDAs had been heavily influenced by the example of Che Guevara (Koloğlu, 2000: 80-1). The student movement was so radical, that Ecevit and Esatoğlu were beaten up during the Teacher’s Union of Turkey [Türkiye Öğretmenler Sendikası, TÖS] Congress in July 1969. Ecevit was blamed for being the “new partner of America” (Uyar, 2017b: 322-3).

¹²⁸ Neftçi (1997) had lost the Assembly Group Administration elections. According to her narrative after the 1968 she started to disdain the factionalism of both the LoC Faction and the Centrists (140).

The competition between the WPT was also extremely heated. The relations between Ecevit and the WPT had been in tatters since October 1967 (Neftçi, 1997: 117-9; Kim, 27.10.1967: 3; 16). After İnönü's messages in 1968 that declared the WPT as the primary competitor for the RPP (Ulus, 15.04.1968: 7) the WPT got extremely alarmed.¹²⁹ In the 1969 Electoral Campaign WPT openly criticized the RPP (Aşut & Atılğan, 2021: 333-6; 353-5; 361-3).

One crisis for the RPP took place with İnönü's decision to reconcile with the former DP members, most significantly Celal Bayar, in May (Ulus, 09.05.1969: 1; 7). Ecevit supported the Chairperson. İnönü's aim appeared to be to create a rift in the ruling JP (Uyar, 2017b: 319; Öymen, 25.01.1975). RPP's embrace of the Chairperson's position to push for an amnesty for political prisoners including the former DP leadership and putschists of 21st May 1963 (Ulus, 12.05.1969; 14.05.1969; Birgit, 2012: 42) caused a significant stir in the PA and former officers in its ranks. Even after RPP's bill on the matter was rejected by the JP votes, Ecevit used this matter to declare that the RPP could no longer be portrayed as a party that has the backing of the army (Kili, 1976: 251; Simav, 1975: 99-101; Uyar, 2017b: 319-21; Koloğlu, 2000: 81-2). However, İnönü's reconciliation with Bayar caused serious backlash both within the RPP, and the electorate. Aksoy, Abadan, and Özyörük¹³⁰ had resigned from the PA, while Enver Ziya Karal and İlyas Seçkin had been critical.

This event also caused a severe rift between the former 27th May Group in the Senate

¹²⁹ The claim of the far-left news outlet *Ant* was a potential alliance of the RPP with the U.S. to remove the WPT from the political game. For the RPP's answer to the allegations see: "Biraz ciddiyet, lütfen.. Ve biraz da dürüstlük.." *Ulus*, 16374, 17.06.1969: 1.

¹³⁰ Aksoy and Özyörük's position was particularly interesting. Erim (2021) claimed that Aksoy and Özyörük had visited Erim on 27th of March 1969 and argued that Ecevit had no capability and degraded left of center. They wanted Erim to lead with a social democratic programme (893). I could not locate any sources for Aksoy and Özyörük's changed positions about Ecevit. However, I can think of two reasons for Aksoy: Aksoy was angry either due to Ecevit's adherence to İnönü's balancing act, and refusal for challenging him for chairpersonship, or a preliminary breakdown of relations between Avcıoğlu's group and Ecevit.

and the RPP (Milliyet, 12.05.1969). There was significant disgruntlement from the army as well. On one hand, due to the Bayar Affair, the LoC Faction had broken over the cleavage that put the RPP, Army, the former DP Cadres, and the JP at odds with each other. On the other hand, reconciliation over Bayar provided a pretext for the LoC Movement to start implementing changes to the RPP's overall identity via coming to terms with its past in the 1969 Electoral platform, significantly over allegations of the RPP being anti-religious and being in an anti-democratic league with the Army. Ecevit's criticisms of the intelligentsia that looked favorably towards military intervention in politics harmed the Army-RPP relationship further.

Sometime after the 1969 Elections, Ecevit was removed from state order of procession [devlet protokolü] and he was under the surveillance of the Intelligence Service. İnönü was trying to defend Ecevit in the eyes of the security sector (Erim, 2021: 945; Barış, 1972b: 7).

Over the summer primaries in different localities had put the Centrist figurehead at unease. The RPP had decided for all the leadership to run in primaries (Uyar, 2017b: 328-9). Erim felt particularly insecure during his campaign for candidacy in Kocaeli due to support from Güneş to his competitors. Satır had his problems and had to apply for the quota of the Party Centrum. The usage of the Centrum quota for Union representatives and order of candidates had also been a problem and Erim had vetoed the decision in the PM (Erim, 2021: 898-900; 902-7).

Another issue for the Centrists was the preparation of the 1969 Electoral platform. Erim (2021) provided his criticism of the platform draft over how some classes would not like the platform and who was going to vote for the RPP with this platform was not clear (904).

1969 was also around the time İnönü started to have high hopes for Ecevit as the future Chairperson of the RPP, especially due to Ecevit's diplomatic performance. İnönü Had tried to convince Erim and Satır, that Ecevit was going to be the next Chairperson of the RPP. To that end a talk between the two on the 15th of September 1969 was emblematic. Erim had continuously expressed his doubt about Ecevit. İnönü's probing efforts for Ecevit's leadership, however, continued until the 20th Congress in July 1970. (İnönü, 2020: 819; 859; Erim, 2021: 891; 904; 907; 909; 917; 918; 930). Topuz (2011) claimed that he heard İnönü utter that the RPP's next Chairperson was going to be Ecevit two times, the latter being publicly (398-9). Neftçi (1997) had a similar observation. İnönü and Ecevit had been extremely close in 1969, and İnönü went as far as complaining that he could not support Ecevit during the campaign period. Neftçi claimed that the attitude of İnönü caused envy in other figureheads of the RPP (173).

1969 General Elections and Its Aftermath

The RPP entered the 1969 General Election campaign with high hopes for success (Hyland, 1970: 8). There were two new elements to the RPP's campaign which clearly showed that the LoC Factions' ideas have served the RPP as a "roadmap": A new strategy was put in place that opposed anti-democratic tendencies and opposed polarization over religiosity. It was formulated by Murat Öner and Nermin Abadan in its most basic form in a Strategy Committee in the RPP Centrum around 1967-1968. The RPP organization cadres and candidates, with a "secret" notice, were primarily engaged with "economical revolutions" and avoided all polarizing topics, such as secularism and religion. All other topics were to be taken under the light of the economy. The candidates were also reminded that style was as important as the political message and asked to be calm, prepared, and avoid incriminating other

parties and voters during propaganda speeches (Öner, 1976: 263-5; Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1970: 163-4). The new electoral platform, *İnsanca Bir Düzen Kurmak İçin halktan Yetki İstiyoruz* (CHP, 1969). The platform reflected the new strategy of the RPP and offered new formulations compared to the 1965 platform. It claimed that “The order is broken”, “A change in government is not enough”, “Change of order can be done democratically”, “Turkish people is revolutionary”, “The people wanted revolutions at the base”, and “Divisions of progressive-regressive was against the reality” (CHP, 1969: 6).¹³¹ The platform had been a further development of Ecevit’s *Bu Düzen Değişmelidir* (Ecevit, 1975), which was prepared with the help of the High Advisory Committee. All in all, the RPP entered the 1969 Campaign with preparations resulting from a collective effort by a younger generation of politicians who were aided by experts and technicians. These preparations had been made since the 1967 split and the LoC Factions’ coming into existence. One striking part of the 1969 platform was its claim for the new identity of the RPP: “The Republican People’s Party, with its new structure that is absolved of elements that were conservative, against the people and alienated it to the people, now is at the power to realize its populist and revolutionary principles, and realize the real revolution that the Turkish people misses, the revolutions of the base that will alleviate Turkey to an independent industrial nation, saving the Turkish people from poverty and exploitation, and the Turkish Economy from backwardness.” (CHP, 1969: 128). In the campaign of 1969, the RPP’s primary aim was predominantly rural villagers and workers. Whereas the main slogan was “A change of order”, the new one was “The land belongs to those who cultivate it. The water belongs to those who use it”

¹³¹ For expanded discussion of the 1969 RPP platform, see : (Kili 1976: 247-8; Uyar, 2017b: 324-32).

[Toprak işleyenin, su kullananın] (CHP, 1969: 3).¹³² The first part of the slogan was used for the first time during Ecevit's 1968 Budgetary Proceedings speech. Now it was reformulated for the 1969 Elections.

İnönü did not campaign in 1969 and only made some radio speeches. The campaign was driven by Ecevit and others. The allocated radio time was divided up between most İnönü, Ecevit, Satır, Celalettin Ulusoy, and Erim. The RPP also started to publish its planned administrative orders [kararname] after it became the governing party starting on the 25th of September. The “offense” strategy and the platform allowed the RPP to pursue an energetic campaign period “unified with one voice” (Kili, 1976: 250).¹³³

During his radio speech on the 6th of October when Ecevit talked of “change of order in the East”, Ecevit provided an apologetic account that argued the land reform was prevented, an order that came from the Ottoman times persisted (Ulus, 07.10.1969: 7). On the 8th, Ecevit repeated his argument on the requirement for “revolutions at the base” on the radio, and also provided a critical stance towards the single-party period (Ulus, 09.10.1969: 7). There were critics of Ecevit's argument as it was considered a “rejection of legacy” [redd-i miras] (Simav, 1975: 107).

With all the hopes, preparation, and the “unified” campaign in the 1969 General Elections, the RPP failed to rally its desired number of voters and lost 1 percent of the vote compared to 1965.¹³⁴ Still, its number of seats in the lower house of the parliament increased to 143. The LoC Faction in the CAC had pushed for a new set

¹³² Ecevit's radio speeches were also aimed at rural audience. See: (Ulus, 05.10.1969: 1; 6; Ulus, 06.10.1969: 1; 7)

¹³³ One interesting development during the campaign was the chants heard during Ecevit's rallies: “Prime Minister Ecevit”. Güneş claimed the people genuinely chanted about Ecevit. Erim, however, thought that this was a ploy of the Party Centrum. Erim claimed Güneş had personally propagated for Ecevit's prime ministry in Kocaeli campaign (Simav, 1975: 107; Erim, 2021: 911).

¹³⁴ The RPP received 2487006 votes which was 27.4% of the vote. Voter turnout was the lowest in decade: 64.3% (Kili, 1976: 250).

of policy prescriptions and a new strategy based on a class alliance of urban workers, villagers, and youth/intellectuals. As for its strategy, arguably it was a response to the defeats of earlier years. Still, the efforts of the General Secretary and his team were not enough to bring about an absolute victory in the elections (Kili, 1976: 249-50). For Kili (1976), the main reason for the 1969 electoral blunder for the RPP was a failure to create a belief in the electorate that RPP was going to execute its programme coherently (254). The 88 of the 143 MPs were new faces in the RPP PG (255).

Immediately after the defeat, the first issue at hand had been the election of new Assembly Deputy Chairs. Satır and Necdet Uğur had been elected since Erim had declared that he was not going to run. However, İlhami Sancar also ran with Satır's approval against Uğur who was closer to the LoC Faction (Erim, 2021: 912; Ulus, 23.10.1969: 7). Senate Group Deputy chairs were elected as Hıfzı Oğuz Bekata and Fikret Gündoğan (Ulus, 02.11.1969: 1)

Before the first PA meeting in December, Ecevit delivered a speech commemorating Atatürk's death anniversary on the 10th of November, in the SDAs. Ecevit's speech was a continued articulation of the RPP's electoral strategy and 1969 platform. He criticized the early republican concept of "revolutions", and made a theoretical revision in the RPP's ideology. Ecevit stressed that the early republican "revolutions" were primarily at the level of the superstructure. Ecevit proposed pursuing economic revolutions at the base level democratically. That final point was an absolute refusal of following ties with the putschist elements in the TAF, and the violent stratagem of revolutionary youth organizations on the far-left (Ulus,

12.11.1969; Ulus, 13.11.1969).¹³⁵ The rivalry between social democrats and the far-left groups escalated steadily between 1969-71 (Milliyet, 1971: 50-66). On one hand, this was a major ideational commitment after the 1969 Campaign. On the other hand, Ecevit's speech provided an ideational pretext for the Centrists to criticize Ecevit and the LoC Faction. However, the timing was also meaningful. Results of the 1969 General Elections were considered "intolerable" by the Centrists and even some members of the LoC Faction.

On the 7th of December, the PA convened for the first time after the elections. The CAC Report stressed the RPP's new identity, which was out of its statist outlook, and determination to show this new identity "confidently and consistently". The report could also be read as the apologia of the LoC movement on the election defeat: According to the report the increasing voter apathy, division of the RPP, and the founding of the RP alongside the emergence of the Alevi identity-based Unity Party of Turkey, independent parliamentary candidates in different localities, and some cases the usage of Party Centrum's MP candidate quota for eight union representatives were detrimental for RPP votes. The report presented the fall in RPP votes as taking place in the less developed parts of Turkey, whereas they increased in the better developed and/or industrialized zones such as Marmara, South of the Aegean, cash-crop provinces of the Black Sea and coal-mine hub of Zonguldak provided a new rise-of vote in the face of rising voter apathy. That suggested an interesting phenomenon: Alongside the RPP's coherent presentation of its new identity and left-wing policies the voter base shifted towards the working masses and poor of urban and rural areas or, as the report called "The RPP develops in the

¹³⁵ This speech was later edited and published before the 20th Congress in July 1970, under the title *Atatürk ve Devrimcilik* [Atatürk and Revolutionarism]. See: (Ecevit, 1970).

developed regions” and “The RPP loses votes in the under-developed regions” (Ulus, 08.12.1969: 1; 6-7); also see CHP, 1970: 17-35). The RPP’s LoC Faction was able to include new groups in its voter base and sever the old ones with the *eşraf* (Güneş Ayata, 2010: 276). Five new members were also elected to the PA: Uğur, Neftçi, Pencap, Nazif Aslan, and Said Koçaş. Pencap, Aslan, and Koçaş were elected with the efforts of the Centrists and against İnönü’s blessing for the LoC Factions candidates, Orhan Eyüboğlu and Talat Orhon (Ulus, 08.12.1969b: 1; Erim, 2021: 918).

The rest of the PA meeting in December turned into a full clash of factions and the LoC Faction shattered. Ecevit’s speech received criticism from Erim, Satır, and Koçaş. The lack of coordination in the decision-making processes in the party body. Changes in the local branches, left-wing slogans, and left-wing policy prescriptions in 1969, and most significantly, criticism of the RPP’s single-party rule in the platform and Ecevit’s speeches had been put to blame. Overall, the critics of the 1969 Election campaign had directed their offense at the 1969 Platform. (CHP 1970: 65-7; Kili, 1976: 252-5; Erim, 2021: 918; Uyar, 2017b: 340-2). On the third day of the meeting four members of the CAC, Erten,¹³⁶ Göğüş, Oral, and Yüceler, resigned from their posts. In their place, Yaşar Akal, Nazif Aslan, Nermin neftçi and Seyi Said Pencap were elected (Ulus, 10.01.1969: 1; also see: Milliyet, 09.12.1969;

¹³⁶ Case of Erten’s resignation was an interesting development. After getting elected to the PA with second highest vote in the 1968 Congress and one of the senior members of the LoC Movement he nevertheless severed his ties with his faction. Güneş had provided a narrative that claimed Erten’s fallout was due to local competition between him and Ok during Manisa primaries. Even as the Deputy General Secretary he had lost the primary to Ok. Another reason presented by Erten during the PA meetings after the 1969 Electoral blunder was the growing influence of the team of experts in the High Advisory Committee (Simav, 1975: 109-10; 152). During the 20th Congress, on 4th of July 1970, Erten articulated that he opposed way the Party Centrum quota for the MP candidates were used. (Ulus, 05.07.1970: 7) Much later in 1992, Erten argued that his resignation was due to Ecevit’s “opportunism”. He had supported his argument with claiming that Ecevit had only raised his voice against 12th of March coup-by-memorandum only after Erim’s designation as the Prime Minister, and Ecevit’s “opportunism” during the crisis regarding 1967 “Eastern Rallies” [Doğu Mitingleri] (Erten, 2010: 267-9).

10.12.1969). Güneş assumed Erten's place as the Deputy Secretary. A few members of the PA, originally on the LoC Faction ticket, started to support "centrists" and internal friction heated up. İnönü had responded to the matter by stating that Ecevit would continue in his post under the criticisms.

On one hand, the friction between the LoC Faction, Centrists, and the LoC Faction breakouts had spilled over to the PG and then to the public in 1970. It also persisted for months. In the Assembly Group of the RPP after a motion by İbrahim Cüceoğlu to start preparing for the "change of order" envisaged in the 1969 Platform, Satır demanded all documents and calculations be brought to the RPP PG. General Secretary responded with records that were open for review in the Party Centrum. During this period Centrists had started publishing a weekly of their own: *Haftanın Mektubu* [Letter of the Week] and started to "heavily" criticize Ecevit and his faction. On the other hand, left-wing elements of local branches raised their voices against the allegations of the Centrist faction, significantly İstanbul and Ankara RPP Branches supported the general secretary and the left-wing platform of his team (Kili, 1976: 255-8).

After months of friction in the PA, Ecevit called for the 20th Congress three months earlier than planned in early June. İnönü initially commented on that development as the "majority will decide on the matter" and pulled the date of the 20th Congress to July. (Ulus, 02.04.1970: 1). On the 2nd of February İnönü openly embraced the 1969 Platform (Ulus, 03.02.1970: 1). İnönü also refused any allegations of him accusing different factions of dividing the RPP apart (Ulus, 05.04.1970: 1;7).

The road to the 20th Congress had seen two interesting developments on the part of the Centrist Faction. Erim's (2021) journals show that the Centrist faction organized not only amongst themselves and LoC Faction breakouts (925-30; 934) but also in

late December Vehbi Koç and later on journalists Metin Toker and Nadir Nadi (921; 931-2). Starting from April, Satır had argued there was a leadership struggle rather than an ideational division in the RPP. Centrists showed their adherence to İnönü and left of center. Satır's major concern in his *Milliyet* article on 01.07.1970 was the "irresponsible branch organizations" and provocations by "extra party elements" (Ulus, 03.04.1970: 1; 7; *Milliyet*, 1971:147-8). Erim's article was on a similar track. He had adhered to and vehemently argued that the "corrupt order" should be fixed (Erim, 1970). Both figures had refrained from presenting the factional competition in the RPP as a matter of principle. However, Erim's performance and arguments since the 19th Congress suggested otherwise. Centrist figureheads had issues with the implementation of the left of center, both in terms of its policy prescriptions, alliances, and candidate selections for almost the last two years. The 1969 General Elections and its result had been the breaking point. Ecevit's continuous articulation of a self-critical stance for the RPP, and the overall effort of the LoC Faction in presenting the RPP under the light of a new identity pushed the Centrists to a position of open factional conflict.

The conflict had spilled over the cadre reform in İstanbul, and Diyarbakır (Erim, 2021: 930). Sides also fought over control of the local RPP Branches (934). The epicenter of the factional conflict took place at the İstanbul Local Branch Congress on the 13-14th of June 1970: The SDAs and a group of far-left revolutionary *Dev-Genç* led by Deniz Gezmiş had a confrontation in the Congress (*Milliyet*, 1971: 144). Topuz (2011) claimed the appearance of Gezmiş and his comrades to put weight for

his rival Sedat Börekoğlu (360-1). İnönü's (2020) journals pointed at Orhan Kabibay for the involvement of *Dev-Genç* (856).¹³⁷

Ultimately, the cordial relations between rival factions of the RPP were broken down in the wake of the 20th Congress.

İnönü wrote in his journals:

July 2nd [1970]

...

"I had the final conversation in the evening about the party assembly list to be elected with Bülent. We could not come to terms with Nihat Erim especially. He neither disagrees with me nor agrees on anything. He is broken with Nihat Erim, Kemal Satır. I will not allow for any attacks. I did not push it. I will decide after the outcome" (İnönü, 2020: 859).

