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A NEW LEADER IN TURKISH POLITICS AFTER SEPTEMBER 12, 1980: TURGUT ÖZAL

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Abstract

Turgut Özal, along with Süleyman Demirel, was the person to be mentioned as the new leader in Turkish right-wing political tradition, following late Adnan Menderes who had been the leader of Democratic Party (DP). Özal did not actually have a long political background. He was 56 when he entered politics. His previous attempts to enter politics had been fruitless. Taking advantage of the political circumstances of the 1980 Turkish coup d'état, Turgut Özal entered the arena as the founding leader of the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP) and became Prime Minister in the very first general elections that he ran as a leader. During the ten years (1983-1993) when he was active in politics, his primary goal was, in his own words, a "transformation" in Turkey. His performance was often discussed in his time and is still researched and discussed today. Especially with the economic policies that he implemented, he turned Turkey into a country that is more open to and integrated into the world. However, his policies also drew serious reaction in some circles. On the other hand, there were also instances where he did not display a fully democratic image during some in-party conflicts and practices. For example, he became President in 1989 and played a major role in determining the next party leader as well as the prime minister. This particular situation caused much reaction, even within his own party ANAP. In addition, his interventions in the practices of the ANAP government during his term as President as well as his taking the initiative into his own hands from time to time show that he also had the characteristics of a dominant leader. However, going out of his depth in balancing the tendencies in ANAP since 1987 and his inability to establish the authority he desired to have in his former party following his presidency also demonstrate that Özal was/could not be a leader who had the absolute power to dominate his party with what he had. In this study,

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the leadership characteristics of Turgut Özal, who had an important place in recent Turkish political history, will be discussed and examined. In this context, Özal's speeches in this period, the words spoken about him, and the evaluations made about him will be used.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Turgut Özal, ANAP, the Motherland Party, Leadership, Politics

12 Eylül 1980 Sonrasında Türk Siyasetinde Yeni Bir Lider: Turgut Özal

Öz

Türk sağ siyaset geleneğinde lider olarak Demokrat Parti (DP) Genel Başkanı Adnan Menderes'ten sonra Süleyman Demirel ile birlikte ismi ilk anılan kişi Turgut Özal'dır. Özal esasında uzun bir siyasi geçmişe sahip değildir. Politikaya girdiğinde 56 yaşında idi. Daha önce siyasete girme teşebbüsü sonuçsuz kalmıştı. 12 Eylül 1980 Askerî Darbesi'nin ardından oluşan politik şartların da kendine sağladığı avantajlarla siyasete kurucu lideri olduğu Anavatan Partisi (ANAP)'nin başında giren ve yapılan ilk genel seçimlerde tek başına iktidara gelerek başbakan olan Turgut Özal aktif siyasette yer aldığı on yılda (1983-1993) kendi tabiriyle Türkiye'de "transformasyonu" amaçlamıştır. Yaptığı icraatlar hem döneminde tartışılmış hem de bugün tartışılmaya devam etmektedir. Bilhassa ekonomi politikasında uyguladıkları ile Türkiye'yi dışarıya açıp dünya ile daha bütünleşmiş hale getirmiştir. Fakat bununla birlikte, bazı çevrelerin de ciddi tepkisiyle karşılaşmıştır. Diğer yandan, parti içi uygulamalarında tam demokratik bir görüntü ortaya koymadığı durumlar da olmuştur. Örneğin, 1989 yılında kendisi cumhurbaşkanı olurken, ardından gelecek genel başkan ve başbakanı belirlemede başat rol oynamıştır. Bu durumu ANAP içinde dahi tepkiyle karşılayan isimler olmuştur. Bunun yanı sıra, cumhurbaşkanı olduğu dönemde iktidarda bulunan eski partisi ANAP hükümetinin uygulamalarına müdahalesi, kimi zaman inisiyatifi kendi eline alması da onun baskın lider özelliklere sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Ancak buna karşın, özellikle 1987'den itibaren ANAP'taki eğilimler arası denge kurmada zorlanması ve Köşk'e çıktıktan sonra da ANAP içinde istediği otoriteyi kuramaması Özal'ın her şeyi ile partisine hâkim olmada mutlak güce sahip bir lider olmadığını/olmadığını göstermektedir. Bu çalışmada, yakın dönem Türk siyasi tarihinde önemli bir yere sahip olan Turgut Özal'ın liderlik özellikleri ele alınıp bir değerlendirmede bulunulacaktır. Bu kapsamda, Özal'ın bu dönemde yaptığı konuşmalar, kendisi hakkında söylenen sözler ve hakkında yapılan değerlendirmelerden istifade edilecektir.

Keywords: Turgut Özal, Anavatan Partisi, ANAP, Liderlik, Siyaset.

Introduction

The word "leader" emerged back in the 1300s, and it later came to be used in politics for the first time during the 19th century. Therefore, there are a great number of definitions that attempt to describe what "leadership" is. According to one of those definitions, leadership refers to motivating a group of people who have gathered around a certain purpose. Another approach defines "leadership" as a leader's potential to excite masses and steer them toward a certain purpose. A leader, on the other hand, is "someone who guides and coordinates the actions of the members of a particular organisation." In addition to these, an impressive (charismatic) leader is one that has the potential to "reassure and motivate" the masses that support him.¹ At the same time, a leader is someone who has "a vision of the future,"² and he should also "set an example," "push processes," "invigorate people," and "motivate his/her team".³

A political leader is someone who can lead his society to believe in his own political objectives.⁴ Political leadership, on the other hand, refers to "a series of behaviours which aims at obtaining, maintaining, and sustaining power by influencing, guiding, and manipulating the opinion of masses, especially by a leader who has become a symbol of the political tradition he represents."⁵ When political leadership in Turkish politics is concerned, it can be asserted that leaders have played a major role in the developments of their particular times.⁶ This can be partly attributed to the fact that Turkish political parties do not yet have established institutional traditions. Especially after the second half of the twentieth century, the activities

¹ Cengiz Demir-Kemal Yılmaz-Aydın Çevirgen, "Liderlik Yaklaşımları ve Liderlik Tarzlarına İlişkin Bir Araştırma", *Alanya İşletme Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2/1 (2010), ss. 130-131, 135.

² Hümeyra Demir, *Kişisel Marka ve Liderlik Kavramının Siyasal Pazarlama Üzerindeki Etkisi: 1983-1989 Turgut Özal Dönemi Örneği*, Aksaray Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İşletme Anabilim Dalı Üretim Yönetimi ve Pazarlama Bilim Dalı, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Aksaray 2019, s. 29.

³ Oğuz Göksu, "Siyasal Liderlikte Yeni Bir Model Önerisi: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Örneği", *Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences*, 18 (3), s. 1060.

⁴ Demir, *a.g.t.*, s. 54.

⁵ Ayşegül Komsuoğlu, "Türkiye'de Siyasal Liderlik ve Kitle İletişimi: Bir Örnek İnceleme, Süleyman Demirel", 38. ICANAS (*International Congress of Asian and North African Studies*), Ankara, Türkiye, 10-15 Eylül 2007, s. 1935.

⁶ Ali Çağlar-D. Ali Arslan, "Cumhuriyet'ten Günümüze Türk Siyasi Liderleri: Atatürk'ten Demirel'e Üst Siyasal Elitler", *H.Ü. İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, Cilt 18, Sayı: 2, 2000, s. 500.

of political parties worldwide are seen to be replaced by the activity of a leader.⁷ Alternatively, it will not be wrong to assert that it was rather the developments around the world that pushed people with leadership skills to the forefront at the time. The leaders that have left their mark were chiefly those who had the ability to “influence the opinion of masses and steer their political and social behaviour.”⁸ “Charismatic leaders have dominated Turkish politics,”⁹ too, and Adnan Menderes, Süleyman Demirel, and Turgut Özal - all rightist leaders - can be categorised as some of those leaders who were produced by the specific dynamics of their times. And Turkish voters have always leaned towards voting for the leader rather than the political party.¹⁰

1. Turgut Özal’s Appearance in the Political Arena

Born in Malatya in 1927, Halil Turgut Özal studied electrical engineering at İstanbul Technical University (İTÜ).¹¹ Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel appointed Özal as Undersecretary of State Planning Organisation¹² in 1967; however, he was discharged from the position by Nihat Erim, who became prime minister after the military memorandum of 12 March 1971, and was downgraded to Advisor at the Prime Ministry. Later, Özal carried out duties both at home and abroad¹³, and he was nominated by the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP) as their candidate from İzmir in the 1977 general elections, and yet he was not elected as a member of the parliament in the elections. In 1979, Turgut Özal and Süleyman Demirel’s paths crossed once again, and Özal was re-appointed as Undersecretary of Prime ministry and Deputy Undersecretary of State Planning Organisation.¹⁴ In this new period, the 24 January decisions were prepared, which were to have substantial effects on Turkish economy. In the meantime, the 1980 Turkish coup d’état (September 12) took place, and the country’s government was passed on to the army. Özal, in collaboration with the army, was a key figure in the economic policies of this

⁷ Süleyman Güven, “Türkiye’de Siyasal Hayatta Dönüşüm ve Lider Odaklı Siyaset”, *Selçuk İletişim Dergisi*, 2016, 9 (3), ss. 92, 97.

⁸ Komsuoğlu, *a.g.e.*, s. 1933.

⁹ Ömer Baykal, “Türkiye’de Siyasetin Konsolidasyonu: Turgut Özal Dönemi”, *Akademik Hassasiyetler*, Yıl: 2019, Cilt: 6, Sayı: 12, s. 144.

¹⁰ Güven, *a.g.m.*, s. 107.

¹¹ Mehmet Akyol, *Beni Çok Ararsınız*, Akçağ Yayınları, 3. Baskı, Ankara 2009, s. 593.

¹² *Bu Dünyadan Bir Turgut Özal Geçti*, Derleyen: İsmet Binark, Turgut Özal Düşünce ve Hamle Derneği Yayınları, Ankara 2008, s. 35.

¹³ Hikmet Özdemir, *Turgut Özal*, Doğan Kitap, İstanbul 2014, ss. 79, 83.

¹⁴ BCA, Belge Tarihi: 01.12.1979-00.00.0000.

period, and he found himself a place in the cabinet of Bülend Ulusu, who then acted as the minister of state and deputy prime minister.¹⁵ Thus, Özal began to function directly in the political arena for the first time. However, he resigned from office on July 14, 1982, due to various reasons. Turgut Özal, who wanted to continue his political life as a political leader, formed the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP) on May 20, 1983, and, he became prime minister as the leader of the party that came to power alone in the general elections of 6 November 1983.

2. A Review of Turgut Özal's Leadership Skills

In the history of Turkish politics or democracy, as also expressed above, the main emphasis is usually on the leader (*a leader-focused attitude*), and not the political party.¹⁶ Turgut Özal entered politics at a relatively old age (when he was 56), and was actively involved in politics for ten years only; thus, initially, when he first appeared in the political arena, he was merely a "an actor candidate". Nevertheless, his name later became a "brand" in the history of Turkish politics. At the same time, he was also a leader who often set and occupied the agenda of the country. Turgut Özal, also in accordance with Max Weber's definition of "charismatic leadership," entered politics at a "post-crisis" time.¹⁷ One of the primary reasons why Turgut Özal gained much public support was because he was promising "a glimmer of hope" to his audience. He represented the "new", and this was strikingly impressive for the public. With his taboo-breaking statements and radical actions, he was a "different" leader in many aspects. For example, the following expressions uniquely belonged to Özal: "stepping into a new age", "avoiding bureaucracy", "the richer the people, the richer the state", "creating a prosperous middle class."¹⁸ Apart from this, Özal was labelled "an extraordinary insurgent"¹⁹ by certain foreign authorities due to his ground-breaking economic reforms.

There is a lot of research made into Turgut Özal'a personage. As a matter of fact, the amount of research made on Turgut Özal is considerably larger than

¹⁵ *Milliyet*, 22 Eylül 1980, s. 1.

¹⁶ Göksu, *a.g.m.*, ss. 1058-1059.

¹⁷ Demir, *a.g.t.*, ss. 75, 92.

¹⁸ Oya Ayman Büber, Mine Söğüt, "Siyaset Merdivenleri ve Özal", *Bütün Yönleriyle Özal ve Dönemi 1983-1993*, Yay. Haz.: Oya Ayman Büber, Mine Söğüt, Tempo Kitapları-2, İstanbul 1993, ss. 55-56.