The LoC Faction Establishing Dominance in the RPP: 20th Congress

In the 20th Congress between the 3rd and 5th of July 1970, although the previous efforts of the Centrists to portray their opposition of the Genal Secretary and the RPP PA as a matter of legality and better management in party rule, the factional friction spilled over the ideological matters. İnönü in his opening speech, reasserted several limiting points in the RPP's contemporary trajectory: adherence to the democratic process, refusal of armed insurrection, staying in the NATO while not showing enmity towards both the US and the USSR, the RPP not being a socialist party while considering founding of a socialist party outside the RPP. İnönü also asserted that

¹³⁷ Erim (2021) had had a conversation with İnönü about saving Kabibay from his putschist ties on the 11 of June (938). He appears uninformed over Kaibbay's usage of *Dev-Genç* in the İstanbul Branch Congress. However, Kabibay's appearance in the 20th Congress on the 3rd of July, at the side of Centrists (Milliyet, 04.07.1970: 11) suggest some connection with the expanding juntas on the left and Satır. Ecevit had used this point against Ssatır during a speech in the 20th Congress (Milliyet, 05.07.1970:11).

there was no point of difference between the left of center among the administrators of the RPP (Ulus, 04.07.1970a: 1; 3; 7).

On the side of Centrists, Erim argued in his speech that some of the criticism that appeared in the PA report to the 29th Congress was not articulated by him (see: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1970: 65-66). He clarified the criticisms of his support of land occupations of the peasantry by Ecevit. He also argued against criticism of the early republican period, and told that his generation considered Atatürk as taboo and that he told Ecevit “it would be better if you did not say we are going to realize the revolutions at the base”. For Erim there was also no need to always say there was something new being done. He argued that matters such as RPP relying on class politics and supporting the notion of a “general strike” had to be brought to the PA before being articulated. Kabibay’s speech was even more emblematic of the ideological differences. Kabibay said that popular enlightenment on the left was not possible with current cadres and the sympathy that the RPP received was squandered. He also asserted that Atatürkism was a doctrine, and it was articulated with Kemalism. Whereas critiques were possible as in all doctrines, the RPP was not the place for such criticism. (Ulus, 04.07.1970b: 7; Milliyet, 04.07.1970: 1; 11). Satır spoke on the second day of the 20th Congress. He said that he did not think the same way with Ecevit regarding the PA report. He argued that the 1969 Platform was not discussed in the PA. He also criticized Ecevit on his word regarding Atatürk. When Satır claimed that there were grievances between him and Ecevit but a problem of the General Secretary receiving criticism some of the delegates started to yell at Satır and tension in the Congress rose. İnönü had to intervene. Satır finished his speech by articulating his personal distraught at being called “centrist of center” [ortanın

göbekçisi]. Göğüş and Yüveler articulated their criticisms over the usage of the Party Centrum quota for MP candidates (Ulus, 05.07.1970a: 7; Milliyet, 05.07.1970:11).

Erten and Oral talked for themselves on the second day of the 20th Congress. Erten told that they did not act as a faction of their own. He opposed Ecevit's argument for the "Popular Sector" [Halk Sektörü] and he believed in a much stark etatism in the economy (Ulus, 05.07.1970a: 1; 7; Milliyet, 05.07.1970:11).

On the LoC Faction side, Güneş spoke on the 2nd day of the Congress. He provided the Congress with reports of his financial accounts, defended himself on his *Türkiye İş Bankası* connection, provided a self-criticism for his *eşraf* connections, and also criticized his relative Erim on the same ground. He also defended Ecevit and his actions (Ulus, 05.07.1970b, 1; 7). Ecevit, spoke on the last day saying although it was previously argued that there were no differences of ideas, he saw that during the congress ideational differences over the RPP's strategy, ideology, and democratic process. He declared that the RPP designated his strategy using opinion polls and did not prepare the strategy of the RPP in 1969 behind closed doors, party reform and cadre change were ongoing, the age of the "mass party" was over, and the RPP was with the laborer's, poor and oppressed. Ecevit also responded to Erim, Satır, and Kabibay about his critical perspective on Atatürk, and said Atatürk would himself have gone to the people in his revolutionary actions. On "rejection of legacy" he argued that as long as it was on the path of Atatürk and six arrows criticism was possible. He said, "bad thing is not rejecting some legacy but refusing one's revolutionary principles." He also criticized Kabibay and to some extent Satır's defense of the "wide front" discourse of the putschist groups among the

intelligentsia.¹³⁸ Ecevit refused the notion of a “cute democracy” [cici demokrasi] defended by “intellectuals who are cut off from the people” and argued that there was a mass ideational difference between Kabibay and the entire RPP. Ecevit then claimed that he was happy with the growing rift between the RPP and the revolutionary intelligentsia saying: “Intellectuals understand that we are friends of the people. Turkey will be saved by an embrace of the intellectuals and the people. Our strategy is the friendship of the people [halk dostluğu]” (Ulus, 06.07.1970: 1; 7-8; also see, Simav, 1975: 113-4).

The whole process of the 20th Congress was a critical juncture, in terms of factional power balance in the RPP and the utter breakdown of İnönü’s balancing act of the RPP factions. Congress put its weight behind the LoC Faction and voted overwhelmingly for Ecevit’s PA list.¹³⁹ The cadre change was visible in both the upper and local echelons of the RPP. Strategically, two factional positions showed that RPP’s founding and traditional elite-pact of “landlord, local notable and large-landowner” were dropped for a new alliance of “laborer, villager, worker, shop-

¹³⁸ This group was organized around weekly *Devrim*. The weekly newspaper was a continuity of *Yön*. After the 1969 Elections the former *Yön* cadres had lost all their hope in a parliamentary change of power and turned their attention to utter and complete refusal of parliamentary democracy. To that end, Ecevit and the RPP was a primary target for *Devrim*’s slander of the democratic process: “Cute democracy”. Avcıoğlu had been tacitly supporting the Centrists in the RPP. One of the editors, Hasan Cemal and intelligence service informant among *Devrim* circle later confirmed this with the same sentence: “There were special efforts at devrim to create disorder with the RPP” (Cemal, 1999: 210; Fedayi & Çelik, 2012: 240; also see: Atılgan, 2008: 309-333).

¹³⁹ The list of elects to the new PA was: “Bülent Ecevit, Yaşar Akal, Kenan Mümtaz Akışık, Mustafa Aksoy, Yılmaz Alpaslan, Cahit Angın, Turgut Artaç, Nazif Aslan, Şeref Bakşık, Tahsin Bekir Balta, Doğan Barutçuoğlu, Orhan Birgit, İsmail Hakkı Birler, Osman Coşkunoğlu, İbrahim Cüceoğlu, Hasan Çetinkaya, Mehmet Delikaya, Kemal Demir Selçuk Elverdi, Selahattin Hakkı Esatoğlu, Orhan Eyüpoğlu, Ferda Güley, Turan Güneş, Coşkun Karagözoğlu, İlyas Kılıç, Kamil Kırıkoğlu, Mustafa Ok, Talat Orhon, İbrahim Öktem, Seyfi Said Pencap, Kemal Satır, İlyas Seçkin Osman Soğukpınar, Necdet Uğur, Haluk Ülman, Mustafa Üstündağ, desim Üstünel, Hayrettin Uysal, Çetin Yılmaz, Cahit Zamangil, Nail Gürman [Youth Branches] and Nermin Neftçi [Women’s Branches]” (Ulus, 07.07.1970: 1). For Satır’s list see: (Kili, 1976: 263)

owner and poor” with the 20th Congress of 1970, in line with its program (Kili, 1976: 263-5).¹⁴⁰

Centrists were defeated decisively. Satır and Demir, although elected due to being on Ecevit’s list for the PA as İnönü urged, soon resigned from the PA, committing to the opposition. Satır, in his resignation letter to the chairman İnönü, blamed the General Secretary for promoting anarchy with his pro-land reform slogan and diverting from the principle of secularism (Kili, 1976: 264-5). Nihat Erim took the presence of the SDAs in the RPP congresses personally: He saw SDAs, Youth Branches, and Women’s Branches as tools for suppressing opposition in the RPP. Erim even likened SDAs to Nazi SS in his journal: “[SDAs] sing a march. Something called the Left of Center March. In one verse it continued as ‘Centrists [Göbekçiler] disperse, left of center is coming’. They sang this even when I was voting. Food for thought: I, a centrist [göbekçi]” (Erim, 2021: 941).¹⁴¹

The immediate aftermath of the 20th Congress was also significant for one reason: Starting of problems between İnönü and Ecevit. One big reason was İnönü’s loss of his hold over the PA. The matter had gotten serious during the preparation of the CAC list. İnönü had requested Talat Orhon and Kamil Kırkoğlu to enter the PA, but Koç and Ok not to be taken to the CAC. Ecevit and other prominent LoC Faction Members went ahead and made their list themselves.¹⁴² Starting with his clash over the CAC list İnönü’s attitude had started to change towards Ecevit. He found

¹⁴⁰ Other centrist figureheads that raised their voice against the LoC faction were Nihat Erim, İlhami Sancar, Orhan Kabibay, Muammer Erten, Ali İhsan Göğüş, Hüdai Oral, Mehmet Yüceler (Demirel, 2016: 859)

¹⁴¹ According to Erim’s (2021) diaries, Centrists were thinking of leaving the RPP in the months following the 20th Congress. Vehbi Koç repeatedly tried to convince Satır, Göle, Erim and others to join Feyzioğlu’s Reliance Party. The RP cadres were quite enthusiastic, and they also repeatedly tried to convince the Centrists. However, Centrists seemed in the end to stay in the RPP as long as they can (945-8; 950).

¹⁴² Ecevit’s CAC cadre in 1970 was Güneş, Üstünel, Akal, Baksık, Birgit, Güley, Kırkoğlu, Neftçi, Ok, Orhon, Pencap, Seçkin, Uysal and Haluk Ülman (Ulus, 11.07.1970).

Ecevit's immediate attitude and actions after the 20th Congress "bold" (İnönü, 2020: 861). Bakşık narrated supporting accounts of İnönü and Necdet Uğur. İnönü had presented the problems between him and Ecevit as a matter of at least two years around 1971-72. But the CAC members were uninformed of the heated arguments between İnönü and Ecevit. Uğur claimed that İnönü had protected Ecevit against Satır and Erim. However, after the 20th Congress İnönü and Ecevit were extremely close: "I saw that İnönü had been yelling and Bülent was sitting silent, his head down and his knees tucked together. After a while İnönü stopped, and mended Ecevit's heart" (Bakşık, 2009: 351; 354). Another symptom of the breaking down of relations was Ecevit's increasing stress levels and anger: On the day of Coup-by-memorandum Neftçi (1997) had run into Ecevit, Güneş, and Baykal on their way to Adana. When she asked Ecevit to stay in Ankara, Ecevit scalded her in front of others saying the party business could not be stopped. Neftçi wrote that others had similar experiences due to Ecevit's rising stress levels (185-6). However, Birgit's (2012) narrative suggested a complementary view. Both İnönü and Ecevit were informed of juntas in the army. Significantly the LoC Faction expected a right-wing coup d'état a la Greek Colonel's Junta. Birgit upon learning of the attempt on the 9th, with the help of his connections in the Army, tried to contact the JP leadership for Ecevit. However, he could not establish a line of communication with the JP. Birgit had advised Ecevit to leave Ankara for a while and go to the "Congress of the Landless" (59).

The RPP cadres spent the following months hoping that divisions in the JP would allow a democratic transition of power to the RPP (Uyar, 2017b: 380), rising youth violence in the streets, and organizing in the rural areas. The SDA members started an anti-violence campaign of "dropping the guns" [Silahları Bırak] (Ulus,

20.12.1970: 1) which was not taken seriously by the far-left youth organizations which were increasingly polarized in the wake of far-right *Ülkücü* actions against them. (Uyar, 2017: 372-82; 386).¹⁴³ Meanwhile Ok organized the “Congress of the Producers” in the Aegean provinces with the aid of the RPP İzmir Branch and, Süleyman Genç and Youth Branches on the 9th of January 1971 (Ok, n.d.). The second such Congress was to take place on the 12th of March in Adana: “Congress of Landless”.¹⁴⁴ Genç was also active on his own and organized first the “Democratic Left Thought Forum” This was a series of panels that brought together the RPP leadership and a significant portion of the left-wing intelligentsia between the 20th and 22nd of November 1970. The full transcripts of the forum had been published in *Ulus* (Uyar, 2017: 276-9; *Ulus*, 04.07.1970).¹⁴⁵

Perhaps the most important development of early 1971 was increasing revolutionary action by the far-left youth and rising hopes of a left-wing coup in revolutionary circles. Ecevit, persisting on his earlier rejection of military forces’ involvement in politics, warned that the expectation of a left-wing coup might turn into the reality of a right-wing coup (Bilâ, 1987: 330). Ecevit’s forecast was going to be realized with the coup attempt on the 9th of March 1971 and counter a coup-by-memorandum on the 12th. However, the problems in the army not only broke down the JP government but also İnönü’s balancing act in the RPP.

¹⁴³ According to Aytürk, *Ülkücü* movement was found to combat any and all left-wing politics on the street, by the Nationalist Action Party in the 1960s. The *Ülkücüs* organized in universities and other higher education institutions between 1966-8 and then expanded their operations to high schools. The actions of *Ülkücü*’s in the 1960’s were comparably little to those during the 1970’s (Aytürk, 2020: 441).

¹⁴⁴ Ok (n.d.) claimed that it was planned to hold more local Congresses: “Congress of Usury” in Konya, “Tea and Hazelnut” in Rize, “Grain Producers” in Diyarbakır and “Husbandry” in Kars.

¹⁴⁵ Also see: Demokratik Sol Düşünce Forumu, *Türkiye’nin Yapısal Analizi*, Ankara: Ulusal Basımevi, 1971

Leadership Change and Road to 1973 Elections: 1971-1973

In this part, I will shortly discuss the party change in the RPP after the 12th of March Coup-by-memorandum and 1973 General Elections. The period between the immediate aftermath of the September 12th Coup-by-memorandum and 1972 is significant for the party change in the RPP since the coup-by-memorandum had served as an external shock that caused a chain of breakdowns in the RPP that led to an abrupt leadership change in 1972. With the leadership change in 1972. The new leader of the party Bülent Ecevit and his team turned their attention to winning the next elections and coming to power. This took the form of amendments in by-laws and party reform attempts by RPP Centrum in local branches, significantly in the rural areas regarding the member structure. Another significant party change was the second factional exodus after 1965 in the RPP. After İnönü had stepped down from the leadership he resigned from the RPP on the 5th of November 1972. With him, 59 senators and Parliamentary Deputies had resigned from the RPP. The final piece of party change took occurred when Chairperson Ecevit and his circle made General Secretary Kamil Kırıkoğlu step down. Kırıkoğlu's fall in 1973 was due to his resistance to anti-military actions of the RPP during the Presidential Election in parliament, and potentially due to a growing ideational split in the RPP: "Social Democracy" versus the "Democratic Left".

Breaking Point: 12th of March Coup-by-Memorandum

After İnönü learned about the Memorandum of the TAF high command on the 12th of March 1971,¹⁴⁶ first via the LoC Faction Member Orhan Birgit. However, he soon started to receive conflicting reports from Metin Toker and decided not to respond

¹⁴⁶ For the content of the memorandum and discussion see: (Kili, 1976: 267-9; Bilâ, 1976: 332-5).

immediately. İnönü also asked to find Ecevit (Birgit, 2012: 60-1), who had immediately returned to Ankara upon hearing the memorandum on the radio. Ecevit had been extremely distraught and felt an utter loss for the efforts of the last five years. When he walked in the *Pembe Köşk* (İnönü's residence), he found Demir, Uğur and Nizamettin Neftçi with İnönü. Ecevit's first words were "My Pasha, we need to oppose this" (Öymen, 11.02.1975: 7; Neftçi, 1997: 186-7). That day İnönü and Ecevit went to the Parliament together. There İnönü said to the press about the coup-by memorandum and Demirel's resignation, "Democratic mechanisms are working. We shall see". He then clarified: "Words attributed to me are at the state of a wish. My entire focus is on the continuity of the democratic regime normally. That is my wish". Ecevit responded to the journalists as it was too early to talk. What was the shocking part for him was the responses of the RPP Deputies who were close to the Army in their open happiness of the fall of the JP government due to military intervention (Milliyet, 13.03.1971: 1; 9; Öymen, 11.02.1975: 7; Birgit, 2012: 61). The CAC had taken measures to suppress any supporting comment to be published in the RPP's news outlet, *Ulus* (Güley, 1990: 419).

İnönü talked for the RPP on the 15th in the RPP PG meeting at the defense of the parliamentary democracy. He found the memorandum unconstitutional, talked negatively of a new "reform government" and called for elections. At this point, İnönü and the LoC Faction were on common ground and stood as one group against the coup-by-memorandum. Centrists such as Satır, Erim, former army officer Said Koçaş and others supported the coup (Ulus, 16.03.1971: 1-2; Kili 1976: 270-2; Uyar 2017: 391; Erim, 2021: 962-4; Koçaş, 1978: 59-61; Fedayi & Çelik, 2012: 228-9). However, on 16th İnönü switched his position and supported the new government and stated that a lot has changed in 24 hours, revoked his earlier statements (Kili, 1976:

273; Fedayi & Çelik, 2012: 228). İnönü was to allow the RPP to support Erim as the Prime Minister of the new government and allow the RPP to provide ministers to the cabinet.

That fact and İnönü's endorsement of Nihat Erim's military-backed government was in a way forced upon İnönü. Uyar (2017b) explained and argued that İnönü tried to keep the democratic regime intact in whichever way possible. He also pointed to the fear of chaos and anarchy due to rampant far-left and argued that the potential influence of the military elites such as President Cevdet Sunay and Chief-of-Staff Memduh Tağmaç, over İnönü (390-4; Toker, 1993: 237; 217). Another narrative claimed that İnönü switched his position after meeting with the head of the National Intelligence Fuat Doğu on the 16th of March in the parliament (Koloğlu, 2000: 85). Additionally, İnönü had refused to allow Erim to resign from the RPP. On the morning of the 21st of March 1971, İnönü received Erim's resignation letter and he was furious at the *fait accompli*. Nevertheless, he tried to keep the RPP away from providing ministers to Erim's cabinet. Erim insisted on İnönü's support and convinced him (Erim, 2021, 963-4).

Upon the news of Erim resigning from the RPP, the CAC convened at the *Pembe Köşk*. Öktem had reminded İnönü of the experience of the 27th of May Coup period. Güneş told İnönü "We try to get away from the shadow of the Army and events keep coming on us". İnönü had agreed with those words. On the 20th of March, the CAC decided for the RPP to not support Erim's government. However, the real call belonged to the PG. İnönü had managed to the decision to support Erim's government with the conditions of it being a government for preparing for elections, and conditional support for the reforms, getting accepted in the PG, on the same day (Ulus, 18.03.1971: 1; Simav, 1975: 120-1; Neftçi, 1997: 198).

On the 21st Ecevit stepped down as the General Secretary along with his CAC, with a *fait accompli* of his own. Ecevit's stance was that the JP government was already brought down 13 months ago, and both the actions and criticism of the parliamentary process were a move by Army Commanders to satisfy their supporters [kendi kamuoyları]. Ecevit then claimed that the military intervention was turned towards the RPP on the left of center due to a misdirection of some others. The rise of the RPP could only have been stopped with the "halting of the democratic mechanism" and "the RPP seemingly trying or wanting to come to power with a support that had no popular support". He argued that both had been achieved and put, "I will not accept that the Republican People's Party comes or seems like coming to power via ways without the will of the people." Ecevit then argued that the RPP was in a conundrum: If the RPP supported or joined the military-installed government then there would be the slander that the RPP came to power in league with the army, which would harm both. If the RPP did not join or support the government then there would be slander of the RPP acting with envy and irresponsibility. Ecevit then likened the memorandum to the Greek case and argued both were done against the left of center parties which could not be stopped democratically. He then said, "In the last days, there were talks of non-partisan attitudes [partilerüstü anlayış]. The intervention is so misled, it is neither non-partisan nor even non-factional" (Ulus, 22.03.1971: 1; Kili, 1976: 276).

Ecevit's decision was taken personally and forced upon the other members of the LoC Faction. Güneş, Birgit, and Ok were utterly shocked when they learned about Ecevit's decision. They still had to act as if everything was normal (Simav, 1975: 97; Birgit, 2012: 63; Ok, n.d; Güley, 1990: 420-1). When the resignation of the General Secretary was brought to the CAC, some members opposed this decision and

criticized Ecevit for his *fait accompli* such as Pencap, Bakşık, and Neftçi. Bakşık and Neftçi did not join the press conference of Ecevit, after the CAC meeting (Neftçi, 1997: 194; Bakşık, 2009: 292-3).