¹⁹ Resul İzmirli, Ramazan Gökbuvar ve Buğra Özer, "Dönüşümcü Bir Lider Olarak Turgut Özal", *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, Sayı: 42, Ekim 2014, s. 246.

the amount of research made on ANAP, the political party that Özal himself established. The significant amount of research on Özal also indicates both his particular influence on Turkish politics and his good leadership skills. In fact, Özal frequently displayed the “agenda setting” and “guiding” behaviours that are known to characterise a good leader. On the other hand, he was also a “highly self-confident” and “alluring”²⁰ leader who knew how to impress people. In this regard, Turgut Özal’s leadership style will be examined according to his most outstanding character traits which are his pragmatist, democratic/anti-democratic, bold/libertarian, authoritarian, and interventionist identities in his political life (although, of course, considering Özal’s multidimensional personality, many others can be added to these). Turgut Özal’s leadership skills, many of which appear in his political life, can be “best observed in his Motherland Party politics”.²¹ When his request to join forces with the team of Süleyman Demirel – a banned politician then – was rejected as Özal was trying to establish his Motherland Party, he reportedly said, “I am determined to establish this party,”²² which was probably an early promise of his determination as a leader. By coming into power only in six months after he established his party, Özal achieved a noticeable success. In fact, Özal had already promised to become a powerful leader in his electoral speeches given to masses. According to Yavuz Donat, “People were going mad. There were those who threw themselves in front of Özal’s campaign busses. There were those who were dying to catch a glimpse of him, and those who drove into stockades while trying to wave at him, and those who stepped on each other just to touch his bus... That was when I said to myself: ‘He is coming. He is coming alone...’”²³

1a. Özal, the Pragmatist

Pragmatism arises as an outstanding feature of the Turkish political center-right where Turgut Özal is also located.²⁴ Özal was essentially a result-

²⁰ Yakup Keskin, *Türk Siyasal Hayatında Karizmatik Bir Lider Özelliği: Turgut Özal*, Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Kamu Yönetimi Anabilim Dalı Siyaset ve Sosyal Bilimler Bilim Dalı, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İstanbul 2002, s. 80.

²¹ Burcu Ermeydan, “Dönüştürücü Liderler Olarak Turgut Özal ve Deng Xiaoping: Farklı Koşullarda Ekonomiye Dönüştürmek”, Editör: Doç. Dr. Şirin Atakan Duman, *Uluslararası Turgut Özal Sempozyumu*, Turgut Özal Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi, Ankara 2016, s. 47.

²² Hasan Cemal, *Özal Hikâyesi*, Everest Yayınları, İstanbul 2013, s. 14.

²³ *Off The Record Yavuz Donat Kitabı*, Söyleşi: Şebnem Bursalı, Turkuaz Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2019, s. 200.

²⁴ Tanel Demirel, “Turgut Özal: Reformcu Bir Siyasetçi Hakkında Bazı Notlar”, *Muhafazakâr Düşünce Dergisi*, Yıl: 15, Sayı: 55, Eylül-Aralık 2018, s. 59.

oriented person. This particular trait of his personality met with his humble appearance as “one of us”.²⁵ He disliked procedures, and he was even restless at times.²⁶ He made himself quite clear when he observed: “I am a problem solver,”²⁷ which also suggested that under no circumstances did he want to be impeded by the particulars in the path that led to his objectives. Therefore, he “often considered jurisprudence as a detail that constantly got under his feet.”²⁸ Generally speaking, he never acted in a “partisan” way, and rather assumed almost always a rational manner. This, particularly, helped him earn the trust of a large majority of people, especially during his early years in power.²⁹ Therefore, his pragmatism was a most remarkable aspect of his leadership style.³⁰ Özal also knew how to make use of opportunities. Of course, his previous work experience in the private sector was also essential to his mental agility.³¹ For instance, he took advantage of the conditions of his time, or the conjuncture of events, and turned them into his favour while founding his political party. This, Özal himself described, with the following words: “I entered politics thanks to certain provisional clauses included in the Turkish constitution; if it weren’t for those, I wouldn’t be here.”³² The provisional clause that Özal referred to here was the one that introduced a political ban on the politicians who had been actively involved in politics before 12 September 1980. Therefore, his pragmatism (or utilitarianism) was evident in his first manoeuvre in politics. Just two days before the elections, Kenan Evren first criticised Özal and then canvassed for Turgut Sunalp (MDP), albeit indirectly, which he (Evren) also later admitted that he did. Turgut Özal kept his composure in the face of Evren’s propaganda, and avoided dispute over the issue with both Evren and the army.³³ Also in this parallel, right after their victory was announced on the day of the elections, which were held on 6 November 1983, Özal immediately warned party members

²⁵ H. Bahadır Türk, *Muktedir, Türk Sağ Geleneği ve Recep Tayyip Erdoğan*, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 2014, s. 128.

²⁶ Muhtittin Demiray, “Turgut Özal”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, C: 34, s. 105.

²⁷ Mehmet Barlas, *Turgut Özal’ın Anıları*, Sabah Kitapları, İstanbul 1994, s.

²⁸ Demirel, *a.g.m.*, s. 57.

²⁹ Ecem Kazu, *Algı Yönetimi Perspektifinden Siyasal İletişim ve Lider İlişkisi: Turgut Özal Dönemi Analizi (1983-1989)*, Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Kamu Yönetimi ve Siyaset Bilimi Anabilim Dalı, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gaziantep 2018, s. 156.

³⁰ Demir, *a.g.t.*, s. 94.

³¹ Veysel Bozkurt, “Geleceğin Toplumunu, Dönüşümcü Liderlik ve Turgut Özal”, *Kim Bu Özal? Siyaset, İktisat, Zihniyet*, Editörler: İhsan Sezal ve İhsan Dağı, Boyut Kitapları, İstanbul 2001, s. 182.

³² Cemal, *a.g.e.*, s. 12.

³³ Mehmet Ali Birand-Soner Yalçın, *The Özal Bir Davanın Öyküsü*, Doğan Kitap, 12. Baskı, İstanbul 2012, s. 189; Süleyman Aşık, *Türk Siyasî Tarihinde ANAP ve Turgut Özal*, Kopernik Kitap, İstanbul 2019, s. 76.

against rampant behaviour during celebrations, and asked them to avoid extremism as much as possible,³⁴ which he expressed in person.³⁵ Thus, at a time of unrest following the military intervention, Turgut Özal acted responsibly and sensibly enough to avoid any “accidental manoeuvres” at the beginning of his political life. Although the prudent attitude that Özal adopted was criticised in some political circles, it also provided him with ease and convenience while the whole country was recovering and returning gradually back to the civilian regime.³⁶ In this respect, owing to his pragmatist approach to politics, Özal, especially during his first years in power, did his best to avoid any conflict with the army and particularly President Kenan Evren, and thus, he initiated a period of political and social normalization in Turkey.³⁷ Nevertheless, the quick progress of the events that led to an early mayoral election in March 1984 along with the amendments made to the electoral system, which provided the winning party with more advantages –in line with his own interests- before the 1987 general elections, were also a consequence of Özal’s pragmatist attitude.

With his result-oriented attitude to politics, Turgut Özal displayed a similar pragmatist attitude in foreign politics as well. His particular approach to the relationship between Turkey and Greece, which are known to have had a long history of often problematic diplomatic relations, was just another instance of his pragmatism. In this regard, Özal said, *“It is true that there are many problems between Turkey and Greece. They are stubborn; what we call white they’ll call black. Therefore, we must act wisely and collaborate with them by doing joint moneymaking business. We should roll up our sleeves and get to work now.”*³⁸

When Özal’s pragmatist understanding of politics is approached from a different standpoint, he also emerges as an “inclusive” leader who brought together four distinct political views under his umbrella. He succeeded in getting conservative, nationalist, liberal, and social-democratic voters to vote for his party ANAP. The particular greeting that he used to greet people, which was basically joining his hands over his head, also had a similar message. Thus, it was not only voters from different ideological backgrounds that he brought together under his umbrella, but also party leaders from different ideological

³⁴ Birand- Yalçın, *a.g.e.*, s. 191.

³⁵ Barlas, *a.g.e.*, s. 54.

³⁶ Zeynep Çağlıyan İçener, “Türkiye’de Başkanlık Sistemi Tartışmalarının Yakın Tarihi: Özal ve Demirel’in Mülâhazaları”, *Bilig*, Güz 2015, Sayı: 75, s. 317.

³⁷ Ahmet Yıldız, “Liberalizm-Muhafazakârlık Sarkacında ‘İnformel Bir Demokrat: Turgut Özal’dan Kalan”, *Muhafazakâr Düşünce Dergisi*, Yıl: 15, Sayı: 55, Eylül-Aralık 2018, s. 43.

³⁸ Cemal, *a.g.e.*, s. 89.

backgrounds. Mehmet Keçeciler who was an important member of the party who came from the conversationalist wing of the parliament described the very situation as follows: *"We established the party with people who knew, loved, and had the potential to help Turgut Özal and Turkey."*³⁹ In other words, Özal's "inclusiveness" was *"another form of populism, and it was defined by his political pragmatism."*⁴⁰ When the names that Turgut Özal included in his working team are considered, it is clearly understood that the names he had chosen were the best names in their respective fields, rather than people representing a certain ideology. To give an example, Işın Çelebi, whose ideological background was significantly different from that of Turgut Özal's, was elected to the parliament as an ANAP member in 1987; later, he was appointed as Minister of State, upon which Özal expressed that he had insisted on transferring him to his party by saying, *"I don't care if one is Mao's son as long as he works. I need men who work."*⁴¹ This example is also in line with Turgut Özal's "pragmatist" attitude to politics rather than a reliance on principles that were "doctrinaire"⁴². In a speech in 1993, Özal expressed his own "inclusive" attitude to politics with the following words:

*"(...) Since the day I entered politics, I have always worked to unite people and things. Remember our greeting (joins hands above head). We have never discriminated between the rightist and the leftist. I said, 'Do not touch civil servants.' And all these that have been made possible in Turkey in the recent years have also brought us some relief. This relaxation is familiar to most people today. In other words, people are now free write to write whatever they want; all, a gift of this relaxed atmosphere. There are even those articles that you or others don't really like. However, if there is freedom of thought and opinion, then there must also be tolerance to freedom of expression. People can write on whatever topic they want now. These are all fruits of the previous period that we went through."*⁴³

Also, in his first speech as Prime Minister at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), Turgut Özal first described the economic scenery of the recent past, and then added that his statements were not meant as a criticism of past policies, but rather as a starting point to initiate a discussion of possible

³⁹ Uğur Güzel, *Özalçılık*, Emre Yayınları, İstanbul 2008, s. 502. Ancak, ileride görülecektir ki, siyasi şartların değişmesi sebebiyle dört eğilim anlayışı ANAP'ın gücünü kaybetmesinde en önemli etkenler arasında yer alacaktır.

⁴⁰ Yıldız, *a.g.m.*, s. 39.

⁴¹ Interview with Işın Çelebi (b. 1950) made on May 23, 2016.

⁴² Feride Acar, "Turgut Özal", *Türkiye'de Liderler ve Demokrasi*, Editörler: Metin Heper-Sabri Sayarı, Çeviri: Zuhâl Bilgin, Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul 2008, s. 191.

⁴³ *Cumhurbaşkanı Turgut Özal'ın Basınla Sohbet Toplantısı*, Ankara 1993, s. 28.

solutions.⁴⁴ Even during his first years in power, Özal always refrained from disparaging both the people and the ideologies that were associated with the 1980 Turkish coup d'état (the 12 September coup). Also, he typically used an inclusive language as a result of his four-view political umbrella. These also show how he acted in accordance with the conjuncture of events in his time.