The next days had been critical for the LoC Faction and the RPP in general. The military intervention revitalized factionalism within the RPP as both LoC Faction and Centrists tried to get better positioning in the new context (Bakşık, 2009: 293; Neftçi, 1997: 203-4). The LoC Faction decided to keep to their positions after discussions. Güneş and the “Mülkiye Junta” members such as Baykal, Ülman, Erol Çevikçe, and Yücekök had argued for completely resignation from all administrative bodies of the RPP to further limit Erim’s hand in the military-backed-government. Ok argued against it and used an example from the Korean War. Others had supported him such as Yılmaz Alpaslan (Ok, n.d; Simav, 1975: 121-2; Neftçi, 1997: 197). The top priority had been to find a new General Secretary that could work with İnönü and save a split in the RPP.

The crossroads of the LoC Movement and İnönü were explained for both sides by the literature: For Kili (1976), while placing the interest of the RPP to a secondary position, İnönü acted by his goal of keeping the democratic regime intact with the fear of a complete coup d’etat just like between 1961-5 (282). Uyar (2017b) found Ecevit, however peculiarly silent until the 21st of the coup, and his argument of the coup-by-memorandum being against him and the LoC was unrealistic (390-4). Fedayi and Çelik (2012) rightly pointed out Ecevit’s decision to take a step back and leave the floor to the Chairperson at the hour of the crisis (229). Kili’s (1976) argument pointed otherwise: Whereas the coup having possibly aimed at the RPP on the left of center was not plausible, as per Ecevit’s claim, the “untold motive” for Ecevit’s retreat was the experience of İnönü governments between 1961-5. The LoC

movement had tried to show the public that they were more loyal to democracy and prevent an image of “Army+the RPP” to block an electoral win (280-2). The main effect of the “March 12th Memorandum” on the RPP was catalyzing the “rebirth” or “achieving the identity and body of a real people’s party” (267). It was Ecevit and Left of Center Faction’s open ‘revolt’ and subsequent leadership change following the external shock of the 12th of March Coup-by-memorandum that convinced the electorate that the LoC movement was sincere in its efforts of change.

Uyar’s (2017b) account, whereas able to provide a clear explanation of İnönü’s side of the friction, is unable to explain Ecevit’s side. Ecevit’s conflict over İnönü was not according to a plan that was put into place in 1965 for Ecevit’s rise to leadership (206; 390-3). Rather, as İnönü and Erim’s diaries and other biographical narratives show the relationship between the Chairperson-General Secretary had been extremely close, and İnönü himself groomed Ecevit for Chairpersonship. The relations between the duo had started after Ecevit and the LoC faction established dominance over the RPP Centrum removing the Centrist from ruling bodies except for the PG. However, the primary reason for the breakdown in 1972 was a difference of opinions regarding party goals of “regime guardianship” and “vote maximization” between İnönü and Ecevit. İnönü, on one hand, prioritized appeasing the Armed forces to stop them from closing the parliament and establishing complete military rule, sticking to his “regime guardianship” behavior. Topuz and İsvan’s narratives on their visit to İnönü after March 12th are illuminating. İnönü said “I am responsible for history. Bülent is not, he will come later. I saw that the military was putting its weight and going to close the parliament. For how many years? Does Bülent know that? How is the parliament going to open again? When? They accepted Nihat’s independence, and I provided some ministers to the government and saved the

parliament from closing...” (İsvan, 2002: 47; Topuz, 2011: 433). İnönü was acting to protect the regime.

Ecevit on the other hand prioritized saving his efforts to strategically change the RPP’s identity and persisted in “vote-maximizing” behavior (Kili, 1976, 281-2; Fedayi & Çelik, 2012: 229). When he failed to convince İnönü to put distance between the RPP and the military intervention, and the pressures from the Army had forced İnönü’s hand, Ecevit moved on on his path. Ecevit’s resignation speech, although seemed exaggerated at first glance, had tried to separate the RPP from the Army. It also pointed at factional ties of the military intervention, and the Centrist Faction. Arguably Ecevit while at the end of his wit due to rising stress levels, still managed to create an image that there was a clear ideational difference between the LoC and the Centrist faction, and translated it clearly to the public eye.¹⁴⁷

After Ecevit resigned from General Secretariat, İnönü was unable to reestablish his control over the Party Centrum and “balance out” its affairs. Both the CAC and the PA were dominated by the LoC Faction. Ecevit secluded himself for a while (Öymen, 15.02.1975). Soon he became a thorn at the side of İnönü, constantly reminding him of an impending leadership change. İnönü felt at risk as he tried more and more to control the RPP Organization and failed. Ecevit was slowly being hailed as the new leader of the RPP in the local trips that he made.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Supporting evidence of this argument could be found in Murat Belge’s later narrative: “Meanwhile the military intervention was polarizing the Republican People’s Party. İnönü, the successor to Atatürk and the statesmen who introduced democracy to Turkey in 1946, was still head of the RPP and welcomed the military role. But Ecevit did not. He had introduced the legislation after the 1960 coup that enabled workers to strike, and now he became the most vocal opponent to the governments appointed by the Army. With enviable strategic vision, he tried to renovate the base of the RPP by channelling the new working class militancy which had been revealed in the 16 June demonstration and which the far left had so tragically ignored. Presenting himself as the ‘people’s hope,’ he challenged İnönü, and, much to the general surprise, forced the older statesman to step down from the helm of the RPP” (Samim, 1981: 74).

¹⁴⁸ Anecdotal evidence suggest Ecevit was under severe stress and felt extreme hopelessness. Ecevit’s seclusion came with the increasing influence of Raĥşan Ecevit as a factional figurehead. One piece of

First of Ecevit's successors as the General Secretary, Şeref Bakşık had resisted the requests of the other LoC Faction members at first. However, Ecevit had reached Bakşık and claimed that if he did not accept then the RPP would see a factional split (Bakşık, 2009: 296). With Bakşık's election, Ecevit had also refused the allegations by Göğüş that he would have found a new party (Ulus, 25.03.1971: 1).

From March 1971 to May 1972 apart from three issues of unity (defending the 1961 constitution, defending the RPP against the allegations of the Court regarding RPP's connections with the extreme-left militants, and applying to the Constitutional Court to repeal the Bill on the capital punishment of far-left youth leaders) İnönü and the LoC Movement engaged in a constant tug-of-war in the PA (Kili, 1976: 295). Consecutive CACs and General Secretaries, Bakşık and Kamil Kırıkoğlu¹⁴⁹, and their respective CACs tried to keep the party from disintegrating while blocking İnönü's moves to stop the LoC Movement by overhauling the delegate structure of the RPP and partially absolving the party by-laws (290; 305). Both politicians had open left-wing ideological positions in line with the LoC. However, neither were part of Ecevit's inner circle hence, preferable to both İnönü and the LoC Faction as mediating figures.

Bakşık's tenure¹⁵⁰ had passed playing a stressful game of balance between the LoC Faction then spearheaded by Güneş, Satır's Centrists, and İnönü who tried to take

evidence was provided by Bakşık and Simav. Simav (1975) claimed that Bakşık was not as sympathetic to Ecevit as before after his election to General Secretary position and Raşan Ecevit was unable to forgive that (160). Bakşık in turn narrated in detail, he was very closely communicating with Ecevit during that period. After Simav had a falling out with Ecevit after 1975, Simav had told Bakşık (2009) that he operated on Raşan Ecevit's claim (384). Regardless, with 12th of March Memorandum had allowed Raşan Ecevit to come in as shadow player in the RPP politics and factionalism with her influence over Ecevit, and trying to outplay others (Bakşık, 2009: 368-9; 382-3; Neftçi, 1997: 142; Ok. n.d).

¹⁴⁹ Kırıkoğlu had rejoined the RPP on the 1st of January 1967 (Milliyet, 02.01.1967: 7).

¹⁵⁰ Bakşık's CAC was Yaşar Akal, Yılmaz Alpaslan, Cahit Anın, Doğan Barutçuoğlu, İsmail Hakkı Birler, İbrahim Cüceoğlu, Hasan Çetinkaya, Kamil Kırıkoğlu, Mustafa Ok, Seyfi Said Pencap, İlyas

back the control of the RPP. Neftçi (1997) had already fallen out with the LoC Faction due to her loyalty to İnönü (230).

Bakşık (2009) aided İnönü in balancing the influence of the army via the Erim Government (304-22) while resisting him in matters regarding the RPP (324-40; 306-2). At least until the 29th of April 1971, Bakşık actively tried to reconcile İnönü and Ecevit. However, after Ecevit, during a speech in Ereğli, Zonguldak,¹⁵¹ claimed some figures who were cut off from the people would have tried to keep the military regime going and no revolutions were possible without the votes of the people in any regime, any hopes of reconciliation were bereft. Ecevit on his part continued to set a limit between the RPP and the military-backed government. İnönü had taken Ecevit's words personally and felt unease when Bakşık offered to bring Ecevit before him (Ulus, 25.04.1971: 1-2; İnönü, 2020: 891; Bakşık, 2009: 341-5).

Until his resignation on the 18th of November 1971 (Barış, 19.11.1971), Bakşık had resisted İnönü's pressures to dismiss İstanbul, Ankara, and İzmir RPP Branch and Youth and Women's Branch administrations who supported Ecevit (Kili, 1976: 287-8). Whereas the Centrists still had a hold over the RPP branches in different localities largest cities in Turkey had vehemently backed the LoC Faction and Ecevit (287).

On the 27th of December 1971, Kırıkoğlu was elected as the new General Secretary of the RPP (Barış, 28.11.1971a; Fedayi and Çelik, 2012: 233).¹⁵² just a few days later, when Kırıkoğlu also opposed İnönü's decision of supporting the 2nd Erim

Seçkin, Hayrettin Uysal, Mustafa Üstündağ and Çetin Yılmaz (Ulus, 26.03.1971: 1). He had picked Kırıkoğlu and Üstündağ as his Deputies (Ulus, 27.03.1971: 1-2).

¹⁵¹ Anadol (2015) had greeted Ecevit couple and detailed Ecevit's visit to Ereğli and Zonguldak. Anadol described Ecevit's attitude change after his resignation and rising anger in his speeches (172-5).

¹⁵² Kırıkoğlu's CAC were a list that was prepared by Güley (1990: 427-8). Yaşar Akal, Yılmaz Alpaslan, Cahit Angın, Doğan Barutçuoğlu, İsmail Hakkı Birler, İbrahim Cüceoğlu, Hasan Çetinkaya, Selçuk Elverdi, Orhan Eyüpoğlu, Mustafa Ok, Cevat Sayın, İlyas Seçkin Mustafa Üstündağ, Çetin Yılmaz (Barış, 28.11.1971b: 1; 7). Üstündağ and Eyüpoğlu were elected as Kırıkoğlu's deputies (Barış, 30.11.1971: 1). (Bakşık, 2009: 371-2).

Government without getting the decision from the administrative bodies, “Ecevitists” had reportedly left the PG meetings during the voting (Barış, 12.12.1971: 7; 19.12.1971: 1; 7). İnönü started to take the possibility of a congress more seriously (Barış, 30.12.1971: 1; 7).

1972: Year of Three Congresses

1972 was perhaps the height of the party change in the RPP since the electoral defeat days of the 1950s. After May 1972, RPP not only changed its leader but also saw by-law changes that adjusted the organizational affairs, and participation in government, in three consecutive congresses. Finally, a falling out between Ecevit and Kırıkoğlu took place in the April of 1973 over the Presidential Elections in the Parliament (Fedayi and Çelik, 2012: 247). This event was emblematic of a future ideational conflict in the RPP: “social democracy” vs. “democratic left”.

During his tenure, Kırıkoğlu also resisted İnönü’s demands to take control of the RPP Branches in the large cities (Kili, 1976: 290). What differentiated him from Bakşık was his confrontational attitude towards İnönü (Simav, 1975: 230). Arguably he was also trying to establish himself as a leading figure in the RPP. Kırıkoğlu and İnönü had a small falling out due to the preparation of the CAC list. Kırıkoğlu promised İnönü to make a new CAC list on his own. However, when İnönü learned that the elected CAC was based on a list by LoC Faction member Güley, he felt betrayed by Kırıkoğlu (Simav, 1975: 168-9; Barış, 07.05.1972b: 7). Later on, before the 5th Extraordinary Congress Kırıkoğlu offered İnönü to make a new PA of his own. However, İnönü had leaked Kırıkoğlu’s list (Koloğlu, 2000: 87; Bakşık, 2009: 371-2; Cılızoğlu, 2017: 187). Kırıkoğlu wanted to outmaneuver both Ecevit and Satır and their respective groups. Cılızoğlu and Bakşık reported that he had more left-wing

ideals. When İnönü leaked his list, Kırıkoğlu was claimed to say “I knew I could not reach my goal with Ecevit, but I had no other options” and supported Ecevit (Koloğlu, 2000: 87; Bakşık, 2009: 372; Cılızoğlu, 2017: 186).¹⁵³

İnönü tried to take a hold of the situation and the party organization tried to assert his charisma in the local congresses. Similarly, factions in the RPP had competed in the local Congresses and the Parliament. The parliamentary side of the friction took place over a bill prepared by the Centrists in the Erim government which was going to change the Party Law and abolish Women’s and Youth Branches from politics altogether. The Women’s and Youth Branches, for the most part, were openly in support of Ecevit, and they had the right to vote in Congress, as delegates since 1968. The LoC Faction had tried to stop the bill to be voted on the Assembly floor even when there was a PG decision to vote yes and faced disciplinary measures. However, the 5th Extraordinary Congress had convened before the disciplinary action (Kili, 1976: 290; 294-5; Simav, 1975, 212-3; Topuz, 2011, 454-5; Anadol, 2015: 202).

In terms of local congressional competition, the most significant of those had been Adana and Ankara Congresses. Central District Congress in İzmir on the 16th of January 1972 was also significant as there was fighting between Centrists and LoC faction supporters. Simav had claimed that Centrist Necip Mirkelamoğlu brought in some men with sticks and fighting was broken out. In the end, Ecevit’s candidate had won (Barış, 17.01.1972: 7; Simav, 1975: 180).

¹⁵³ Kırıkoğlu was also responsible or some of the intra-party gossiping regarding Ecevit’s leadership skills. İnönü had told Kırıkoğlu, “Kamil don’t you know that Bülent could not herd two geese? [Kamil sen Bülent’in iki kaz güdemeyeceğini bilmez misin?]” Soon him, and other such as Genç, Anadol and Baştürk were going to form a left-wing faction in the RPP. (Koloğlu, 2000: 87; Cılızoğlu, 2017: 186; Anadol, 2015: 233; Kayra, 2021: 351).

The Adana Congress on the 9th of January 1972 had been a serious blow for the Centrists. Adana was Satır's hometown and a stronghold for the Centrists. On one hand, The Youth Branches members under Genç, and Güneş's team worked over the delegates for a week. Satır on the other hand came in with the support of the Centrist ministers in the Erim Government. The race was won by Emin Bilen Tümer who was on the LoC Faction ticket and received only 14 more votes than the Centrist candidate (Barış, 10.01.1972: 1; 7; Simav, 1975: 175; Öymen, 16.02.1975).

Ankara Congress on the 23rd of January served as a critical juncture of its own in the İnönü-Ecevit friction. Ecevit was not present at the Ankara Congress. İnönü personally attended and made a speech that ended İnönü's charisma for many in the RPP. İnönü started his speech by saying that he never believed slander and that Ecevit was a communist. After that, he continued his speech with criticisms of Ecevit and accused the former General Secretary of trying to control the party administration without being elected to them. During his criticism of Ecevit, Satır supporters started to chant and clap. İnönü's old age had made his hearing and vision increasingly impaired and he did not realize that the chanting was in support of him and started yelling, "I see that every measure is taken" at the delegates, thinking they were Ecevit supporters. The crowd was shocked. İnönü also claimed that Youth and Women's Branch members were being used "to make a *fait accompli* at congresses in already decided ways" Meanwhile, İnönü's speech had been cut off due to some problem in the vice amplification system. İnönü abruptly ended his speech saying, "there were measures taken to make his word not understood" and stormed off. (Barış, 24.01.1972: 1; 7; Milliyet, 1971; İsvan, 2002: 60-1; Topuz, 2011: 448).¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Topuz (2011) had claimed that he visited İnönü on the morning of the Ankara Congress, as a final attempt of reconciliation between him and Ecevit. İnönü told Topuz that "He is an adventurer. He

İnönü's speech was a stark accusation of "lawlessness" and factionalism towards the former General Secretary Ecevit having *de facto* control over the RPP via the existing CAC and the PA. When İnönü claimed that there was no Satır-Ecevit friction but İnönü-Ecevit friction, delegates were yelling at İnönü, "No my pasha no, we do not disagree with you. You are our statesmen [büyüğümüzünüz]. You also know with whom we have disagreements" (Tokatlı, 24.01.1972: 9). All in all, İnönü's speech at Ankara RPP Branch Congress was so unfortunate from the perspective of RPP cadres, that it could be argued that İnönü's charisma was severely tarnished.

Ecevit was mostly out of the whole fight for local Congresses, but active with local visits. Güneş, Ok, Genç and others were more active during the local Congresses. He was slowly turning into a leader in the eyes of the RPP members. One late narrative was emblematic of such motivation. One RPP member in a local congress in Aydın in 1972 confronted Ecevit:

"One day I visited a party meeting in Nazilli. It was a crowded meeting. Honestly, I was 'mumbling' words. Then a worker came next to me, which I cannot forget. He took the microphone and told 'Ecevit stop such talk. Are you willing to risk struggling even with İnönü or not, for democracy, tell us that'. I was shaken and after a moment of thinking I said, 'I promise I will risk it' and I did." (Akar and Dündar, 2006: 83).

receives orders from abroad. If Ecevit becomes the head, Ankara's status of Capitol of Turkey will be in jeopardy. He serves the Soviet ambitions over Turkey". Topuz argued that such words were due to influence of the Centrists over İnönü (447-8). A similar narrative was provided by Anadol and İsvan who claimed that during his speech with audio problems, İnönü said that Ankara's status as Capitol would be in jeopardy if the LoC Faction candidate Rauf Kandemir was elected, during Ankara Congress (Anadol, 2015: 198; İsvan, 2002: 61). Journalistic accounts of the İsvan (2002) claimed that Centrists had told İnönü that Ecevit supporters were going to "boo" him during his speech (61). Same claim also appears in Kili's (1976) work (291). Also, Tokatlı, (24.01.1972) reported that İnönü said, "Mr. Ecevit went so far, the party will be harmed, the country will be harmed by it" (9).

After the LoC Faction started to dominate the local RPP Branch Congresses in early 1972, the final straw that took the RPP to the 5th Extraordinary Congress took place over a bill prepared by Mirkelamoğlu to postpone elections until 1978. Not only LoC Faction but Erten, Oral, and others opposed the bill. The latter would soon call themselves the “Third Worlders” Faction, who acted against Ecevit and still differentiated themselves from the Satır faction.¹⁵⁵ İnönü again criticized Ecevit and the Party Centrum during a PG meeting on the 5th of February and expressed his decision to take the RPP to an early congress to the press. Ecevit’s peace effort amidst the accusations by military attorneys on the RPP, regarding connections with the extreme-left militants, only served to postpone the Congress (Kili, 1976: 299-303).

Meanwhile, Satır’s group had worked with İnönü in a plan to nullify the LoC Faction’s advantage in terms of delegates. Normally the 21st Congress would take place in June of 1972. However, with an extraordinary congress, delegates from the 20th Congress in 1970 would decide the outcome of the factional dispute, giving the Centrists and İnönü a potential edge in taking back the control of the Party Centrum. (Öymen, 18.02.1975; Kili, 1976: 303-4).

İNönü’s support for the Centrist case for delegates and his handling of the process had created a precedent of arguments against İnönü for the 5th Extraordinary Congress, over “intra-party democracy”. The CAC argued, by party by-laws, that an extraordinary Congress could be convened with new delegates elected during Congresses in 1972 and if a provincial branch had not still made its congress then the delegates from the 20th Congress could vote in a future congress. However, İnönü

¹⁵⁵ The breakaways of both groups, the “Third-Worlders” [Üçüncü Dünyacılar] perceived the congress not as a matter of discussing the Left of Center but as a quarrel for leadership and supported İnönü (Kili, 1976: 313).

called for a congress on the 21st of April, and took matters into his hand, establishing a “bureau” of his own to personally call the delegates from the 20th Congress list. This was a breach of the RPP by-laws regarding the CAC and local Administrative Committees would be responsible for the procedures of Congress. İnönü had also single-handedly, revoked the rights of the local branches on dismissing provincial and district Administrative Committees effective immediately with the decision for the 5th Extraordinary Congress. The CAC had declared this was an unlawful revocation of the party by-laws. Arguments and counter-arguments between İnönü and the CAC continued until Congress day on the 5th of May (Kili, 1976: 305; Barış, 22.04.1972; Barış, 23.04.1972a; Barış, 23.04.1972b; Barış, 24.04.1972).

The matter of Delegate lists had been carried over to the court and the court in Elazığ decided that the delegates elected in 1972 could attend the Congress (Barış, 29.04.1972: 1). The Elazığ court members and the case had been taken to the High Council of Judges by Satır supporters [Yüksek Hakimler Kurulu]. Satır himself declared the decision of the Elazığ Court “unauthorized” (Barış, 30.04.1972; Barış, 01.05.1972).

Meanwhile, the RPP organization had been in close contact with Ecevit. They had raised their concerns and criticisms over the question of delegates, and handling of the Congress with local press declarations in the days before the Congress. On the 4th of May, “43 provincial chairs, 8 province representatives, and 7 provincial youth branch chairs in the name of 55 provincial youth branches” issued a declaration that criticized İnönü and the handling of the Congress, and protested Satır. That day Provincial Chairs and delegates, numbering a hundred, had visited İnönü. After being scalded by İnönü in public many of the delegates had been heartbroken and

disillusioned by İnönü's attitude (Kili, 1976: 307-8; Anadol, 2015: 202; 204-6; Topuz, 2011: 450-455; 456-8).

Factions of the RPP, on their way to the 5th Extraordinary Congress, presented their cases to the public. Interestingly both the "centrists" and the LoC movement stressed the change in the party. For the former, the RPP broke itself from a large "mass party" and moved towards being a socialist party. For the latter, what had been happening was "nothing but the rebirth of the RPP" which tried to find its place and fit into the multiparty system after "living as a 'Single Party' and 'state party' for a long time" (Kili 1976: 309-13). Three days before the Congress Satır made a press conference and said that "I am not saying that we are going to win the extraordinary congress. We have already won". He had published a book titled *CHP'de Bunalım* in a very Ecevit-style move, before the congress (Barış, 03.05.1972). The LoC faction was quiet and entered Congress with some degree of confidence. Ecevit had published *Perdeyi Kaldırıyorum* as part of his Congress preparation. The book had been disseminated to the delegates by the LoC Faction (Anadol, 2015: 198).

The general feeling in Turkey had been extreme in the last months. There was a curfew. Just a few days ago, a government crisis had occurred, and the Parliament had ratified the capital punishment verdict of the court on three extreme-left militants. An assassination attempt took place on the Gendarmerie General Commander, and a plane had been hijacked and taken to Sofia, to stop the executions. On the plane, İnönü's son was present on board the hijacked plane. He had a heart attack and when the news was heard in the Congress hall, which was surrounded by policemen, the 5th Extraordinary Congress of the RPP was delayed for a day.

5th Extraordinary Congress

On the 6th of May 1972, after the news of the executions of Gezmiş, Aslan and İnan was heard, İnönü opened the 5th Extraordinary Congress by stating that the matter at hand would not be resolved with him and Ecevit working together. This was understood as “Either Me or Bülent” by the wider public (Barış, 07.05.1972a: 1; Milliyet 07.05.1972: 1; 9; Öymen, 20.02.1975; Güley, 1990: 434). İnönü also went over the rule of opening speech happening after the election of the Congress Chair (Atalay, 1986: 117). The Congress was stalled with motions and countermotions and the election of the Congress chair was only done in the evening. Sırrı Atalay who was supported by the LoC Faction was elected the Chair of the Congress (Barış, 07.05.1972a: 1). One of the motions, by the LoC Faction, regarding the acceptance of the delegates from 15 provinces caused problems for Satır and İnönü. İnönü had walked to the speaker's post and said that he called the Congress, and the delegates were from the list of the 20th Congress. If the delegate list were to be touched he would take the matter to the court. Atalay had cut the heated discussion and the yelling in the Congress Hall, stating that İnönü's words would be assessed in history.¹⁵⁶ İnönü's manner was perceived as threatening by some of the delegates. When İnönü further argued that the motion to be taken back and if not he would end the congress and take the matter to the court, the Chair of the Congress Atalay retracted the motion regarding the delegates from the 15 provinces. Then İnönü started his main speech (ibid.; Ünlü, 07.05.1972: 1; 7; Anadol, 2015: 210).

¹⁵⁶ Atalay's (1986) narrative claimed that both LoC Faction and Centrists were extremely aggressive in their positions. When İnönü threatened the Congress, he thought that he had act quickly, even if the LoC Faction was right in the light of the RPP by-laws, and accepted İnönü's demand. Güneş and Birgit were furious. Ecevit kept his calm to some degree. After the first day's end, Atalay had to soothe the LoC Faction (118-20). Satır's Faction had tried to work against Atalay's election as the Congress Chairperson, by a note that stated, “We would like to bring the insincerity of those who want to place candidacy of Sırrı Atalay for Chairpersonship, who was the Feyzioğlu group's Congress Chair candidate for left of centers flagship 18th Congress, to your attention” (Milliyet 07.05.1972: 1; 9).

In his Congress speech, İnönü gave a history of the RPP since the 18th Congress and retold his version of the events until the 12th of March Coup-by-memorandum. İnönü accusation was that Ecevit did not cease his activities in controlling party affairs after his resignation, and he had been active. Kırıkoğlu had allowed LoC Faction to retain its controlling power over the RPP. The SDA's and the İstanbul Branch and others had also supported Ecevit. According to İnönü the former General Secretary, the PA, and the CAC acted unconstitutionally, or similar to the old Union and Progress Party Central Committee and the parliament under the DP. İnönü wanted the 5th Extraordinary Congress to end efforts of the CAC “under the outside influence”, “refusing that it could be audited”, “as a faction”, and “to change the RPP into something else from what it is and what it should be”. Then there would be elections for a new PA (Barış, 07.05.1972b: 7). Then Atalay ended the procession of the first day of the Congress.

The second day of the 5th Extraordinary Congress, the 7th of May started with Satır's two-and-a-half hours-long speech. The highlight of Satır's speech was his criticism of the notion of “going to the people” [halka inmek] as agitation and the creation of anarchy. Satır's example was the “land reform” accepted in the 20th Congress. According to him going to the people was done with laws. He had also criticized Ecevit for refusing the RPP's legacy and criticizing Atatürk. He championed social democracy and asserted that the RPP was a “mass party”. He also refused the allegations o he was in league with interests groups in Adana, and Vehbi Koç, Falih Rıfki Atay and Bedii Faik Akın (Barış, 08.05.1972: 7; Milliyet, 08.05.1972: 11). For Satır's group there was no need for social democracy while there was Kemalism/Atatürkism (Moğulkoç & Telsezen, n.d.).

The problem of the new vs. the old delegates persisted on the second day. Atalay had talked with Ecevit regarding the matter and Ecevit was understanding. He resolved the matter by refusing the motion yet inviting the Provincial Chairs who were not given delegate status by İnönü, as guests (Atalay, 1986: 122-3).

Another polemic took place between General Secretary Kırıkoğlu and Cabinet Minister Göğüş. On one hand, Kırıkoğlu had accused Göğüş of controlling the state radio and TV to disseminate false information to manipulate the Congress period in the RPP. He also refused that he was receiving orders from Ecevit. Kırıkoğlu claimed that he and Ecevit had similar ideas on some grounds which was normal. The highlight of his speech was an argument against İnönü's attitude before and during the Congress: "İsmet Pasha is not a sultan. He is the person who abolished the sultanate. If İnönü is not a sultan then why should we always say yes to his divine will" (Barış, 08.05.1972: 1; 7; Milliyet, 08.05.1972: 11). Göğüş, on the other hand, claimed Kırıkoğlu's words regarding the use of radio against Ecevit's group were slander. He brought up Kırıkoğlu's involvement in the Talat Aydemir Junta, almost a decade ago. Göğüş had also claimed during his speech that the LoC Faction was taking the RPP to parallel the leftist militants in a makeshift socialist stance (Barış, 08.05.1972: 7; Göğüş, 2008: 157; Milliyet, 08.05.1972: 11). All of the speeches were done among severe yelling, arguments, and even fistfights.

After Göğüş, Ecevit came to the speaker's post after a motion that gave him unlimited time for speech was approved by the Congress. (Milliyet, 08.05.1972: 11; Ecevit, 1972) In his speech Ecevit provided his account of the events. For Ecevit, there were three sides to the turmoil in the RPP: Those on the left of center, those who wanted to corrupt the left of center, and those who agreed with the left of center yet disagreed with the first group due to personal reasons (4-5). The disagreement

between Ecevit and İnönü on the other hand did not rest upon ideational differences but, methods, as İnönü's methods of administration were quite old in the contemporary Turkish context (5-6). Ecevit claimed that until the declaration of left of center by İnönü, he could balance out the party with ease since the friction in the RPP was caused by "personal competition" but not "ideational differences" (7). The conflict surfaced due to İnönü's refusal to bring the CAC's opinion on the support for the 1st Erim Government in 1971 to the PG floor. However, it started when İnönü's "balance" failed after the 20th Congress since "the new movement" in the RPP had grown and taken hold with the RPP with efforts of İnönü and Ecevit (9-10). Ecevit stated that he was ready to resign from politics, however, he did not since his resignation did not satisfy the Chairperson, who also wanted the complete overhaul of the cadres in İzmir, İstanbul, Ankara, Women's and Youth Branches of the RPP (10-1). For Ecevit timing of the counter-movement against the Chairperson was not random:

"When the balance is lost in the organization in the same way and for the same reason, our dear Chairperson, sidelined the organization.

"When did he do this? At a time when the RPP organization got conscious of its rights, found its personality the most after more than twenty-five years of democratic education, more than that after five, six years of intra-party democratic experience, our dear Chairperson decided not to recognize the rights of the organization, and limit them. And towards the units of the organization who resisted to use their lawful rights, he wanted measures against the by-laws" (Ecevit, 1972: 10).

Ecevit also claimed that institutions were gaining importance over individuals (Ecevit, 1972: 11). The RPP was moving to be a "party of the organization" from

being a “party of the leader” (28-30). During various parts of his speech, Ecevit answered allegations of Satır, Göğüş, and İnönü going over the events since the 20th Congress. He presented his case as a matter of rules of law vs. order (56). He finished his speech by saying: “I will say even more clearly, here is your decision: Are we going to be free and law-abiding members of a democratic party, or are we going to be palatial slaves? [kapıkulları]. Decision is yours” (57).

The rest of the day went with other delegates speaking on both sides. The last words belonged to İnönü. He reiterated that his actions were lawful as the PA and the CAC were under the direct influence of Ecevit. He also said if Congress found Ecevit right that it would fail to solve the problem. (Anadol, 2015: 212; Milliyet, 08.05.1972: 11).

In the evening of the second day of the Congress, the vote of confidence for the existing PA took place. Voting was done openly with each delegate’s name being read and then the vote being declared aloud.¹⁵⁷ After the voting, the PA was given a vote of confidence with 709 to 503 votes. (Milliyet, 08.05.1972: 1; 11; Öymen, 20.02.1975; Anadol, 2015: 212-4; Topuz, 2011: 467-9; Kili, 1976: 325-7).

With the vote of confidence received the LoC Faction had kept its dominance over the RPP. The victory was achieved over Chairperson İnönü, who was in alliance with the Centrist and Third Worlders faction. A significant majority of the party delegates from the provinces, even after the change in the local cadres had not been reflected upon due to the design of the delegate structure of the 5th Extraordinary Congress by the Chairperson. Arguably, the whole process of leadership change after the external shock of 1971 took place over a combination of ideational differences regarding

¹⁵⁷ For the list of votes see: (Kili, 1976: 471-99).

party goals and party identity, factionalism on the grounds of left-wing ideas and policy entrepreneurship methods, and a change of cadres both on ideological grounds and generational shift.

As former General Secretary Ecevit claimed and exemplified during his 5th Extraordinary Congress speech, the party change in the RPP could be read, as an incremental change that occurred over two decades of getting used to internal and external competition. It could also be read as an ideational series of frictions within the RPP, over the identity, strategy, and policy entrepreneurship of the party starting with İnönü's articulation of left of center in 1965. Or finally, party change in the RPP was an immediate result of the events of 1971-1972, when İnönü, to save the parliamentary process he and the RPP established more than two decades ago, from military intervention, or in other words to guard the regime, went over the legal routines and party administrative bodies to assert his position. Ultimately the same behavior that slowly but surely diminished the personal charisma of the Chairperson had brought the RPP to the 5th Extraordinary Congress, and the *de facto* decision-making to control the delegate structure persisted during the Congress. When the highest decision-making body of the RPP, sided with the left-wing ruling coalition of the party, the Chairperson stayed on his course.

İnönü stepped down as the Chairperson of the RPP on the 8th of 1972 (Barış, 09.05.1972: 1) This was not an end of an era for the RPP, and to some extent unexpected and undesired for the LoC Faction. The aim of the 5th Extraordinary Congress was not a leadership change. However, the party change in the RPP had brought its Chairperson to resolve its year-old matter of succession (Kili, 1976: 328-30; Atalay, 1986: 123-5; Anadol, 2015: 213; Öymen, 20.02.1975; Topuz, 2011: 467).

The next week on the 14th of May, the “Special Congress” convened, and Ecevit was elected the next chairperson of the RPP (Kili, 1976: 330-3; Öymen, 20.02.1975). On the 30th of June 21st Congress of the RPP convened. The Congress was rather serene compared to the last few congresses of the RPP. Congress made by-law changes regarding organizational affairs and contributions of ministers to governments. Kırıkoğlu was elected as the General Secretary (Kili, 1976: 336-7).

“To White Days”: Aftermath of the 21st Congress

After the major party change in the RPP in May of 1972, two more crucial events took place until the 1973 General Elections: İnönü’s and oppositions resignation from the RPP, and the resignation of Kırıkoğlu and his supporters from the CAC. The first event was important in terms of marking the end of the LoC Faction – Centrist competition in the RPP. The second event, however, marked the end of the coalition around the idea of left of center. Kırıkoğlu had positioned himself as an opponent to Ecevit, and soon created his own left-wing faction in the RPP around the phrase “Democratic Left”. Arguably, one path of factionalism closed for the RPP while new potential paths started to present themselves.

Satır’s faction kept its pressures over Ecevit and the PA via their presence in the RPP PG until early November. The split in the RPP took place due to PA’s decision to retract the RPP’s ministers in the Melen Government. That day İnönü presented his resignation from the RPP. This caused Centrists and breakaways to leave the RPP as well. In total 15 senators and 44 MPs left the RPP (Öymen, 20.02.1975; Kili, 1976: 337-41).

Kırıkoğlu's resignation from the General Secretariat took place during the presidential election crisis of early 1973.¹⁵⁸ When Ecevit and the ruling coalition of the RPP did not want to vote for a candidate imposed by the Army, former Chief-of-Staff Faruk Gürler, took a PG decision not to attend the round of the presidential election in the Assembly to publicly declare that the RPP was not backing Army's candidate. Kırıkoğlu, CAC members "Mehmet Ali Pestilci, Cahit Angın, Hasan Çetinkaya, Cevat Sayın and 30 other MP's" however, went ahead and joined the meeting. Soon after Kırıkoğlu received criticisms from the Mülkiye Junta and resigned from his posts. Orhan Eyüboğlu was elected the new General Secretary (Kili, 1976: 344; Milliyet, 05.04.1973: 1; 11; Emre, 2014b: 119).¹⁵⁹

Kırıkoğlu's later explanation of the matter was that a PG decision over presidential elections was not constitutional and therefore he went ahead and joined the meeting (Cılızoğlu, 2017: 263-4). The Mülkiye Junta members presented the matter as Kırıkoğlu's support for Army's presidential candidate Gürler and as an extension of a difference between him and others in the RPP when it came to adherence to the democratic process (Emre, 2014b: 119; Simav, 1975: 292-293).¹⁶⁰

The close reading of the narratives of several actors on both sides of the friction suggests a much deeper ideational difference between the "social democratic" and

¹⁵⁸ See: Nye, Roger P.. "Civil-Military Confrontation in Turkey: The 1973 Presidential Election". *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 8. (1977): 209-228.

¹⁵⁹ Along with Kırıkoğlu, Mustafa Üstündağ, Cevat Sayın, Cahit Angın, Halil Goral, M. Ali Pestilci, Hasan Çetinkaya, Selçuk Erverdi, Kemal Okyay and Nadir Yavuzkan were removed from the CAC (Milliyet, 05.04.1973: 11).

¹⁶⁰ Whether Kırıkoğlu's involvement with the Aydemir Junta in 1963 was known within the RPP at the time is a mystery. The closest potential witness should have been Mustafa Ok (n.d.), who was also part of the Aydemir Junta in 1963. However, even his memoir did not mention his involvement. Apart from Göğüş' articulation of the matter during the 5th Extraordinary Congress this matter is not touched upon in any of the narratives. Kırıkoğlu's biographer Cılızoğlu (2017) denied any connection of Kırıkoğlu with the Aydemir Junta. İnönü, probably was also not aware of the connection. The key example of Mustafa Ok allows for interpretation. Ok was a known member of Aydemir's junta in 1963, after each congress from 1966, up until 1971 İnönü had tried to veto him from joining the PA and the CAC (Ok, n.d; Bakşık, 2009: 300). Arguably, if İnönü had known the connection of Aydemir and Kırıkoğlu, his attitude would be different.

“democratic left” wings of the RPP. Kırıkoğlu considered himself as being more to the left of Ecevit (Cılızoğlu, 2017: 252; Bakşık, 2009: 372) and tried to create his “left-wing” faction in the RPP. Youth Branches under the control of Genç, union representatives from Türk-iş, Such as Baştürk, and prominent members such as Anadol and Koç had been part of this new grouping (Anadol, 2015: 298; Kayra, 2021: 352).

It could be argued that Kırıkoğlu spent the time between his election to the PA in 1970 organizing his group of supporters in the RPP. The common denominator of the group was being involved with the WPT or adhering to “socialist” ideals or considering “social democracy” as the right-wing position in left parties (Cılızoğlu: 210). The first chance of operation for Kırıkoğlu occurred with Ecevit’s resignation as the General Secretary. After Kırıkoğlu was elected as Deputy General Secretary under Bakşık, he had offered Bakşık to undermine Ecevit to stop him. Bakşık had refused (Bakşık, 2009: 372). After Kırıkoğlu's election to General Secretariat, he also tried to convince İnönü to his cause to no avail.

Kırıkoğlu also tried to take the control of the RPP Organization under his control. Arguably, With Ecevit’s Chairpersonship, he started to try to curb the growth of alternative bodies to RPP Youth Branches of RPP, under the control of Genç, that could reach the voters related to RPP. After the closure of the SDAs in 1972 their cadres joined the Youth Branches which prompted friction between “social democrats” and “democratic leftists” (Öymen, 16.02.1975). According to Cahit Angın under legal arguments, that only Youth and Women’s branches could operate in reaching the masses, Kırıkoğlu’s team in the CAC had tried to stop the creation of “Popular Volunteers” [Halk Gönüllüleri] under Raşan Ecevit (Cılızoğlu, 2017: 221-

3; Tütüncü Esmer, 2006: 103).¹⁶¹ Another claim suggested that Kırıkoğlu tried to change local branch administrative cadres in İzmir where Genç was most powerful (Simav, 1975: 290-1). Anadol claimed that, by 1972, cadres under Genç were able to rise up to the administrative bodies in local RPP Branches in Eskişehir, İzmir, Ankara, and Çorlu, Tekirdağ (Anadol, 2015: 195).

With the resignation of Kırıkoğlu his efforts were curbed for a while. However, cadres closer to his on the “democratic left” continued to operate and undermine the social democratic faction in the RPP in the years following 1973. The reason was the breaking of the “coalition magnet” effect of the left of center. In the vacuum created by İnönü’s resignation and the exodus of the more centrist-leaning cadres, the RPP found itself in a new set of frictions that had reflected the ideological conflicts within the larger Turkish left.