2a. Özal as a Democratic/Anti-Democratic Leader and Özal, the Brave

Turgut Özal, who was actively involved in politics for only ten years, was also known for his libertarian moves which have left a mark not only on his times, but also on the times that succeeded. He played “*a critical role*” in the initiation of a more deep-seated democratic tradition in Turkey.⁴⁵ In this regard, it can be asserted that he also normalised the discussion of several taboo matters in Turkey. In fact, Özal knew no taboos.⁴⁶ He said: “*Taboos, or those untouchable matters, should be made available for discussion, slowly though. We have nothing to fear from discussing these.*”⁴⁷ The following expressions also demonstrate the importance that he attached to democratic/free thought: “*(...) We might not like an idea; however, even the refutation of such an idea requires that we discuss it in the idea market. Think of it as the free market. Just like the goods that come and go in the free market, ideas must also come and go in the idea market, so that we can find the best of them.*”⁴⁸ In addition to this, he was always at the center of discussions. Özal was also “*a transformational leader*” in that he dared try those things that previously were unimaginable. On the other hand, he was a leader who knew how to impress masses and when to take risks.⁴⁹ His statements and actions regarding the Southeast question (the Kurdish question) may also support this argument. He always approached the matter from the perspective of “*liberties.*”⁵⁰ According to Tanel Demirel, if it had not been for Özal’s “*brave moves*”, this question would not even have been opened up for discussion for long years.⁵¹ While he served as the President of Turkey, he often expressed that the Kurdish identity had to be recognised by the society.⁵² He also refuted the false belief that he was leaning toward the idea of a federal government by saying: “*We can*

⁴⁴ TBMM Tutanak Dergisi, 17, Cilt 1, Birleşim 10, s. 65.

⁴⁵ Acar, a.g.e., s. 204.

⁴⁶ Birand-Yalçın, a.g.e., s. 41.

⁴⁷ İzmirli, Gökbnar ve Özer, a.g.m., s. 248.

⁴⁸ Barlas, a.g.e., s. 316.

⁴⁹ Bozkurt, a.g.e., ss. 179, 195.

⁵⁰ Yıldız, a.g.m., s. 51.

⁵¹ Demirel, a.g.m., s. 64.

⁵² Büber ve Söğüt, a.g.m., s. 62.

discuss why a federal system won't solve our problems. If you put a ban on the matter and don't allow further discussion, then the federal system will always remain an option and a solution in some minds." He, however, also clearly expressed that the Republic of Turkey would never allow the establishment of a separate Kurdish state.⁵³ In addition to these, he always openly drew attention to the very existence of the Kurdish question, and uttered the word 'Kurdish' with unprecedented "*ease*." His moves regarding the lifting of the ban on the Kurdish language along with these may also be considered as the outcomes of Özal's libertarian leadership style. Özal's libertarian approach to the question was reinforced further when hundreds of people were killed in a terrorist attack during the 1992 Nowruz festival in Diyarbakır.⁵⁴ Moreover, the lifting of the ban on the Kurdish language – which was outlawed by the military government following the 1980 Turkish coup d'état – was another manifestation of Turgut Özal's democratic and libertarian attitude to most matters.⁵⁵ He said: "*There are no such bans in civilised countries! You cannot ban people from speaking their mother tongue.*" Ertuğrul Özkök, a journalist who also asserted that Turgut Özal assumed a pragmatist attitude towards the Kurdish question, expressed that Özal was always in favour of a peaceful settlement and wanted the matter to be handled in "*the most practical way possible.*"⁵⁶

On the other hand, his libertarian attitude to matters and his broad-minded perspective was always in support of freedom of thought, faith, and enterprise, which became his trademark traits as a leader.⁵⁷ Also serving as indications of his democratic and libertarian policies, Turgut Özal not only led the charge towards becoming a part of the UN Convention on the Prohibition of Torture in 1988, but also initiated the process through which Turkish citizens were recognized the right to individual application to the European Court of Human Rights and the compulsory jurisdiction of this court was authorised. The abolition of the Articles no. 141, 142, and 163 of Turkish Criminal Law can also be considered an illustration of Özal's upright understanding of democracy.⁵⁸

⁵³ Barlas, *a.g.e.*, ss. 149, 152.

⁵⁴ Fuat Uçar-Osman Akandere, "Turgut Özal'ın Kürt Sorununa Yaklaşımı", *Ankara Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, Sayı: 61, Güz 2017, ss. 376, 382.

⁵⁵ Barlas, *a.g.e.*, s. 148.

⁵⁶ Birand-Yalçın, *a.g.e.*, ss. 455-456, 477.

⁵⁷ Demiray, *a.g.m.*, s. 106.

⁵⁸ Keskin, *a.g.t.*, ss. 93, 101

His understanding of democracy was so specific and unique to himself that there were banners that read "Democratic President" during his funeral in İstanbul.⁵⁹

Turgut Özal was also a brave man. His high self-confidence was clear when he said "*We are not afraid of anyone..., and no concessions will be made to any group.*"⁶⁰ His attitude to foreign affairs may be particularly significant in this regard. His understanding of politics in this field is now considered a one "*that teaches others how to think big.*" He, however, also "*took risks when he had to*" in his foreign politics.⁶¹ He put in great effort to transform the "passive," "introverted," and "insecure" attitude of past governments in foreign politics.⁶² Özal advocated implementing assertive foreign policies regarding the safety and interests of Turkey especially in the Balkans, the Middle East, and Central Asia, with which geographical locations Turkey had a long-standing past.⁶³ Nevertheless, he also expressed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was "*conservative*" when it came to bureaucratic matters and that they would rather not take risks, following the example of İsmet İnönü.⁶⁴ In fact, Özal always disliked the hindrance of bureaucracy and often preferred to have a personal dialogue with involved parties in most instances.⁶⁵ This, however, has also been an aspect that was frowned upon not only by his own team, but also in certain other circles. Özal was at odds with his old team over foreign affairs, especially when he was President at the time of the ANAP government. To give an example, the particular attitude that Özal adopted towards the First Gulf War was one that completely disregarded the government's position on the matter.⁶⁶ Özal also believed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was running behind schedule with regard to the steps that were supposed to be taken at the face of war, and he refused to act in coordination with Foreign Secretary Ali Bozer, which eventually forced the latter's resignation from office.⁶⁷ It was again Özal's brave and active initiative on foreign affairs that caused a dispute with the

⁵⁹ *Milliyet*, 23 Nisan 1993, s. 10.

⁶⁰ Türk, *a.g.e.*, s. 134.