One observer of the RPP provided this description of the party actors before the 1973 Elections in length:

“Bülent Ecevit did not identify with any of the groups, but seemed closer to some groups or people and provided overt or subtle help to them. During Summer 1973’s southern campaign he openly showed his support for Deniz Baykal to the people of Antalya. He direct and indirectly aided the youth who were members of the Social Democratic Thought Associations. Especially

¹⁶¹ Ecevit (1966) articulated the idea for this initiative in 1966. The group was to “go the people” with a logic of “social service” rather than “social aid”. The inspiration was American “Peace Volunteers”. The group should provide the exploited, ordinary people with knowledge and skills to get better in economic life. The mentality was also explained as not going to the people with the image of the state, rather to go there “against unjust and badly used state power” (81). The first attempt to found the “Popular Volunteers” took place as an intra-party educational seminar aimed at the Youth and Women’s branch members from Thracian and Marmara provinces in Bursa on 5th of August 1967, under the name “Educational Seminar for Youth and Women Pioneering Leaders and Popular Volunteers” Öktem and Ecevit had attended the seminar (Ulus, 05.08.1967:7) However Prime Minister Demirel had arrived and criticized the seminar in the following days. After provocations from press close to the JP and Metin Toker’s skeptical article the initiative was cancelled (Öner, 1976: 257-9).

against the reaction of Ankara parliamentarians he also showed closeness to me.

“The Mülkiye Junta did not seem active at the beginning of the year. The Leader was not on good terms with Turan Güneş. Besim Üstünel was in Sweden. Deniz Baykal had just returned from military service. Haluk Ülman and Ziya Gökalp Mülayim were not seemed to be active.

“General Secretary Kâmil Kırıkoğlu was being supported by union representative Abdullah Baştürk, and Youth Branches Chair Süleyman Genç and his friends. Bülent Ecevit was not so fond of this radical group. Soon after he dismissed Kâmil Kırıkoğlu as the General Secretary, and aided in the fall of Genç and his friends during the Youth Branches Congress.

“Orhan Eyüboğlu, whom [Ecevit] brought to the post of General Secretary, and his friends (İstanbul MPs such as Ali Topuz, Orhan Birgit, Necdet Uğur, [Aytekin] Kotil, and others consisted of this group), toppled Ahmet İsvan (he was Ecevit’s alma mater), who won İstanbul mayorship in elections and joined the radical left-wing over time, with the knowledge and support of the leader, and then Ecevit’s relations also soured with this group.

“The leader’s relations with younger politicians were two-sided. He wanted Süleyman Genç, Hasan Belovacıklı, Sabri Ergül, Kemal Anadol, and their friends to leave the Youth Branches and work in the main bodies of the party. This was due to the hard-to audit or uncontrollable power of the Youth branches and under the control of that group they could act against the party discipline. Most of this group was from İzmir. Ecevit helped another group against those. The leaders of these were Semih Eryıldız, Ali Dinçer, Levent

Tosun, Ethem Özbakır, Yusuf Arıak (and his wife Nilüfer Arıak), Ayhan Saner, and Hasan Mani. These were mostly young kids from Ankara, coming predominantly from Middle East Technical University and secondly from Political Science and Agricultural faculties. They were not radicals and they were a continuity of the Federation of the Social Democracy Associations' continuum. The leader then supported young politicians such as Coşkun Karagözoğlu, Alev Coşkun, Yüksel Çakmur in Aegea.

“I observed that the leader and his wife were not showing closeness and attention to the Women's Branches and its chair Neriman *Hanım*. Women's Branch members were not active or effective.

“As for party members, these were divided into two groups. İsmet İnönü sympathizers were not coming to the party. They had cut off all relations with Bülent Ecevit and his friends. In a way, they found Bülent Ecevit too radical. They also had a stark competition for leadership and İsmet İnönü had left the party...

“As for those in this category, the old and experienced politicians of the party, such as Cahit Angın, İsmail Hakkı Birler, İlyas Seçkin, and Rauf Kantemir, the leader was neither warm nor close. We could think that this is normal. In a way, Ecevit tried to look for people who could aid in the ideas he tried to develop. It is normal for a leader to leave some distance between himself and his friends in politics. As far as I can remember, he disliked some of those in reality.

“He was extremely careful and attentive in his relations with other party members, especially with those outside Ankara. Meanwhile, I learned that

ruling a party was to know party members and keep constant relations with them” (Kayra, 2021: 351-4).

Organizational Change and Expansion in the RPP: 1965-1973

Organizational changes in this period show the effects of the party reform under “left of center” and the divisions caused by it. These are by-law changes regarding organizational structure in 1968, two waves of factional exodus in 1967 and 1972, alliances with the labor movement which started around 1969, and changes regarding financial sources of the RPP which came to agenda in 1968. The institutional structure, financial sources, policy prescriptions, and party identity of the RPP started to change drastically after 1967. Among those changes in the by-laws and Congress, motions were dramatic as they provided for a new and “better” representative situation in the RPP bodies (Uyar, 2000: 39). Moreover, tied to by-law changes and Congress decisions, a new committees were founded: High Advisory Committee [Yüksek Danışma Kurulu - HAC], RPP Labor Bureau [CHP İşçi Bürosu], Cooperatives Bureau [Kooperatifçilik bürosu] (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1968: 17-20; 1970: 10). Moreover, the right to pick 5% of the parliamentary deputy candidates, known as a quota, was given to the RPP Centrum. The latter and the Labor Bureau were especially important in solidifying the growing Alliance with the left-wing unions in the Türk-iş. Another big change took place in the finances of the RPP. Party organizations left their traditional *eşraf*-based modes of acquiring finances and started to find new ways. Lastly, a sister organization to Youth Branches of the RPP was founded to enlarge the effectiveness of the RPP on university campuses.

A significant change had also taken place in the designation of MP candidates for the 1969 General Elections. Out of 23 previously decided MP candidate quotas for the RPP Centrum, only 12 were used for union representatives and technicians.

Including the party leadership, such as İnönü, Ecevit, and Erim, almost all candidates were decided via primaries in local branches (Uyar, 2017b: 328-9).

Reform in Party Ruling Bodies and Disciplinary Bodies: The by-law changes in the 1967 and 1968 Congresses changed the workings of party discipline and the balance of PA, Congress, and Delegates. 21st Congress in 1972 made changes on the matter of PA members' participation in government.

1967 changes saw that in disciplinary bodies time provided to defenders was significantly lowered. The PA was given powers to use disciplinary measures over provincial branches (Article 46) and the PG (Article 50) (Ulus, 30.04.1967b: 2).

1968 Congress' changes in the by-laws were regarding the election of local party officials (Article 12), and the periods in which local congresses were going to take place were increased to two years. A rule on organizing yearly talks in provinces and districts about the local needs and general party politics with residents was added (Article 14), the vote of PG Deputy Chairs in the PA was revoked (Article 26), and the number of members in CAC was increased to 14 (Article 34) (Ulus, 21.10.1968: 7). The 21st Congress in 1972 made 34 changes to the RPP by-laws. The PA was designated as the highest decision-making body in the RPP after the Congress and it was also given the power to form, join or leave governments (Article 25)

Disciplinary measures now included the temporary removal of a member, who was sent to disciplinary bodies, from their party post (Barış, 03.07.1972: 1; 7).¹⁶²

The intense factionalism had made the RPP officials adjust their disciplinary measures twice in five years. At this point, the Centrist faction of Satır was still present in the party and showed its power in the PG by electing its representatives (Simav, 1975: 243). However, the change from the CAC to PA as the party's main decision-making body was arguably a more inclusive move.

Reform In Financial Sources: Another significant development in the RPP was a change regarding the sources of the party finances. Up until the overhaul of leadership with the rise of the LoC Faction, the RPP had mainly relied on its *eşraf* connections in the form of ruffles, ball tickets, and donations.¹⁶³ The shift in the party finances were gradual and not as clear. However, the LoC Movement's preference for relying upon getting aid from larger masses rather than the affluent and the business person is a clear indication of a desire to move away from older connections.

Actual changes took place in three steps following 1968 by-law changes. By 1969 there were significant changes in the by-laws of the RPP in regards to financial sources of the party. The most significant change was regarding the donations and credit use: Article 66 stated that the maximum amount of yearly donations could be

¹⁶² İnönü raised his concerns over the by-law changes that gave the PA power over the PG as being unconstitutional and against the RPP tradition to place the Parliament above all institutions. Güneş thought that İnönü was partially right, as after the 1973 elections, there were renewed factionalism that tied Ecevit's hand in the PA (Simav, 1975: 261-3).

¹⁶³ The 1963 by-laws (CHP, 1963) regulated the party finance under seven articles. Article 59 stated that yearly dues from members, ruffle revenues organized with the decision of the PA, membership card and pin revenues, party publication revenues, revenues from the party holdings, revenues from party work such as sports events, concerts, plays, shows and balls, and donations (20-1).

5000 liras and it was mandatory to document the act of donation. The PA was given the right to acquire credit loans if needed (CHP, 1969: 62-73).

The Constitutional Court annulled a law regarding treasury support for the political parties in the Parliament, at the beginning of 1969, and due to the lack of a new law regulating the matter, the RPP was bereft of such an income source (Milliyet, 04.04.1969: 1; 9). Arguably the decision of the Constitutional Court served as an “environmental change”, prompting action by actors in the RPP (Harmel and Janda, 1994: 266-7).

However, the matter of income generation was already a topic of contention between the Centrists and the LoC Faction. Days before the Constitutional Court’s decision idea of demanding the income generated by *Türkiye İş Bankası* shares of the RPP was considered out of the question. However, Turan Güneş went ahead with the court case and lost it eventually (Erim, 2021: 892; 918).

To fund the RPP then, in 1969 and 1972, advertisements for two aid campaigns were arranged and appeared in the RPP’s semi-official newspaper. The first aid campaign was started on the 4th of April 1969 with a message from Ecevit (Ulus, 04.04.1969:1).¹⁶⁴ The second aid campaign started on the 2nd of December 1972 (Barış, 03.12.1972: 1). The next step in this reform was İnönü expressing his concerns over receiving financial support from businesspeople at the “small congress” of January 1971. He argued that businesspeople donated aid to political parties to influence them and in the past, he tried to refrain from going to entrepreneurs as much as possible. He called for financial independence of the RPP

¹⁶⁴ The campaign was perhaps not as fruitful as it was hoped and the RPP was lacking resources for the upcoming election campaign. Erim (2021) noted on 16th of June 1969 that Ecevit telephoned him, and matter of finances came up. To ask for money from the wealthy was decided (900).

from entrepreneurs and the state and for acceptance of paying standardized monthly dues from the RPP members (Ulus, 24.01.1971:8).¹⁶⁵ Thirdly, with the dominance of the LoC Movement, The RPP ended the tradition of arranging lavish dance parties or balls as a means of garnering financial support for the party. The last RPP ball was İnönü's 87th birthday party in İstanbul on 24 September 1970 (Ulus, 25.09.1970: 1).¹⁶⁶ Instead, the RPP turned its attention to the ordinary people and started to arrange popular concerts (Birgit, 2012: 51), theatre plays, and selling ephemeral materials such as pins, pens, cigarettes, and ideological material like party booklets (Akar and Dündar, 2006: 74-75).

Still, RPP's financial income scheme had issues, causing further problems emblematically for financing its publishing house and newspapers and election propaganda (CHP, 1970, 13-14; 30). By 1971 *Ulus* was sold to Aysev-Dalokay Corporation and renamed *Barış*. The RPP's printing house "Ulusal Basımevi" was still losing money (CHP, 1972: 12-5). The RPP also sold two of its land holdings due to financial troubles (Cumhuriyet, 31.12.1971: 1).¹⁶⁷ By the 4th of April 1972, the RPP had 2694187 Turkish Liras of debt. Its safe had 5061 Liras while the bank account balance was 259230 Liras. The second aid campaign acquired 360.549 Liras and 70 Kuruş (Milliyet, 05.04.1973: 11).

¹⁶⁵ Centrist RPP officials had visited businessperson Vehbi Koç for financial aid (Erim, 2021, 901). However, Erim noted on 20th of July 1969: "Big businessmen again want Demirel to win. That's what I get from the talks of V. Koç and Şarık [Tara]. *Hürriyet* is also showing a change again, in the last two-three days" (902)

¹⁶⁶ Birgit (2012) wrote the date as 25th of 1968, however according to *Ulus*' correspondence this ball took place on 24th of 1968 (51).

¹⁶⁷ One piece in *Toplum* argued the RPP was in financial turmoil at the time of 5th Extraordinary Congress. According to the piece İnönü had engaged in extensive telegraphing with the provincial RPP Chairs. There were also a number of MP's who were in debt to the party. Both issues had put RPP in further financial trouble (Toplum, 05.05.1972: 12-3).

High Advisory Committee: In the 19th Congress in 1968 a committee with a maximum of 15 members was founded. These members could join PA meetings but did not have the right to vote (Ulus, 21.10.1968: 7). The reasoning behind was to unify different groups of experts working for the RPP.¹⁶⁸ Besim Üstünel was put at the helm of this initiative. The experts were from various fields such as “statistics, political sociology, development economics, agriculture, and urban studies”. Güneş was the most famous name in the bureau. Doğan Avcıoğlu¹⁶⁹ was also present for a short while (Emre, 2014b: 112-3). This group was going to be a reason for disgruntlement for the Centrist faction and was soon nicknamed the “Mülkiye Junta” (114).¹⁷⁰ The second group of The High Advisory Committee was elected by the PA in 1970 PA. It’s members were Muzaffer Akalın, Mustafa Akdağ, Erdoğan Bakkalbaşı, Deniz Baykal, Vedat Dalokay, Tekin İleri Dikmen, Saim Kendir, Şükrü Koç, Ziya Gökalp Mülayin, Nizamettin Neftçi, Ahmet Yücekök (Ulus, 12.07.1970: 1; 7).

New Alliances with the Labor Movement, Labor Bureau, and Labor Assembly: In the 1968 Local Elections the RPP picked two union representatives for candidates. After the 19th Congress in 1968, the RPP used the LoC Movement’s connections with the left wing of the Türk-iş. These were a group of “political unionists” who started to operate after the 1965 Zonguldak strike (Bianchi, 1984: 220) To that end

¹⁶⁸ Mülayim (2019) wrote that Deniz Baykal, Yücekök, Vedat Dalokay, Saim Kendir, Tekin İleri Dikmen were among those worked with the RPP. “As we worked like this, Ecevit said ‘It is not going to work, we should organize the advisers in one body, and create a new body called “High Advisory Committee”’ one day” (187)

¹⁶⁹ Avcıoğlu was even considered as the head of the research bureau in September 1967. Erim had approved. Ecevit also considered Avcıoğlu as the new chief of *Ulus*. Satır had disapproved (Erim, 2021: 858).

¹⁷⁰ Güneş’ narrative refuted the existence of a specific “Mülkiye Junta”. According to him bigger names such as Aksoy, Abadan and Özyörük had left the RPP ruling bodies by 1969. “Interesting I am not from *Mülkiye*. Apart from Haluk Ülman no one was from *Mülkiye*. Deniz Baykal, Haluk Ülman and Besim Üstünel entered the party soon after Ecevit’s election as the General Secretary... When there were big fights these friends were not the only ones around Ecevit. For example, there were no such perception of such a junta at Mustafa Ok, Yaşar Akal and İlyas Seçkin” (Simav, 1975: 102).

two developments took place: The first was the founding of the Labor Bureau in the party centrum to organize the worker's committees at local RPP branches which were started to be founded since 1967. To that end, two Labor Assemblies were arranged by the RPP in 1969 and 1970¹⁷¹. Hamdi Turan was made the initial head of the centrum bureau. In 1969 Abdullah Baştürk was elected as the chair of the labor bureau (Ulus, 15.04.1969: 1; Ulus, 16.04.1969: 1). In the 1970 Labor Assembly, representation from Türk-iş and DİSK was higher. Rafet Altın was elected as the new head of the Labor Bureau (Ulus, 01.07.1970; 02.07.1970; 03.07.1970). The second was the usage of RPP centurms' MP quotas to bring union representatives to the parliament. Union leaders such as Baştürk, Burhanettin Asutay, Osman Soğukpınar, Bahir Ersoy, and Emir Postacı were elected as MP's. (CHP Çalışma Meclisi Raporu, 1970; Uyar, 2017b: 328-9).

This alliance with the left wing of Türk-iş was arguably driven by ideational closeness. The ten unions that allied themselves with the RPP started to publish their theoretical stances after 1970. A theorist, Haluk Faruk Erginsoy from Oley-iş had been influential in these efforts.

Social Democracy Associations (SDA): Social Democracy Associations [Sosyal Demokrasi Dernekleri] were founded in 1967 and started to organize themselves on university campuses throughout Turkey.¹⁷² These were center-left rivals to the other youth organizations such as the Federation of Idea Clubs/Revolutionary Youth Federation of Turkey [Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu/Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu- FIC/Dev-Genç] that were close to the WPT, Free Thought Clubs

¹⁷¹ For the reports provided to the Labor Assemblies see: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Çalışma Meclisi Raporu, Ankara, 1969; (CHP Çalışma Meclisi Raporu, 1970).

¹⁷² Also see: "Sosyal Demokrasi Dernekleri". *Kim* 442. 11.01.1967. p. 2.

which were close to the JP, and Union of Idealist Hearts [Ülkü Ocakları - UIH] which was close to the Nationalist Action Party [Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi - NAP]. The RPP Youth branches had lost their effectiveness on the campuses and the RPP wanted to increase its appeal significantly in competition to the TICs. However, SDAs were not active due to fears of losing their control by the RPP Centrum, and due to a desire to keep a “negotiationist” position until 1969.

With Nail Gürman’s (1969-1970) election to Chairpersonship, SDAs were going to be influential in expanding the social democratic programme to the rural zones of Turkey, as well as educating a younger generation of social democrats for the 1970s. Under Gürman, SDAs organized rallies and worked in local organizations. The SDAs also supported land actions of peasants in Konya, İstanbul, Manisa, Aydın, and Samsun. The most significant campaign of the SDAs was “drop the guns” [silahları bırak] which also brought them toe to toe with Dev-Genç which defended violent revolutionary action (Ulus, 20.12.1970:1). During Semih Eryıldız’s tenure as SDA Federation Chairperson (1970-1971), its ideational efforts immensely increased. Translation and publication efforts came forward, reading lists were prepared and the SDAs served as organizations that disseminated social democratic ideas and identity. These youth organizations were also significant for showing a preliminary picture of the ideational conflict in the RPP: “Social Democracy” vs “Democratic Left”. Between 1970 and 1971 SDAs and Youth Branches under Süleyman Genç’s chairpersonship differentiated in their ideological identities. Towards 1973 this issue started to surface and presented itself as the main topic of long-awaited programme change in 1974.

SDAs were closed after the 12th of March Memorandum by the martial rule. (Kaya, 2021: 191-200). They then joined the Youth Branches. Until then the SDAs had both provided ideological dissemination of the RPP's social democratic agenda, and an organizational expansion.

Organizational Reform in Northeastern Anatolia

According to his narrative, Ferda Güley, during a visit to Trabzon and Ağrı with Muammer Erten and Erkin Topkaya, in November 1968, recorded irregularities in the local RPP organizations there. In Torul, Gümüşhane, Güley realized that there were no written member lists. In Bayburt the picture was the opposite, and due to gossip of primaries the member lists were “overfilled” with supporters of local landlords and *eşraf* or in Güley's terms “soldiers”. Güley also visited Ağrı, Erzurum and their districts. He also audited Erzincan, Sivas and Amasya (Güley, 1990: 400-5). At least one entry in İnönü's dairies shows that Güley had been actively pursuing organizational and cadre reform in his auditing zone. Two notes about Ecevit's opinions suggest that even with some earlier developments organizational and cadre problems in the east persisted (İnönü, 2020: 817; 823; 852).