⁶¹ Pınar Özden Cankara-Yunus Emre Aysel, "Türkiye'de Siyasal Liberalizmin Nirengi Noktası: Turgut Özal ve Recep Tayyip Erdoğan'ın Hükümet Etme Yaklaşımlarının Karşılaştırmalı Analizi", *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Cilt: 8, Sayı: 41, Aralık 2015, s. 529.

⁶² Büber ve Söğüt, *a.g.m.*, s. 69.

⁶³ Demiray, *a.g.m.*, s. 106.

⁶⁴ Barlas, *a.g.e.*, s. 118.

⁶⁵ Lale Dünder, "Özal Dönemi Türk Dış Politikasında Turgut Özal'ın Kişisel Özelliklerinin Rolü", *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, S: 58, Bahar 2016, ss. 6-7.

⁶⁶ Cankara-Aysel, *a.g.m.*, s. 533.

⁶⁷ Engin Güner, *Özal'lı Yıllarım Başdanışman Engin Güner Anlatıyor*, Doğan Kitap'ta Genişletilmiş 1. Baskı, İstanbul 2014, ss. 121-122.

Commander of the Turkish Armed Forces General Necip Torumtay (four-star rank), who also later resigned from his office. Another example of Özal's brave moves in foreign affairs was his apology to Algeria. President Turgut Özal apologised to Algeria for Turkey's abstention in a 1958 United Nations (UN) meeting where the recognition of Algeria's independence was put to the vote.⁶⁸ This particular instance also validated how distant Özal was to an insecure attitude in his politics.

As a political leader, Turgut Özal assumed an increasingly civilian-friendly attitude throughout his years in power in a country where the army dominated civil-military relations. Özal, as the leader of the Motherland Party, which came to power alone right after a military coup, acted as gently and as sensibly as possible in accordance with the conjuncture of the events of his time. He even expressed that he found the idea of a "payoff" which the Demirel wing of the parliament held onto, to be incredibly dangerous.⁶⁹ Özal always acted quite perceptively with regard to matters concerning the former military government. When he appeared before Kenan Evren in 1983 to officially take over the duty of government formation, he suddenly hugged Evren during the greetings, which not only dissolved the tension and distance that had escalated in the pre-election period, but also conveyed the message that he meant to adopt a conciliatory attitude in the days to come.⁷⁰ Indeed, this gesture was "unprecedented" and never before seen in a state ceremony.⁷¹ As already mentioned above, throughout his years in power Özal also made moves that could have led to military intervention. In other words, he never refrained from taking risks when it came to "implementing the principle of civilian supremacy."⁷² The most significant instance occurred in 1987 when Özal appointed a completely unexpected Chief of Defence, which was shockingly against "military practices." Chief of Defence General Necdet Üruğ (four-star rank) had announced that he was to retire from office in June 1987 because his term of office was coming to an end. Chief of the Army General Necdet Öztoran was the anticipated name as his successor in accordance with "military practices and the order of precedence".⁷³ However, Özal expressed that this was not an ordinary

⁶⁸ *Milliyet*, 6 Şubat 1985, s. 6.

⁶⁹ Barlas, *a.g.e.*, ss. 35-36.

⁷⁰ Birand-Yalçın, *a.g.e.*, s. 200; Barlas, *a.g.e.*, s. 54; Yavuz Gökmen, *Özal Sendromu*, V Yayınları, 2. Baskı, Ankara 1992, s. 97.

⁷¹ Acar, *a.g.e.*, s. 192.

⁷² Demirel, *a.g.m.*, s. 64.

⁷³ Muammer Yaşar, "Üruğ Paşa'nın Örnek Kararı", *Yeni Asır*, 1 Aralık 1986, s. 6.

matter of successors and predecessors, and put forward that a civilian personage would be better for the position, especially with regard to the upcoming presidential election in 1989.⁷⁴ In his next briefing, he explained that General Necip Torumtay was appointed as the new Chief of the Army.⁷⁵ Öztoran's reaction to this decision was severe,⁷⁶ yet it did not produce any results. This step taken by Özal was a major blow to the military tutelage in Turkey.⁷⁷ The discussion that Özal initiated and led regarding the affiliation of the General Staff to the Ministry of National Defence was another indication of his democratic/civilian attitude.⁷⁸ Being "a president who performed the Friday prayer" was another courageous step that Özal took. He said, "*Secularism is not for individuals; it is for the state. I am a good Muslim.*"⁷⁹

National economy was another field in which Turgut Özal made considerably brave moves. Thanks to his previous work experience both in the State Planning Organisation and private sector, he spanned and even reversed the boundaries of state socialism and made significant economic reforms. When he came to power in 1983, he put many of his economic plans into practice. In other words, Özal "*always strived to make Turkey an economically competitive country in the global arena.*"⁸⁰ In his own words, he started a "transformation" in Turkey (please note here that the word he used was "transformasyon" derived from English rather than its Turkish equivalent). He also took important steps in the field of telecommunication. Moreover, free circulation of foreign currencies and Turkish lira's increasing convertibility rate were also some of his achievements.⁸¹

Despite all these democratic and brave ventures, however, some of Turgut Özal's actions and expressions in politics also took on an anti-democratic outlook from time to time. Although he contributed greatly to the balancing of civil-military relations after he entered politics at a time of military tutelage, some of his actions and attitudes towards his rivals and voters compelled others to think that he might not have really internalised democratic principles after all. One of the first cases that occurred in this parallel was the dispute over local

⁷⁴ Gökmen, *a.g.e.*, s. 133.

⁷⁵ *Yeni İstanbul*, 30 Haziran 1987, s. 1-7.

⁷⁶ *Halka ve Olaylara Tercüman*, 1 Temmuz 1987, s. 6.

⁷⁷ Âşık, *a.g.e.*, s. 172.

⁷⁸ Keskin, *a.g.t.*, s. 100.

⁷⁹ Büber ve Söğüt, *a.g.m.*, s. 82.

⁸⁰ Bozkurt, *a.g.e.*, ss. 185, 188.

⁸¹ Keskin, *a.g.t.*, s. 88.

elections in the first days of the ANAP government. The condition that a party, in order to participate in the elections, had to hold a congress in at least half of the cities in Turkey six months before the elections drew much reaction, especially from the opposition, and it was expressed that the way must be cleared for other political parties to participate in the elections. However, ANAP members of the parliament voted down the proposal. Turgut Özal played tough and questioned the reason why such parties had not already held their congresses despite their knowledge of the election law.⁸² This clause, however, was later abolished by the ANAP government, although it was a last-minute development. When he commented on this particular matter years later, Özal expressed that this was a last-minute announcement because it was feared that the opposition would react to such a "fait accompli."⁸³ He also admitted that the announcement of the election day as 25 March 1984 was his idea, for it would occupy the agenda at a time when non-parliamentary parties were vehemently discussing whether they could participate in the elections or not.⁸⁴ As a matter of fact, this attitude also was clearly not compatible with democratic practices at a time when a truly democratic system was in the very process of construction. This instance also reveals that Özal sometimes rather looked out for his own political interests.⁸⁵

Even more anti-democratic than this 1984 incident was the 1987 referendum on the abolition of restrictions. The post-coup military government banned most of the pre-coup politicians, a situation which became untenable especially after 1986. The True Path Party (DYP) wing in the parliament, who were merely a shadow of Süleyman Demirel, and their reactions were a source of pressure for both the ruling party and Özal himself. In this atmosphere, Turgut Özal said "*It was the people that imposed these bans; and they are also the ones to lift them,*"⁸⁶ implying that the nation was to decide whether to lift the bans or not. Here, he was pointing to the fact that it was the nation that approved of the 1982 constitution act in the concerned referendum. On the other hand, however, this did not mean that the nation really approved of these bans because not only was the political atmosphere at the time of the referendum tense, but also there were a number of clauses that were simultaneously put to the vote. Also, his

⁸² *Milliyet*, 4 Ocak 1984, s. 6.

⁸³ Barlas, *a.g.e.*, s. 69.

⁸⁴ Yavuz Donat, *Yavuz Donat'ın Vitrininden 3, Özal'lı Yıllar 1983-1987*, Bilgi Yayınevi, Ankara 1987, s. 70.

⁸⁵ Âşık, *a.g.e.*, s. 122.

⁸⁶ *Yeni Asır*, 15 Nisan 1987, s. 6.

statements such as “do not give another chance to what has already been tried,”⁸⁷ and “do not forget the days of anarchy when you were worried sick waiting for your husband, wife, or child,”⁸⁸ did not comply with democracy.

In a certain sense, Turgut Özal depended on the election results regarding his own political future, which also did not comply with democratic principles. Another instance occurred just before the 1988 referendum, which was going to be held to reset the elections to an earlier time at the request of the government party, when Özal said “I will leave both prime ministry and politics according to the results of this referendum.”⁸⁹ Indeed, this expression was a scathing warning to the voter. Mehmet Keçeciler also maintained that Özal had uttered these words upon understanding that the results of the referendum was not going to produce favourable results.⁹⁰

Another example could be his “now you have your water” which was followed by “and I have my votes”⁹¹ which he said in Gaziantep during the by-election in 1986. These expressions were just another instance of Özal’s anti-democratic behaviour, and it, again, did not comply with Özal’s understanding of democracy. Therefore, it can be concluded that he valued the political interests of himself and his party above service.⁹²

3a. Özal as an Authoritarian/Intrusive Leader

There are many leadership styles. One of them is autocratic (or authoritarian) leadership. Autocratic leaders usually take decisions on their own and expect to be acknowledged unequivocally. This type of leaders are usually smart and well-respected.⁹³ And they also display an “avuncular” image. Although they usually discuss matters with their teams, it is always them who have the last say. In this regard, Turgut Özal’s leadership style can be said to exhibit an avuncular type of authority.⁹⁴ Turgut Özal wanted to be or already was a leader who wanted to be at the head of the decision-making process, which was, in fact, an attempt to practice “bossism”, which was another

⁸⁷ Orhan Tokatlı, *Kırmızı Plakalar Türkiye’nin Özal’lı Yılları*, Doğan Kitap, İstanbul 1999, s. 66.

⁸⁸ *Cumhuriyet*, 2 Eylül 1987, s. 6.

⁸⁹ *Güneş*, 19 Eylül 1988, s. 11; *Milliyet*, 19 Eylül 1988, s. 1; *Türkiye*, 19 Eylül 1988, s. 9.

⁹⁰ Interview with Mehmet Keçeciler (b. 1944) made on November 24, 2016.

⁹¹ *Hürriyet*, 22 Eylül 1986, s. 17.

⁹² Âşık, a.g.e., s. 148.

⁹³ Demir- Yılmaz- Çevirgen, a.g.m., s. 138.

⁹⁴ Keskin, a.g.t., ss. 10, 81.

manifestation of his authoritarian disposition. According to Gökmen, Özal “never liked stipulations” and wanted his team to “yield” to his wishes.⁹⁵ To give an example, during the foundation phase of his party, Özal talked to Rasim Cinisli, a nationalist-conservative politician, and said: “*Rasim, you are the one who knows most about politics and party business in my team. There will be only one person, and that will be me.*”⁹⁶ These expressions clearly demonstrate Özal’s autocratic leadership. The law on political parties was legislated by the military government and vested the leader in power with broad authority, which became a decisive factor in the 1983 general elections.⁹⁷

Another instance that illustrates Turgut Özal’s autocratic aspect can be observed in his attitude to ministerial appointments. He never held interviews with people whom he considered for appointment.⁹⁸ An extreme example was his appointment of Yıldırım Akbulut as the Chairperson of Parliament right after Özal was elected president in 1989. Indeed, Akbulut was informed of his appointment “*abruptly*” on November 9, the day Özal became President.⁹⁹ It can be inferred from this particular instance that Özal kept his opinions solely to himself and made most of his decisions in line with his own criteria. On the other hand, according to Acar, Turgut Özal was “*an ‘authoritarian’ politician who saw no harm in by-passing democratic principles at times and wanted his wishes to be fulfilled at all costs*”¹⁰⁰.