Just before the 1973 Elections Güley, with the help of Women's and Youth Branch Members help, double-checked each RPP Branch's delegate lists before primaries for the 1973 Elections. After the audit concerning 1969 Results, Güley's team found that “some district branches” followed their own needs rather than following the party by-laws and the vote amounts. Some Local, Women's, and Youth Branches had more than the designated number of members in their administrative and disciplinary committees. Güley had prepared new lists. However, when facing apathy that argued either it was way too late for new lists to be used or the fear of local Branch

delegates punishing the Centrum Cadres in the next Congress, he had to resort to a resignation card. Ecevit intervened and supported Güley. The result was “10-15” local Branches corrected their mistake and thanked the Party Centrum. The rest of the district heads had resolved the matter in their way with their local Chair of the District Electoral Board (Güley, 1990: 465-9).

In another such event, when Güley intervened in Gümüşhane primaries, the local Party cadres who opposed Erol Tuncer’s¹⁷³ candidacy there punished the RPP in the 1973 Elections (Güley, 1990: 469-71).

Güley’s narrative suggested that there was a severe limitation on the organizational reform efforts in the RPP. Whereas the Party Centrum could easily reach metropolitan areas of Turkey, the rural areas appeared as a significant obstacle to the total reform of the RPP Organization. The necessary by-law changes and organizational expansion were done following the needs of the local RPP elites and lost their effect. Güley’s efforts in 1972-3 were at best successful to a limited extent.

Cadre Change After 1965

The cadre change in 1965 started with İnönü’s articulation of the left of center. An ongoing cadre change took place in the RPP Organization as factional frictions continued. Two sets of factional exoduses in 1967 and 1972 were the clearest indicator of the cadre changes in the Party Centrum and Parliament.

The RPP saw an extensive overhaul of its Party Centrum Cadres between 1965 and 1973 (Kili, 1976: 352-63). The factional disputes in the RPP and a plethora of

¹⁷³ For Tuncer’s narration of the Bayburt primaries and election campaign see: Tuncer, Erol. *Anılarım*, Ankara: TESAV Yayınları, 2021: 240-74.

external factors curbed the pace of change, until 1965. The electoral defeat of 1965 started a series of factional clashes. That factional dispute would kick the cadre changes in the RPP to an unprecedented extent. The difference between pre-1965 and post-1972 cadres was stark as Kili (1976) keenly observed, that only three members (Bülent Ecevit, İlyas Seçkin, and Hıfzı Oğuz Bekata) of the three cabinets of İnönü were still going to be members of the RPP by 1972 (180; 190). There was an almost total overhaul in terms of cadres close to the Party Centrum. This was significant as the Part Centrum kept the organization in check ever since the founding of the RPP (Güneş Ayata, 2010, 86).

Çölaşan's (1975) research about the MPs and their vocational backgrounds in 1973, provided one picture of the RPP Assembly group at the time. The majority were self-employed (54,1%). Almost one-third (32,3%) of the RPP MPs were former state officials [memur], with schoolteachers making up slightly less than 50% of this group. Only a handful were laborers (2,2%) or farmers (6%) (33; 39).

As for the local branch cadres, these started to be changed gradually. Where local carriers of the left of center idea were stronger due to popular support such as metropolitan areas or areas with working-class or cash-crop farmer presence the cadre change had been smoother for the RPP. Topuz's narrative serves as a detailed example of the cadre change in the RPP after 1970.

Lastly, the Youth Branches cadres saw an overhaul and renewal after 1970. The new cadres however originally had their political identification with the WPT, and FICs/*Dev-Genç* and had conflicts with the majority of the LoC Faction. They soon started their ideological initiative in the RPP.

Cadre Change in Istanbul Branch Organization

The cadre change in the İstanbul Provincial Branch started right after the acceptance of the left of center in the 18th Congress in 1966. This branch was considered one of the better working provincial branches in the RPP. When existing Branch Chair Ali Sohtorik did not want to work per the new way of the RPP, Necdet Uğur served for a while as the Branch Chair (Birgit, 2012: 48). After the brief tenure of Aydın Kazancı who was close to Sohtorik until the 1969 Elections, Ecevit and the Party Centrum pressed for a cadre reform in İstanbul. A temporary Chair and Provincial Administrative Committee were to be elected. Prominent members of the İstanbul branch convened and voted with closed surveys to designate the temporary Chair until the Provincial Congress in 1970. Topuz was elected. (Topuz, 2011: 328-31).¹⁷⁴

Topuz started his reform of the PRR İstanbul Branch by improving coordination between the district and provincial branches via organizing meetings in districts of İstanbul (Topuz, 2011: 335-6). After auditing all the district administrations, a course for cadre reform was decided. Topuz and his Committee decided that Eminönü, Şişli Gaziosmanpaşa, Sarıyer, and Silivri district RPP administrators had to be dismissed over “ideological reasons and the good of the party” (338).

Ecevit and his close associates put their support for the cadre change. Topuz made the cadre changes in person and at times felt in danger (Topuz, 2011: 338-43). Soon after, he received word from Party Centrum that his acts were stopped due to lobbying by the Şişli District Administration who were sent to Disciplinary Committee. Topuz was called to come to Ankara and prove his case to İnönü in

¹⁷⁴ Topuz (2011) claimed that his candidate was İstanbul MP Orhan Eyüboğlu. He had refused the offer. Topuz’s Administrative Committee members were “Celal Altınay, Mustaf Aydın, Neriman Başman, Yalçın Gürsel, Enver Karabeyoğlu, Hasan Fehmi Kılıçlar, Yalçın Kızılay, Aytekin Kotil, Kemal Mengüç, Türkan Okar, Ayhan Peker, Erol Ünal, and Sabri Vardarlı” and Ekmel Zamil. (330-1).

person. He provided a case of irregularities in the branch finances, among 10 other breaches of party by-laws. İnönü was convinced when he saw the proof of the financial fraud (344-6).

Topuz also had stiff competition with Satır's candidate during the 1970 İstanbul Congress (Topuz, 2011: 352-66). The status of İstanbul as one of the strongholds of the left of center was solidified with Topuz's victory. His tenure as the Provincial Chair was subject to pressures of the Centrist until the 5th Extraordinary Congress in İstanbul, and the İstanbul branch was a prime example of Centrist arguments over Ecevit's extra-legal control of the RPP organization.

Cadre Change in Youth Branches

After the acceptance of the left of center as the official party line in 1966, the Youth Branches had special attention from Bülent Ecevit and other LoC Faction members (Kaya, 2021: 207-8). Moreover, Bülent Ecevit had a great ideological effect on the SDAs. This created an ideological "competition" between the SDAs and the Youth Branches after 1969. The reason was the recruitment of former WPT member Süleyman Genç to Chairpersonship of the RPP Youth Branches in 1969 (198-9). The demarcation line was Social Democracy (SDAs) and Democratic Left (Youth Branches). Also, in 1969 Semih Eryıldız on other hand had been elected as the Chair of the SDAs.

Before the 20th Congress in 1970, then Youth Branches Chair Günüğür Çambel had been dismissed due to supporting *Devrim* journal's ideas and Centrists. Afterward, Genç was supported by the CAC in the 6th Congress of the RPP Youth Branches. Genç was considered due to his large team in İzmir and personal reference to a friend

of Ecevit's. Neftçi (1997) was responsible for the recruitment of Genç. Other candidates had been pressured not to run (Kaya, 2021: 208-9; 215-216).

Genç, Sabri Ergül, and Nafiz Bostancı aided RPP Centrum to organize local Congresses. One was in Aegean regions called the “Congress of Producers”. The second was the Congress of the Landless which was to be on the 12th of March 1971. They were also present during the local and general congresses in 1972. They were extremely energetic and pivotal in aid of the LoC Faction. They also started to get representation in the administrative bodies of Ankara, Eskişehir, and most prominently, İzmir (Anadol, 2015: 195; Kayra, 2021: 352).

Outcome

In this chapter, I have outlined the 23 years of historical party change in the history of the oldest and founding political party in Turkey. Overall, the story of party change in the RPP is explainable within the postulates of the discrete party change approach. Comparable to its western counterparts, the RPP saw change in its approach to politics and embodied competitive politics both internally and externally, in due course of several external shocks. What differentiated the RPP case was the existence of external shocks other than just electoral blunders.

Several other factors differentiated the party change in the RPP from other cases of party change. These were its heritage as the founding party of Turkey and its leading role in the transition of its regime to a competitive electoral regime. To that end, the RPP's leaders felt the need to actively guard the regime they established. Over time other goals of the party got activated. The RPP to seek more votes in the face of strong parties in power had to adapt. This meant new ideas, cadres, and identity.

Two developments in the Turkish political system deeply shaped the RPP's party change. The beginning of the military intervention into civilian politics in 1960 and the rise of left-wing politics in the Turkish party system. Both factors greatly influenced the party change in the RPP providing path dependencies and path breakages.

The period between 1950 and 1960 was the adaptation of the RPP from an archaic party to a party better oriented to competing with an opponent which was moving in an authoritarian direction. A new generation of politicians has joined the RPP during this period, reinvigorating it with new ideas, policy sets, and energy.

Between 1960 and 1965 the need to protect the democratic process and regime stalled the change in the RPP. The effect of the existing changes in new cadres and ideas was curbed both due to internal conservatism and external pressures.

Meanwhile, the RPP lost ground to the rising left, unable to provide a meaningful alternative to radicalism until the 1970s due to conservatism regarding left-leaning ideas and politics in the party.

The defeat of 1965 a series of discussions that ended with a dent appearing on the dominance of the leadership coalition: Left of Center. After Electoral Defeat of 1965 a new movement was assembled as the new left-wing group of the RPP. This group used the subsequent electoral blunder of 1966 Partial Elections for Senate to present its case to the 18th Congress Ordinary Congress of RPP which started on the 18th of October 1966. At the 18th Congress that new faction or "Left of Center Movement" took over General Secretariat, and established a slight majority in the PA. However, the new leadership coalition's power was tested until the first time at the 4th Extraordinary Congress of the RPP on the 28th of April 1967. In this period the

movement reorganized itself to a faction. That Congress and its aftermath led to the first ideational split of the RPP, and further establishment of the LoC Faction as the leadership coalition of the RPP. This strengthened the hand of faction leaders and a younger generation to assert themselves in reforming the RPP for the next decade. As Öner (1976) described: “A new generation, wanted the inner circle emptied, and wanted to move there themselves. How was that going to happen?” (141). In other words, the younger generation of politicians that entered mostly in the 1950’s, “the young Turks” rebelled after years of inactiveness on the ideational front. They had broken the gates with their ideas to fill the vacuum. Soon they started to organize to supply the RPP with new ideas and compete over them with others who wanted to embrace the older set of ideas.

After 1965 the RPP saw a new and organized wave of change. This time around a new faction came to the stage and challenged the existing shape, strategy, and policy entrepreneurship of RPP. They managed to do so significantly with the carrying of ideas, in addition to the energetic factional competition. In three years, they were able to form a coalition that became the leadership coalition and achieved control of the majority of the local branches. When the leadership coalition broke after the significant external shock of military intervention in politics. A year after the external shock RPP saw a leadership change. The matter of factionalism started to take more and more of an ideological outlook. The factions in the RPP fought over the meaning of “left of center”, its extent, implications for policy making, party reform, candidate selection, and of course the identity of the RPP.

Güley’s (1990) narrative captured the role of ideas in the party change in the RPP:

“...What did we want to do in the RPP with the term ‘left of center’? To save the Turkish people from the authority [sulta] of usurers, lords, and landowners. What differences there were between the landlord, and the member and delegate lord, in terms of creating and sustaining an exploitative order? Maybe the lordship over the member and delegate was much more dangerous than the lordship over the land. The former lords, or those who relied on such lords, had been winning in primaries and entered the parliament, taking the places of those who could serve well to the country in terms of their knowledge and wisdom levels. The regime we called democratic parliamentary regime bogged down what a swamp that we called primary or preelection. The swamp must have been dried out and the bogging must have been stopped” (Güley, 1990: 402-3).¹⁷⁵

Significantly after 1965, the organizational reform was the aim of a larger ideationally driven change, following the LoC Faction’s ideational road map that wanted an overhaul of the party identity, policy prescriptions, and cadres. The change was achieved to some extent, yet still limited by institutional and material factors. The victory of the LoC Faction and its leader Ecevit was an embodiment of not only an ideological but a shake-up of the party cadres and the rising importance of the local branches in the RPP. This change “also meant a renewal of the party structure in accordance with the ideology...” (Güneş Ayata, 2010: 86-7). Still, the remnants of bureaucrats in the Party Centrum and *eşraf* in rural branches curbed those efforts (Koloğlu, 2000, p 94).

¹⁷⁵ Güneş Ayata (2010) stated that reforms of delegate structure and the primaries was never fully implemented (96-7).

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

Ideas affect party change. Ideas help actors to understand and evaluate their environment. They also allow them to act when external shocks prompt openings in the conservative environments of the political parties. Ideas help different actors with different ideas on the issues of the day and form coalitions or within the context of parties, movements, and factions. Factions compete publicly according to their publicly declared views.

The case of the RPP is important to show that ideas could affect the political process in political institutions meaningfully, even in adverse environments. Deeply entrenched elites cling to their ideas and resist change. The material power of these elites is not simply broken by the power of ideas but instead through coalition-building and successful organization around ideas.

One within-case comparison and a counterfactual scenario could be brought to the table to make the effect of the ideas on the party change in the RPP. The first is regarding a comparison of Gülek and Ecevit. Gülek was the energetic General Secretary that rallied the local branch members and party youth around him. However, Gülek never placed his differences with İnönü on an ideational basis as

Ecevit did. This was for some part contextual as Gülek was in his heyday during the 1950s, and this period was much less significant for ideological divisions in the Turkish party system. However, his role in curbing the efforts of a small left-leaning group in conscious reforming of the party is significant for showing that he was not operating via ideas, but he was actively carrying interests. Ecevit, similarly, worked against the interests of a core group of politicians who managed to keep left-leaning tendencies in check until 1965. However, after 1965 Ecevit rose to prominence among a coalition of left-wing politicians in the RPP who for the most part argued for the democratic pursuit of social democratic policies. The LoC Movement was significantly a group that came together around ideas and managed to bring in a meaningful party change in the RPP.

In the RPP between 1965-1973 at least two factional displacements and one leadership change took place. The newcomers in the Left of Center Faction worked within the premises of articulated ideas. These were social democratic ideas derived from discussions of the prior decade and other social democratic experiences elsewhere, and they were framed within the party tradition of “six arrows”.

Competition of the factions took the shape of a conflict over the “six arrows” or “Kemalism”. The leader of the LoC Faction used the shaking of the hold of ideas of the existing leader İsmet İnönü or the rising demand for new ideas, to supply the RPP with a set of new ideas regarding the policies, strategy, and identity of the RPP.

Chairperson İnönü managed to adapt to the new developments for the most part, and allowed the new faction to take control of the administration of the party. Over time, the energetic attitude and meaningful changes that the LoC Faction brought to the party increased the support of the chairperson for this group. When the Chairperson lost his hold over party administrative bodies the relationship between him, and the

Left of Center Faction soured. However, the RPP still kept its course until the immediate aftermath of the 12th of March 1971 Coup-by-memorandum.

The leadership change in the RPP was realized as the continuity of an ongoing series of ideational changes in the RPP. Those against the Left of Center Faction placed their opposition through arguments against ideational change and its application. After the leadership change and new factional friction between social democrat and radical wings of the RPP, the party entered the 1973 Elections. The comparison of Gülek and Ecevit is therefore meaningful in telling the strength of the ideas in prompting party change.

The counterfactual scenario revolves around the removal of ideational factors from the party change in the RPP. What if the group of young politicians in the LoC Movement were not there as an ideational coalition but a purely interest-based coalition much like Gülek? I think the first response to this would be that the party change and subsequent electoral success in the 1970s would be quite limited. The very core of the RPP's change was a change in its voter base and grassroots that responded to clear and meaningful ideas conveyed in different localities arguing for land reform, further labor rights, and economic equality accompanied by the promise of democracy.

A further point for this scenario is could be leadership. What if the idea of "left of center" was much less important or distinctive and Feyzioğlu had accepted Ecevit's offer for leadership? Ecevit's leadership would not have mattered, as the young generation of politicians would not have needed a poet and a storyteller who took extensive notes during their meetings. Rather they would support a much more established and experienced Feyzioğlu. On the flip side of the scenario where ideas

were important, acceptance of the offer of leadership by Feyzioğlu would end with a similar result for the Left of Center Movement for the most part. Fezyioğlu would have had to leave aside his connections with the *eşraf*. He would still have had to keep up with the RPP's need to address its burdens of the past and tackle the issue of putschist movements on the left and their supporters in the RPP. More importantly, he would still have had to separate the RPP from the 1971 coup-by-memorandum repeating the conflict with İnönü over regime guardianship. The idea of left of center then appears as a *sine qua non* that explains the party change in the RPP between 1965-1973. The comparison with Gülek explains that without ideas similar factional efforts would be much less successful in changing the RPP.

The electoral platform of 1973 *Ak Günlere* (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 1973) was an extension of the 1969 Platform (Kili, 1976: 364; 396-403). In the elections the RPP became the first party gaining 3570583 votes as 33.3 percent of the vote. The election's turnout rate was 66.8%. With that result, the RPP gained 185 seats in the Assembly (Kili, 1976: 366). The RPP was hit by the latest exodus of members, but still, in places where the Alevi population and significant worker populations existed, the RPP's votes increased (368-9). The RPP's votes had been significantly increased in the Thracian, Marmara, eastern Black Sea, and Aegean regions (Cinar, Ugur Cinar, & Acikgoz, Forthcoming)).

The RPP had turned the electoral table upwards compared to the 1969 Elections. The year of crisis between March 1971 and May 1972 had served to solidify its new identity.

This was the result of conscious ideational efforts since 1965. The RPP had two major factional exoduses in this period, and its metropolitan and Party Centrum

cadres were changed for the most part. The new elites had organized themselves around the idea of “left of center” and came to power.

The change in the RPP was severely hampered by other factors. The entrenched resistance of the Centrists had curbed the means of dissemination for the social democratic ideas framed under the idea of “left of center”. Moreover, especially in rural areas, the RPP elite clung to their seats and continued habits of the past times, ruling over delegates.

Changes in the by-laws provide two inferences: First was that starting with the 1950 defeat, the RPP was trying to become more of a competitive party in terms of its internal democratic process. The second point was that internal democracy meant increasing factional and local means of resisting the party centrum and the dominant faction. Local organizations and Congresses defended their powers jealously for a period, at least until when factional disputes or overall political conditions tilted their opinion to change the by-laws.

The expansion of the RPP organization was mostly dependent on the influx of members. The status of the RPP was on a rise after 1955-56 via the public. Similarly, after the advent of the LoC Faction in the RPP around 1966-1967, a new influx of politicians, prominent figures, and new members to the party began. In addition to such tendencies, there was also a meaningful expansion of the RPP organization, and its specialization to adapt to the needs of different times. Before 1965 this took the shape of the opening of The Women’s branch, the Youth Branch, and the RPP Research and Documentation Bureau. After 1965, when the need appeared the RPP expanded to University Campuses to disseminate social democratic ideals and organize the university youth with Social Democracy Associations. In addition,

Bureau such as Labor Bureau and High Advisory Board sidelined the Research and Documentation Bureau when the need arose to focus the expert and technician support for the LoC Faction.

Ideas, Interests and Structure

Berman (2001) argued that the question of “What characteristics of a situation are important in determining how easy or difficult the assimilation of new ideas will be?” needs to be answered via addressing “institutional factors”, “material factors”, and “ideational factors” (237).

Institutional factors “the organizational context within which ideas emerge” (Berman, 2011: 107) were quite limiting for ideas to have a total effect on the entire party organization. Within the confines of the RPP, ideas primarily served a role among the party elite, both grouped around Party Centrum, the local and auxiliary Branches of the RPP. The elite carried the idea to push for party reform or try to garner new votes. They formed factions following their ideas, fighting over policy preferences and party identity. This is precisely why faction and leadership disputes could be explained via ideas.

The majority of the grassroots and especially delegate structure, however, was influenced by ideas to a limited extent. One supporting evidence for this is the account of Güley (1990: 456-9). The effects of clientelism were still significantly influential in the rural areas (Güneş Ayata, 2010: 94-7) away from the metropolitan areas of Turkey where the RPP organization had better venues for organizational and cadre reform.