Although the extent of his authority was circumscribed when he was with ANAP, especially after 1987, he became even more authoritarian and intrusive during his time as President after the ban on the previous leaders was lifted and national economy fell into decline. There were many other instances which may also illustrate Özal’s autocratic style, and one case occurred during the First Extraordinary Congress of ANAP. Özal, who, very unexpectedly, had appointed Yıldırım Akbulut as Prime Minister, dominated the pre-election period as well. Hasan Celal Güzel, who was a presidential candidate at the time, also reported that Özal had uttered words that seemingly aimed to encourage him to withdraw his candidature, although he had no intention to back down.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Yavuz Gökmen, “Değişim Rüzgârları Eserken”, *Bütün Yönleriyle Özal ve Dönemi 1983-1993*, Yay. Haz.: Oya Ayman Büber, Mine Söğüt, Tempo Kitapları-2, İstanbul 1993, s. 43.

⁹⁶ Rasim Cinisli, *Bir Devrin Hafızası*, Doğan Kitap, İstanbul 2017, s. 442.

⁹⁷ Güven, *a.g.m.*, s. 101.

⁹⁸ Acar, *a.g.e.*, s. 194.

⁹⁹ Özdemir, *a.g.e.*, s. 280.

¹⁰⁰ Acar, *a.g.e.*, s. 205.

¹⁰¹ *Günaydın*, 5 Kasım 1989, s. 7.

Later, Özal said, *"I had told them not to hurry. Now, things are at the discretion of the provincial chairmen and the congress of the Motherland Party"*¹⁰².

Özal's time as President specifically demonstrated how he assumed that he "had a right" to interfere in the decisions and actions of his party. In other words, he always considered himself as "the natural leader" of ANAP and went on to make "steering statements".¹⁰³ In this parallel, during the first days of his presidency, Özal said, *"I am not carrying ANAP's logo on me anymore; well, if this is what neutrality is –not wearing the ANAP tiepin and all – then I'm not wearing it. But, surely, I can't change my opinions. I also have opinions concerning economy, and I will always express them,"*¹⁰⁴ which was an indication that he was going to be a partial president and go on to interfere in his previous party's affairs. It is also known that during his presidency, Özal always invited the ministers to his office to give them orders and instruction.¹⁰⁵ What is more, when ANAP was later overthrown, Özal went on to steer and interfere in the actions of the succeeding government. In a speech in 1993, he said:

*"(...) A president does not simply or automatically approves of whatever is brought before him. A president is someone who is responsible for impeding decrees which he finds unlawful, inappropriate, partisan and not signing them if he thinks such decrees have the potential to harm the political and social balance."*¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

Turgut Özal has been one of the multidimensional and influential leaders in the history of Turkish politics. His understanding of politics has been widely researched and discussed both during his lifetime and after his death. Much has been said and written on his "clichéd judgements."¹⁰⁷ Özal, who held an important position on the bureaucratic ladder before the 1980 Turkish coup d'état, became more popular in public opinion especially with the 24 January decisions which he had proposed. After the coup, he situated himself in the center of economic affairs at the request of the military government and ensured that the decisions were appropriately implemented. Turgut Özal became more and more popular

¹⁰² *Cumhuriyet*, 2 Kasım 1989, s. 12.

¹⁰³ Büber ve Söğüt, *a.g.m.*, s. 61.

¹⁰⁴ *Nokta*, 17 Aralık 1989, Sayı: 49, s. 20.

¹⁰⁵ Gökmen, *a.g.m.*, s. 19.

¹⁰⁶ *Cumhurbaşkanı Turgut Özal'ın Basınla Sohbet Toplantısı*, Ankara 1993, s. 15.

¹⁰⁷ Demirel, *a.g.m.*, s. 58.

in public opinion in this period, and he became the founding leader of the Motherland Party (ANAP) in 1983 after he seized the opportunity that was permitted by the conjuncture of the events of his time. He left his mark on Turkish politics during his ten years in politics until his passing. His period has been called "Özal years." With his unusual personality and political attitude, he held a "different" position in the history of Turkish politics. As a leader, he was able to influence masses. He opened taboo matters up for discussion. In his own words, he initiated the "transformation" in Turkey. The pros and cons of his politics are still widely discussed today.

Thanks to his versatility as a leader, Turgut Özal is a politician who can be investigated in many different ways. In fact, he is impossible to categorise. However, sometimes, some of his character traits were seen to overshadow his political attitude. In this regard, his pragmatist and result-oriented approach to matters also led to his disregard for customary practices, which has been one of the most criticised aspects of his leadership. Also, he looked after his and his party's interests, which can be an indication that his pragmatism was a self-made one in a certain sense. On the other hand, however, when he first came to power at such a delicate time in Turkish history (1983-1987), he deeply felt the influence of military tutelage, and thus mostly acted prudently in order not to dislocate fault lines. And this surely has been an important step in the post-coup normalisation process in Turkey.

Turgut Özal was a truly original politician, although he, from time to time, displayed conflicting actions and statements. While, on the one hand, he put important social and economic decisions into practice as Turkey was quickly recovering and returning to civilian life after the coup, he also displayed certain anti-democratic behaviours. Especially when he defended the political bans that had been introduced by the military government, he also conflicted with his own formulation of the rights to freedom of religion, conscience, thought, and enterprise. His attitude to the Southeast (or Kurdish) Question, however, was that of a daring and fearless politician. Likewise, his practices, which gradually weakened the military tutelage, were important contributions to Turkish democracy. In fact, after he passed in 1993, the civil-military relations became unbalanced again,¹⁰⁸ which also demonstrated the significance of Özal's reforms to the political system.

¹⁰⁸ Demirel, *a.g.m.*, s. 72.

On the other hand, however, he always wanted to be at the very centre of administration, and even had disputes with his own party since he desired to keep the leading position in Turkish politics. This state of conflict escalated even more during his time as President. Despite the fact that he was working with Prime Minister Yıldırım Akbulut, whom he himself had appointed, he had several disputes with the government between 1989 and 1991. He also did not hesitate to express his discontent with certain ministers. These altogether also validate the fact that Özal behaved high-handedly toward the members of his previous party, although he did not have an official link to it whatsoever. This was also a manifestation of Özal's dream of a presidential government.

In conclusion, Turgut Özal left a lasting impression on Turkish politics, and is still researched and discussed. His unprecedented political style is now known as "Özalism" in Turkey. With his pluses and minuses, Özal was a leader who initiated the transformation in Turkey, and, surely, he will remain an unforgettable and a much-debated one.

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