The narrative of Anadol strikingly supported the above argument: During the 1969 Electoral campaign, Ecevit and Öner had visited Zonguldak. Anadol wanted to make a joke:

“‘Sir’ I said ‘our platform is well prepared’. [Ecevit] thanked me before I was finished. He was happy that the party grassroots supported the platform in the face of the opposition in the Party Assembly. I said, ‘But it has a missing point’ He immediately picked up his notebook and pencil to note my criticism... I proceeded ashamedly: ‘Sir, the land belongs to its tiler, the water belongs to its user... These are very nice but lack something!’ Ecevit with his pencil and notebook in his hand grew impatient: ‘Yes?’ I had to spill the beans ‘... The delegate belongs to their arranger! [delege ayarlayanın]’. I had dropped a brick and it was too late” (Anadol, 2015: 149).

Another supporting narrative belonged to Ölçen (1995), who was one of the experts who contributed to the 1973 electoral platform: “Did the RPP have a healthy structure in those days? The party grassroots worked but were it able to organize an effort to tell the electoral platform to the people? I caught a glimpse of nobody reading the *Ak Günlere* platform, within which white doves flew” (36).

The above narratives suggest that the ideational effects were limited by organizational factors, especially in rural areas. The RPP’s cadre reform was curbed to an extent that the RPP organization had problems bringing its ideas to the grassroots to have a meaningful ideational change at that level. In other words, the supply of ideas was there but the “supply chain” was broken.

Material factors such as “the power and interests of different political actors” were key enabling and limiting factors for the RPP. The first was İnönü’s status as one of the “founding fathers”. He had a charisma factor that was able to convince various actors in the RPP. Combined with his balancing act this was a major factor to consider. It forced the hand of General Secretary Ecevit to adhere to İnönü’s “balancing act” (Kili, 1976: 241-2), up until 1970, when the LoC Faction established its domination over the Party Centrum.

A second group that had structural power in the RPP was the established figures in the Centrum such as Erim, Satır, Aksal, Melen, Feyzioğlu, and Güneş. Öner described this situation at the 18th Congress and the rise of the LoC Movement to start controlling leadership positions:

“The RPP had an established circle of administrators [yerleşik yöneticiler katı] Games of politics were invented there. Their seeming friction was either ploys for Congress or moves to move closer to the Pasha. They have established a strong tolerance among themselves, as they knew the real reason for flexibility in games and moves.

“It was hard to get into the circle, but not impossible. Those who prove their talent as required in their measures could get in. If the entrance [tırmanma] was not fitting to their measures, you may get elected to any post and still, you would not be accepted in the circle. Gülek never received a welcome from this oligarchy.

“I had a feeling that they had no reservations for getting Ecevit in. But they were angry that Ecevit was taking a few steps at once. Were they not accepted him to the first steps already? What else did he want?

...

“If today’s problem was just Ecevit the fighting would not reach such degrees. That is what they thought. However, the characteristic of the Left of Center Movement was different. And it threatened the entire oligarchy, elite’s club, inner circle. Furthermore, this movement shook Pasha’s authority [Paşa’nın sultanını], forcing him to reassess the situation” (Öner, 1976: 141).

Still, the material factors were also reflected in the conflict over the matter of the RPP’s identity as a “mass party”.

Between 1966 and 1972 one significant demarcation line between factions had been over whether the RPP was a “mass party” [kitle partisi] or not. During the friction with Feyzioğlu’s right-wing faction, this matter was used to argue that the RPP should refrain from frightening its *eşraf* base with left-wing slogans. Those on the LoC Faction wanted to “go to people” to get more votes (Öner, 1976: 102-3). After the split of 1967, Centrists such as Erim and Satır continued to argue that RPP was a “mass party” and did not want to alienate wealthier voters and landowners (Erim, 2021: 874; 889; 904). Significantly, Satır persisted in using this argument until 1972 (Uyar 2017: 361; 376; Barış, 08.05.1972: 7; Milliyet, 08.05.1972: 11). The term was not related to usage in the political science literature, but a peculiar phenomenon of Turkish politics at that time: The definition of “Mass party” vs. “Class Party”. One observer, İsmail Cem, pointed out the fact that the “mass party” was used as a

misnomer in the Turkish Party system. What happened with the RPP was that Ecevit and his colleagues shifted the party base to another class configuration (Öner, 1976: 103) or a social democratic class alliance.

In the end, ideas explain a lot about the case of party change in the RPP between 1965 and 1973. At the elite level, the change was absolute, from the chairperson to the overwhelming majority of the old elite who had left the party due to disagreements over the new ideas and the new identity of the RPP. At the local level, new actors from the coalition made possible by the left of center made it into Branch administrations in the metropolitan areas and areas with significant agricultural and industrial workers. In the rest of Turkey, the change was possible to a less extent due to delegate structure and inaction at the leadership level.

The change in the RPP took during a period of intense factionalism in politics both within and without the party. Polarization between the RPP and the center-right JP, as well as conflict between the extreme-right and the extreme-left, showed unfavorable conditions. Moreover, military intervention in politics due to the actions at the extreme ends of the political spectrum irrefutably showed the unconsolidated status of Turkish democracy.

Still, the RPP was able to bring in a meaningful set of programmatic and rights-based ideas to the public. These ideas were still presented from the lens of RPP's political tradition, the "six arrows", however, they were inspired by the rest of the social democratic examples in the world. To that end, the case of change from a "national developmental party" to a "social democratic party" was significant for placing it among other cases of social democratic parties in the rest of the globe.

Defining “Left of Center” in a New Way

The main organization of the LoC Movements ideas under one cover was provided to the 18th Congress by Ecevit: *Ortanın Solu* [left of center]. Ecevit provided a critical account of the RPP’s situation and its problems in realizing its program. Ecevit had presented his critique as the “left of center” not being a move to go beyond its programme but a move to “reach its programme”. Ecevit had subtly critiqued İnönü (Kili, 1976: 227-8) who repeatedly presented his position on the “left of center” as his forty-year-old position (Uyar, 2017b: 188). Still, Ecevit moved beyond his adherence to social democracy and wrote, “Left of Center is the left that those who cannot sacrifice democracy, freedom of thought and human dignity -not even for a short while-. Democratic Left which is the requirement of the 27th May Constitution, and fitting with the modern understanding of social democracy is what RPP represents, and it ought to represent” (Ecevit, 1966: 33). Ecevit also argued that democracy should be made into a social democracy that provides for the needs of the people within the democratic system (45). Those reforms were “requirements of the constitution” (46-7). The movement of “revolutions” was going to be not only from “center to the periphery” but also from “periphery to center” meaning that the people should adopt the reform movement (82).

The leader of LoC Faction Ecevit and Chairperson İnönü had differed in their definitions of the “left of center”. For İnönü it was an articulation of his traditional position. For Ecevit, it was a new strategy for bringing itself to the people and getting “a new image” and should thrive in unison to make the people realize “their own rights” (Kili, 1976: 228). To that end, Ecevit’s open adherence to “social democracy” and “democratic left” was the beginning of a conscious change and reform following

the ideas of the LoC Movement. Division in the RPP was caused by this difference between the LoC Movement and other figureheads. Major demarcation point was the voter base of the RPP, candidate selection, and articulation of party positions.

As for İnönü, ideational differences between him and the LoC Movement were smoothed out with the efforts of Ecevit for the most part. That did not mean there were bumps on the road. Significantly in terms of certain slogans and foreign policy variables İnönü had acted unilaterally and limited Ecevit's actions.

To answer Berman's third question, *Ortanın Solu* serves as a condensed and preliminary form of the ideas of the Left of Center Movement declared before it caused a displacement of dominant faction in the form of a change in the general secretariat and the CAC. Therefore, it predates party reform in the RPP.

Party Goals and Ideas

Further discussion on inferences on party goals are needed. Different ideas about party goals cause different behavior regarding the application of the party goals such as vote-maximization, office maximization, regime guardianship, and policy entrepreneurship. The ideational differences between different actors fed into factional disputes over time bringing discrete changes over a series of congresses between 1966-1972. In this part, I present major issues and demarcation lines via different elite actors in the RPP.

Vote-maximization

Perhaps the most important venue of difference over ideas was the matter of vote-seeking. The LoC Faction was primarily focused on garnering votes in competitive

elections. One significant problem was the issue of who was going to be the RPP's voter base.

The LoC Faction renewed its party strategy and platform for the 1969 Elections. The new strategy had been under preparation since October 1967. The first efforts had been started by Murat Öner and Nermin Abadan in the Strategy Commission in the RPP Centrum. The new strategy was designed to not provide open aims but to provide paths and methods to achieve goals. The first point was about who was the target audience. These were workers, white collars, idea workers [fikir işçileri], small farmers, peasants, small artists, and craftsmen. These groups in unison were called "the people". The new strategy pursued an antagonism against large trusts and cartels. Three designated problems with the RPP were its discourse over the religiosity, adherence to democracy, and its burdens of the past. According to Öner the RPP was blamed for being against religion as its members claimed the JP had abused the religion, and as RPP members went to offense against "reactionism", the people took it as an accusation against themselves. His point on the matter was not to talk about religion. In terms of democracy, the RPP had been taken against it even though it was the party to start the democratic process. Feeling hopelessness towards elections also fed into anti-democratic feelings. 27th of May had become a slogan to associate the RPP with the Army. The last problem of the RPP was a complete defense of the past rather than coming to terms with it (Öner, 1976: 260-5).

The need to address the past had been an issue for the LoC Faction since its inception. Both initial articles in *Kim* and Ecevit's *Ortanın Solu* had part redefining the RPP's historical role presenting it as a pretext for the "left of center". Yet the need to further engage in "self-criticism" appeared as LoC Member's local visits and

talks with ordinary people continued. During a visit in October 1967 to Özalp, Van a citizen confronted Ecevit over General Mustafa Muğlalı's summary execution of 33 people in 1943 (Uyar, 2017b: 286).¹⁷⁶

With such motivation, the LoC Movement pushed for self-criticism during the Budgetary Proceedings Speech of Ecevit in February 1968, and it was legitimized under the "revolutionarism" principle of "six arrows" (Ecevit, 1968; 1975; Tütüncü Esmer: 174). A year later, this effort was put into the RPP's electoral platform (CHP, 1969), and repeated by Ecevit both during the electoral campaign, and in its aftermath (1970). One prevalent example in the RPP campaign was to get rid of the burdens of the past and go on the offensive. In Kırıkkale, Ankara on the 21st of September, Ecevit had championed an old idiom for democratization and the RPP's greatest electoral fiasco, "Spirit of 1946" [1946 Ruhu]. He said:

"What is the Spirit of 1946? The real meaning of 1946 is this: The people who wanted to get rid of the pressures of notables, landlords, tyrants [eşraf, ağa, müteğallibe], who wanted a change of order, thought that the Democratic Party was going to bring it. Therefore, it brought the Democratic Party. Now I do not want to get into the detail of the past events. These are left in the past. Only, the people now seeing that the JP [sic] could not make the change of order on the left of center that they longed for, henceforth voted in abundance for the RPP in 1957. There, we want to make the order of change the people longed for and the DP could not" (Ulus, 22.09.1969: 1).¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Muğlalı was tried and imprisoned after the DP deputies brought the event to the Parliamentary floor in 1947.

¹⁷⁷ The theme of "Spirit of 1946" was also present in the narratives of at least one of the LoC Faction members, Ahmet İsvan (2002: 19).

This point had also been a reason for friction between Centrists and the LoC Faction from December 1969 (Erim, 2021: 918) until the 5th Extraordinary Congress in May 1972 (Barış, 08.05.1972: 7; Milliyet, 08.05.1972: 11). The need to address the RPP's past was a constant reminder for the LoC Faction to come to terms with their burdens of history. When asked by a villager why the RPP did not realize its pledges while it was in power, Ecevit responded that during the single-party period the MP did not have the need to listen to citizens and İnönü had changed that system (Uyar, 2017b: 327). Finally, a major event regarding the burden of the 1950s and the 27th of May Coup took place with İnönü's reconciliation with Bayar. Ecevit commented on the matter saying the reconciliation was not due to vote-seeking, after stating that being religious was not a basis for being "reactionary", in a meeting with Miners' Union representatives on the 16th of May: "This time perhaps we are going to lose elections because we wanted to mend the wounds. Still, we are going to mend the wounds even if we lose... To save our future, we need to forget the past" (Ulus, 17.05.1969: 7).

Regime Guardianship

The party goal of "regime guardianship" served as a serious factor in the change in the RPP between 1965 and 1973. İnönü was the embodiment of the status quo, republican tradition, and the founding generation (Güneş Ayata, 2010: 85). At the same time, he had the prestige of establishment and guardianship of the democratic process in Turkey. As İnönü stated in the RPP Common Group in the parliament on the 13th of February 1965 After the fall of the last İnönü government in early 1965:

"The resignation of the government came into being after months of desire and efforts to end the RPP government.

“After the 1961 elections, whether the democratic process was going to work or not was fundamentally under question. We, as the RPP, believed with a clean heart that the democratic regime will persist in 1961, much like we believed it in 1945” (Kili, 1976, 206).

İnönü’s efforts in this period toward democratization, limiting effects of the Army in civilian politics, and secularism were mostly shared by the LoC Faction. However, over time some differences started to show up in ideas and applications. Two issues, secularism and relations with the Army and Security Apparatus, had their implications for democracy.

The LoC Faction agreed with İnönü on the importance of secularism. One divergence of the LoC line following its strategy from the traditional guardianship position of Turkish secularism, what was later called “laicism that respects beliefs” [inançlara saygılı laiklik] (Çetingüleç 2018: 48). Ecevit had supported İnönü’s position against *Nurculuk* in 1966. İnönü on his part accepted Ecevit’s criticisms in *Ortanın Solu* regarding religiosity and problems with his offensive strategy to some extent. İnönü even went as far as bringing that issue up against Feyzioğlu in the 1967 Congress (Bilâ 2011: 305-6).

Still, they had not been as strict on their limits of secularism. One example was a disagreement with the slogan “Left of center, the way of the Prophet [Ortanın Solu, Peygamberin Yolu]” noted by İnönü (2020: 861). The real change was via the electoral strategy in 1969 which prohibited the RPP members to polarize over religious matters (Kili, 1976: 248-9). Such actions and pragmatical slogans of the LoC faction became a matter of contention for the Centrists, who accused the latter of working against the principle of “secularism” (264). Another example was the

addition of a part called “Religion” to the 1973 Platform *Ak Günlere*. Whereas 1969 strategy called for not talking on the matter, in the 1973 Campaign the RPP openly called for freedom of “consciousness and faith” as an irreplaceable part of democracy (Kili, 1976: 363).

As for the relationship with the Army and the Security apparatus, İnönü worked as a guide to the LoC Faction. The main difference occurred over the disagreement on the response to the 12th of March Coup-by memorandum between İnönü and the LoC Faction which was discussed in detail above.

One matter was to present and get the left of center to Army and State elite who were anti-communist at their core, much like the RPP. Differences had occurred over the RPP’s move towards a “left anticommunist” position. On the 31st of October 1966, İnönü took the newly elected RPP CAC, which was dominated by LoC Faction members, to President Sunay. The visit aimed to put an end to gossip about the LoC Faction members being followed by the security bureaucracy. The CAC members waited for İnönü-Sunay's talk to end for 50 minutes. In the meeting, Sunay told İnönü that he understood the aim of the left of center, “to capture [zapt etmek] the new generation with ideas”. However, when they went out Sunay had been extremely cold and did not even talk with the CAC members. İnönü was brooding on the way back to *Pembe Köşk* with the CAC members (İnönü, 2020: 751; Birgit, 2012: 11-3).

İnönü’s reconciliation with Bayar had been an issue in which Ecevit supported İnönü against others in the LoC Faction (Güley, 1990: 406-7). However, in the end, the opposition was stooped. On the 27th of May during anniversary celebrations İnönü openly taunted the TAF high command: “Birgit, have you seen the procession of

soldiers? Those who cannot make a battalion walk in order think of ruling the country!” (Birgit, 2012: 43). Arguably this event also served to solidify the LoC Faction’s efforts to come to terms with the “burdens of the past”.

This event solidified the Army and Security apparatus’ disdain for Ecevit. As the representative of the left-wing of Ecevit was removed from state order of appearance.¹⁷⁸ İnönü told in the 5th Extraordinary Congress that he protested Ecevit’s removal from the official order of appearance of the state processions and receptions, due to Ecevit’s critique of the putschist elements in the army (Barış, 07.05.1972: 7).

Still, this did not stop İnönü and Ecevit to have a clear break in their close relationship. Ecevit had been adamant in his refusal for relying on Army in office. Ecevit was openly trying to increase the distance between putschist elements and the army, while İnönü was trying to keep a middle ground while trying to keep Army in its barracks but also trying to curb their influence by agreeing on some of their demands.

The goal of “regime guardianship” was complicated for the RPP’s change. On one hand, protecting the regime was a matter of agreement between the Chairperson and the LoC Faction. On the other hand, the LoC Factions’ efforts to change RPP’s image and electoral strategy caused slight problems between them at times. The matter was much more serious for the Centrists who openly criticized the LoC Faction on regime guardianship goal.

Finally, it was regime guardianship (as well as intra-party democracy maximizing goal) that prompted and caused a leadership change in the RPP after 1971. The

¹⁷⁸ Ecevit’s case had uncanny resemblances with the “democratic left” leaders in latin America, who were also considered as far-left actors by right-wing soldiers and bureaucrats, even if they had center-left ideas (Iber, 2013).

activation of the “regime guardianship” goal on the part of the Chairperson and the response of the General Secretary served. The difference in the RPP leadership over following the track of the LoC Faction’s path to not rely on the Army in politics, and İnönü’s idea of protecting the regime came at odds. When both sides persisted on their paths, the friction of the sides led to a decisive party change.

Office-seeking

The party goal of office seeking represents a clear demarcation line between the LoC Faction and, Centrist and backers of the military in the RPP. The reason was the refusal of the overwhelming majority of the LoC Faction members to openly refuse an alliance with soldiers in office-seeking. The reason was threefold: The LoC Faction members adhered to parliamentary democracy and relied upon the general right of the vote (Güneş, 2009: 11-3) in all their policy positions. This position was best delivered by Ecevit (1970). Over time there were splits within the LoC Faction due to this fact. The second reason was the experience of the 1960 Coup and its aftermath when army interventions stopped the RPP from pursuing realizing its programme. The third reason was the desired change in RPP’s identity as a social democratic party which distanced itself through means other than the parliamentary process to pursue its political aims. The issue was brought to discussions in the party via discussion of “Kemalism”. To that end Ecevit’s revision in *Atatürk ve Devrimcilik* (Ecevit, 1970) was no coincidence. Rather it was a major political achievement that distanced the RPP from major putschist elements in the larger Turkish left.

One early example of this tendency appeared in Erten’s diary. During a CAC meeting on the 2nd of December 1967, Ecevit stated, “I will touch upon the matter of the army from a certain angle. There should not be an intelligence effort on the

situation of the Army. We are determined to make this work in the face of the Army [Ordu'ya rağmen]. We should not be spending too much time with the Army” (Erten, 2010: 237).

This refusal of dealing with the army and declaration of will towards realizing the left of center was also noted elsewhere. Öner (1976) was invited to a meeting of putschists in the RPP and retold his experience there (40-45). The same group extended an invitation to the LoC Movement in 1966. Ecevit flatly refused the offer “We do not accept anything but democracy. We do not accept any struggle apart from democratic means. If needed, we will struggle to save democracy” (75-6).

The role of centrists is not exactly clear when it came to alliances with the Turkish Army itself. However, there were significant doubts about the position of the Centrist, among the LoC faction members. For example, after the 4th Extraordinary Congress, Erim tried to reach out to LoC Faction. However, Erim’s experience in the disciplinary bodies of the RPP over-involvement with the Aydemir Junta was remembered by LoC Faction members. They considered Erim as, “He did not trust democracy and the people at a fundamental level, which we could not consider as temporary” (Öner, 1976: 242).

The doubts regarding Centrist affiliations with putschist elements were perhaps not unfounded. Erim was a primary example as the Prime Minister of two governments installed by the military after the 12th of March. Moreover, during the 1970 Congress period, Kabibay, who organized an attack on the İstanbul Branch Congress, openly sided with Satır. This fact was used against Satır by Ecevit from 1970 until the 5th Extraordinary Congress in 1972 (Ecevit, 1972). The difference between ideas and actions for achieving the office of the LoC Faction and the Centrists was so great it served as a constant reminder of sufficient ideational difference. Ultimately in the

1972 Congress Centrists were defeated even when they had the support of the government ministers and İnönü himself.

Policy-entrepreneurship and Issue Variables

The LoC Faction started to divert its electoral focus to rural areas after 1967 (Uçkan, 2017: 462). During the period of change, the LoC movement's reiterations for promises of "land reform", for "forest villages", and talked about establishing cooperatives and *Köykents* [literally village cities.] were significant points of Ecevit's 1968 Budgetary Proceedings Speech, and perhaps most heavily in 1969 and 1973 platform. For Satır, The left wing of the RPP was inciting revolt with such promises and attempts to rally the rural population (Barış, 08.05.1972: 7; Milliyet, 08.05.1972: 11).

The slogan used to promote land reform "The land belongs to those who cultivate it. The water belongs to those who use it" by Ecevit was the reason for such friction between the Centrists and the LoC Faction. Anadol claimed (2015) that the slogan was formulated by Murat Öner (148). Ecevit used the first part of the slogan for the first time during the Budgetary Proceedings Speech as "Land belongs to those who cultivate it" [toprak işleyenindir] and said that it was derived from a land reform campaign in Taiwan (Ecevit, 1968: 52; also see, Ecevit, 1975: 156).¹⁷⁹ Erim noted in his journal that he found the slogan in a book on the European left. That slogan was used by French Communist Party in a deliberately "ambiguous" way. When he showed the book to Deputy Secretary Üstünel, Üstünel replied that Ecevit gave him that book. Erim arrived at this conclusion: "Therefore Ecevit saw the slogan in that book, or he read that it is a communist slogan. He is using it knowingly" (Erim,

¹⁷⁹ "Land-to-its-tiller" program in Taiwan was initiated in Taiwan in 1953 (Koo, 1966: 150).

2021: 948). For the prominent Centrists such as Satır and Erim, Ecevit was linked with communism in one way or the other and did not refrain from using this against Ecevit starting with 1970.

The alliance with the left-wing of Turk-iş and usage of party centrum quota for MP candidates, and election of union representatives as candidates during elections had also received criticisms from the Centrists.

One key example of a difference between the LoC Faction and the rest of the party administration was Turkey's NATO membership. Towards the end of 1967, the PG Administration under Satır and Erim requested an inquiry about the view in the RPP towards Turkey's membership to NATO, since NATO's 20-year agreement term was about to end. Erim reported that leftists in the RPP wanted Turkey to leave NATO (Erim, 2021: 865). There are conflicting narratives on the bid on NATO as the position between members varied. Güneş signed a petition arguing that Turkey should exit NATO and was warned by İnönü. İnönü had created a commission on the matter, but in the end, its report was not discussed in the PA. When Toker wrote that there were communists in the RPP, prompted by intra-party discussion Esatoğlu was distraught. İnönü ended the friction by making a speech on the 12th of January 1968, stating that Turkey must not leave NATO but ask for an amendment of its conditions for its national interest (Öner, 1976: 27; Neftçi, 1997: 123-32; Mülayim, 2019: 227-9; Erim, 2021: 865-7). It seems the PA declaration on the 10th of July 1968, which stated the RPP's position on the matter was that Turkey should stay in NATO with possible amendments finalized the matter for good (Ulus, 10.07.1968: 1; 7).

Another such foreign affairs disagreement was between İnönü and the LoC Faction. On the 21st of January 1970 opposed Turkey's bid for a "Common Market" [Ortak

Pazar] in parliament (Ecevit, 1970b). İnönü (2020) noted that Ecevit was under influence of Besim Üstünel on the matter (844).

The review of the application of party goals shows that different ideas and therefore positions among elites of the RPP have prompted different decisions to be taken and therefore causing friction, therefore, answering Berman's first and second questions.

Ideas served as an independent variable that affected the application of politics in the RPP via different conceptions of party goals. Consequently, the RPP's identity was affected via conscious efforts following a broad ideational map articulated before the LoC Faction assumed the administration of the RPP for the most part in 1967.

In Berman's (2011) conception of "supply" and "demand phases" (107), RPP's existing ideational arsenal, "the six arrows" and its left-leaning policy prescriptions, which were designated as being on the "left of center" in 1960 were "tarnished" and lost their appeal with the inability of the RPP's leadership between 1961-1965 during its coalition governments. The actor who pushed for the only notable success in Strike, Lock-out, and Labor Law of the period, Bülent Ecevit, and others tried to open up ideational space in the RPP. However, due to the conservative resistance of the party leadership, an opening for discussion of new ideas could not be found in the RPP. Instead, such a space appeared outside the RPP in venues such as the *Yön* magazine circle and the WPT. The demand for clear ideas presented itself in both the RPP and in the voter base during the 1965 Elections.

After persisting electoral blunders in 1965 and 1966 room for internal debate opened around the term "left of center" which became an embodiment of Chairperson İnönü's ideological position for the last forty years. In 1966 a new movement within

the RPP organized itself and started to compete with other actors who wanted to keep to older ideas such as the RPP being a “mass party” which had its old *eşraf* cadres as a party voter base. A leadership change in the party due to a combination of elite agreement and factionalism allowed for the opening of a room for a new coalition around the idea of “left of center” or “democratic left” or “social democracy”. After 1967 carriers of the social democratic ideas prepared a new strategy for “going to people” and started to address the “burdens of the past” publicly. This was primarily an effort in terms of vote-seeking and ideational divisions presented themselves on this ground. Still, other party goals could make sense of how the actors had different conceptions of “left of center”.

In sum, cumulative effects of ideational alternatives for the left of center explain differences in behaviors and ultimately alliance forming or coalition building.

Left of Center as a Coalition Magnet

The “left of center” served as a temporary coalition-magnet within the RPP from the aftermath of the 1965 Elections until 1972 when its effects were effectively nullified after the election of Ecevit as the chairperson. It was able to garner coalitions both within and without the RPP and attracted non-violent left-leaning actors.

“Left of center” satisfies Beland and Cox’s (2011) conditions for being able to work as an independent variable at least for a duration. I have discussed “effective manipulation” or the creation of a new language to “define policy problems”, and “adoption or promotion” of it by “key actors” such as Chairperson İnönü. The best example of this was perhaps his acceptance of “land occupations” as a “revolutionary” and “illegal” action during the 20th Congress in 1970. As for the final condition of bringing “together actors in the policy-sphere whose ideas were

formerly at odds or activate a new venue of thinking in the said actors who were not particularly engaged in the issue” (2) perhaps the best examples were Kırıkoğlu and Genç who were returned or joined respectively to the RPP after the advent of left of center. Still, they would carry their own left-wing beliefs which point toward a “cognitive lock” or “the refusal of certain policy solutions over ideological fixations” (15). The breaking of coalition attracted by the “left of center” was also broken due to ideological differences.

The left of center gathered its valence (Beland and Cox, 2011: 5) primarily from its adherence to citizenship rights, liberal democratic rights, and economic policies such as redistribution, and workers’ participation in administration in the workplace.

Another tool that increased its attractiveness was the usage of storytelling by Ecevit. Ecevit littered his speeches and texts with stories either from real-life engagements with voters or party members or at times made-up examples. The best example of the latter kind was used during Ecevit’s 1968 Budgetary Proceedings (Ecevit, 1968; 1975: 145-8): The murder case of Bayram Çıtak, a villager from Emirdağ, Konya. Allegedly, Çıtak was murdered by men hired by local landowners, due to his insistence on land reform in his village. Ecevit had brought a telegram sent by a local JP member and read it on the parliament floor (Korkmaz, 1968: 3-5). In other words, Ecevit was able to use ordinary stories of ordinary people to convey the message of the RPP. The best example of made-up stories was also used in the same speech. A fictional visit to a village by a member of the TACC, and a communist agitator was used to “show the importance of land reform in stopping communism” (Ecevit, 1975: 153-4).¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Story went this way: Villagers were working for the local landlord as half-slaves. When the TACC member said if communism arrived and all land was appropriated by the state, reducing the villagers

Left of the center was also a quite “polysemic” idea that was associated with at least two other terms in its inception, “democratic left” and “social democracy”. Such ambiguities, according to Beland and Cox (2011) gather larger coalitions as actors with different understandings of the same ideas. From 1966 until 1974 this trend continued and left of center, democratic left, and social democracy were used interchangeably in the published texts of the LoC Faction members and its supporters.

Significantly, Ecevit was quite skillful in “framing” (Beland and Cox, 2011: 5-6) the ideas of the LoC Faction with a consciously ambiguous, poetic, and sloganistic style. Over time Ecevit’s talent as a public speaker placed him solidly, at the helm of left of the center movement. Mülayim (2019) narrated that Hıfzı Oğuz Bekata, a name close to İnönü and one of the prominent Centrists, told him during Ecevit’s speech in the 20th Congress, “Mülayim, I do not like this man -he meant Ecevit- at all, but what he says is true” (204).

The primary example of the “left of center”’s coalition magnet effect could be understood via its alliance with the left wing of Türk-iş. This alliance was significant as it had a theorist of its own who produced polysemic material that used both social democracy and the democratic left.¹⁸¹ Haluk Faruk Erginsoy was a key figure in this collaboration and provided at least three books on his own, as well as contributing to

to half-slaves of the state, then villagers would answer back (using inside voices) that they were already half-slaves, and it would be better if state owned all land. If land reform was done in that village, providing each of the landless villagers some piece of land, then a communist agitator’s call for state ownership of land would cause backlash (Ecevit, 1975: 153-4).

¹⁸¹ See: Haluk Faruk Erginsoy, *Türk İşçi Hareketi Üzerine Bir Deneme*, İstanbul: Oleyiş Yayınları, 1968; H. Faruk Erginsoy, *Türkiye, İşçi Hareketi ve Demokratik Sol*, İstanbul: Oleyiş Yayınları, 1971; Faruk Erginsoy, *Demokratik Sola Başlangıç*, İstanbul: G Yayınları, 1976; *Türk İşçi Hareketi İçin Sosyal Demokrat Düzen: İlkeler, Amaçlar, Yöntem*, Ankara: Ayyıldız Matbaası, 1971.

one collective work. Although, left of center was left out to keep any party affiliations out at least initially.

Still, the left of center lost its “coalition magnet” effect completely after Ecevit’s tenure as Chairperson. The reason was the rise of an alternative to the “left of center” and by extension to “social democracy”, the democratic left.

Apart from his role in revitalizing the RPP Youth Branches throughout Turkey, Genç organized first the “Democratic Left Thought Forum”. This group tried to become a force of its own in the RPP and differentiated itself from “social democrats” as “the democratic leftists”. Genç’s associate Ergül later told: “[W]hen we acted and prepared the Youth Branches we calculated to capture [ele geçirme] the main leadership” (217). The “democratic leftists” tried to operate separately from the audit and control of the Party Centrum.

Two sets of accounts are illuminating: Neftçi wrote,

“After a few days [Genç] became the Chair of Centrum Youth Branch. In the months leading up to the [20th] Congress, the thing I had to endure are only known by me and God. Youth Branch was against illegal youth movements but in the confusion of terminology, where any wrong word in their declarations and writings would have taken us? In the meantime, we fought a lot. They would add slogans and I would either remove or change them. After the Congress in July, they did not want me to be responsible for Youth Branches. Even if they wanted I would have not. I was spent at heart” (Neftçi, 1997: 176).

Erol Baysal had a claim on the Adana Congress. According to Baysal, the RPP Centrum tried to stop the “Congress of the Landless” in Adana, and Mustafa Ok had

been sent to stop the Youth branches. When unable to stop Ok said, “I wish there were others in your place”. (Kaya, 2021: 218). Ok’s narrative suggested another story. He claimed that he was happy to work with Genç during the Congress preparations and saved him from intra-party disciplinary action at least twice. He had stopped İzmir RPP Chair Talat Orhon’s attempt to send Genç to Disciplinary bodies in 1969. The second time was after the 12th March coup-by-memorandum when Genç had put down İnönü’s photo as a symbolic gesture (Ok, n.d.).

Genç had acquired his radicalism during his time in the Army War School and WPT. He considered social democracy as the “right wing of the left parties” (Kaya, 2021: 199). However, during İnönü’s tenure as the RPP Chairperson, he opted to adhere to the “social democratic” order as a social ideal (Kaya, 2021: 210-1). Genç ideologically had a “socialist” association and preferred former FIC members in his team. However, after he was pressured “not to exclude anyone” by Ecevit and the CAC he had to include social democrats in the Youth Branches administration. However, he had also placed former *Dev-Genç* members as local Youth Branch Chairs (216). Genç had made “500 *Dev-Genç* members enter the party” (224).¹⁸²

Ergül had been made the single candidate by Genç in the 7th Congress of the Youth Branches in 1972 and dominated the floor with his supporters from İzmir and predominantly Sapanca (Kaya, 2021: 227-33). The Congress had also been emblematic of the ideological divisions in the RPP, after Ecevit’s tenure. In what had been called the “secret congress” or “Sapanca Congress”, Genç’s supporters had put up a banner behind the speaker’s post that wrote: “Social capitalists out!” (231).

¹⁸² The “whip” of the LoC Faction Birgit appeared unaware of Genç’s initiative in his narrative. He narrated that he was extremely distraught when he heard the claims of Gögüş and Sezai Orkunt on how extreme-left was being accepted to the RPP (Birgit, 2012: 74-75).

Consequently, an ideological division was started in the RPP after 1970. Ecevit himself reported this ideological division within the Youth Branches after the closure of SDAs. (Öymen, 16.02.1975). The Youth Branch of RPP was handed over to a non-violent but much more radical group that saw social democracy as a right-wing leaning on the left. After the closure of the SDAs, the dissemination of the social democratic ideals had been stopped and curbed by a group that carried the influence of the WPT into the RPP.

Another figure who was not happy with polysemicness and the content of the left of center was Kırıkoğlu. Kırıkoğlu's biographer narrated an argument between Kırıkoğlu and Ecevit during the debates about social democracy and the democratic left. Accordingly, Ecevit said, "Mr. Kırıkoğlu why do you insist? Let's say social democracy and democratic left on basis of need. This is how I do it and it works" (Cılızoğlu, 2017: 84).

Ecevit's polysemic idea was ultimately aimed to bring together a broad societal coalition, as well as a coalition of the left. One anecdote by then university student Duran Ergül supports this view. Ergül and his left-leaning friends went to RPP Centrum to ask for aid regarding their voting rights for the local elections, on the 2nd of June 1968: "We knocked on the door and entered without waiting for a response of 'come in'. Bülent Ecevit was sitting at the table, alone. He rose, shook our hands, and welcomed us in. Zeki [Sarıhan] who was a fiery young man talked directly: 'We are WPT supporters, but we were going to vote for the RPP in these elections. They do not accept votes from Gazi Education [Faculty]'"'. When the RPP's lawyer confirmed that there was nothing to do the students decided to leave: "As we thanked him, and shook his hand goodbye Ecevit clenched his left fist and said 'If we are not

one fist, as the left, such things are always going to happen... He implored us to be strong and in unity to thwart such tricks. Ecevit was right” (Ergül, 2000: 34-5).

Ecevit’s strategy was to bring together the left as a large democratic coalition based on “class-cohesiveness” [sınıf kaynaşması] (Ulus, 06.07.1970: 1; 7-8) to that end he opened the RPP via acceptance of the notion “class” (different from the orthodox view of “populism”[halkçılık] which refused the existence of classes in Turkey).

Therefore more radical figures such as Genç and his team from FIC, and Kırıkoğlu, who in return agreed with the democratic ideals of the “left of center” coalition, joined the RPP. Kırıkoğlu diverged in his idea of RPP’s “historical role” :

“Without the RPP placing itself on the democratic left, in the spectrum of parties, it is not possible to organize, politically caderize, or breathe at the left of the RPP. When the RPP accepts this historical role, embraces the development [birkim] on its left just like holding the hand of a child and taking it across the river with crocodiles. Only then a democratic platform which has its Left in Turkey is possible” (Cılızoğlu, 2017, s. 156).

Kırıkoğlu’s ambiguous metaphor suggests to me that he envisioned the RPP to protect and coordinate the far-left rather than absorbing and transforming it into a social democratic position. The radical wing in the RPP was unhappy with the polysemicness and wanted much more narrowly defined left-wing positions which would leave the social democrats out in the long run. As expected by the ideational approach the competition between actors, in this case, was a competition between ideas.

Two interpretations could be made about the end of coalition magnet effect of the “left of center”. Firstly, after İnönü left, in the vacuum of power Kırıkoğlu and Genç wanted to form their coalition under the “democratic left”. This position was presented in the narratives wanting a stronger intervention in the market and much more radical discourses. Secondly, the reason for such an endeavor on the part of Kırıkoğlu and the Youth Branches was a “cognitive lock” regarding the definition of left and policy prescriptions and refusal of market-oriented policy prescriptions such as “popular sector”.

The left of center, as a native formulation of social democracy within the cognitive tradition of the RPP, and legitimate enough in the eyes of key actors such as İnönü (as opposed to actors of state apparatus) was the reason for the internal composition of factions as coalitions. The “left of center” both explain the path of specific party change and internal strife and the actor coalitions that competed for the control of the RPP.

The effects of the left of center were extremely overt at the party elite level, both locally and centrally. However, the same cannot be said as the party reform regarding the grassroots and the means of disseminating ideas were extremely limited at the local level. In other words, the ideational variable in the case of the RPP could explain the opening up of demand for new ideas and the subsequent supply phase. However, institutional factors (such as the delegate system of the RPP) and material factors (such as the interests of the Centrists in curbing the expansion of the supply chain for the idea of the left of center) placed a serious limit on the dissemination of the ideational supply.

Suggestions for Future Research

In this research, I provided the social democracy and Turkish studies literature with a deviant case. I did not engage in any formal comparisons. I also did not engage in formal process tracing as I kept my research to the confines of descriptive process tracing to answer a “how” question.

One path for the future lies in that direction. The bracketing out of the historical case of RPP from the larger phenomenon of social democratic movements is unfortunate. Although I did not engage with the period after 1973, I can state that the case of Turkey is a failed case of social democratic movements (Smaldone, 2009; Sandbrook, Edelman, Heller, & Teichman, 2006). What makes it important for a deviant case is its non-Marxist origins. Furthermore, the case shows properties of overdetermination, as in the cases of Germany and Chile in its failures such as too polarized political environment, unconsolidated democracy, anti-communist state apparatus, pressures of the Cold war, and violence. The case of Turkey also shows a leadership and cadre problem diverging from other cases. To that end, studying the period after 1973 in Turkey in comparison with other cases of social democracy could be a very fruitful endeavor.

Within-case comparisons with historical events and contemporary center-left parties are also extremely viable. Similar conditions of reliance on clientelism and informality to detriment of programmatical (therefore ideational) and institutional forms of policy-making persists in Turkey, and elsewhere (Kılıçdaroğlu, 2021).

Tracking the ideational journey of the RPP in history could enlighten the problems on the supply side of politics. The RPP between 1965-1973 tried to address problems quite similar to today’s conditions. Hence it could be argued that these historical

studies have more meaning than being mainly intellectual endeavors, and could help to resolve real-world problems regarding institutional participation.

Another suggestion for the future is directly related to the state of the art in the Turkish Studies field. As I tried to shortly present in Chapter 2, the RPP is bracketed out for the most part from the studies on the Turkish left. This is due to an inclination in the students of the Left in Turkey to reduce the Left of Center and the RPP to “Kemalism” or an epiphenomenon of its much more glorified rival the WPT. As also discussed in the rest of the dissertation the relationship between the RPP and the WPT had been rocky for the most part, and both parties differed from each other in their ideational tendencies. At the same time, both parties were influenced by the electoral competition and rivalry at the campuses. This suggests that the literature should open up to study Left in Turkey to center-left as well. The far-left and the center-left were both victims during the 1971 Coup-by-memorandum, the civil war conditions after 1974, and finally in the 1980 Coup d’état. Therefore, they are part of the larger left, which was targeted by the right. Moreover, the relationship between the RPP and the WPT suggests the interaction between two parties was influential on both parties, rather than the RPP being considered as an epiphenomenon of the WPT. In other words, the divergent paths of the RPP and the WPT are not so diverged after all. Therefore, the RPP could be added to such studies as an analytical unit, rather than a background actor. Therefore, it would be very meaningful to study the 1970s Left in Turkey not only from the perspective of the far left but also from the center-left.

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