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Intra-party education and its impact on democracy

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Abstract

This paper scrutinizes the intra-party education of the political parties that hold a parliamentary group in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. These parties are the governing party Justice and Development Party (JDP), the major opposition party Republican Peoples Party (RPP), the ultra-nationalist party Nationalist Action Party (NAP) and the Kurdish Movement-Sympathetic/Corroborator Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). Drawing on a critical interpretative analysis of regulations, by-Laws and curriculum, it conveys the impact of intra-party education to democracy. By attempting to position the parties within Duverger's political party system, it speculates on whether the political parties attitude in the organization, recruitment and content of the education programs reflect their attitude on democracy. It is argued that ideologically loaded parties may display democratic attitudes within the party whereas this attitude may not be found in the broader spectrum of Turkish political life as ideology curbs the latitude of constituency.

Keywords: Political party; education; democracy; party school

1. Introduction

Political parties inherently aim at mobilizing and getting a grip on people around political ideologies. Party programs, statutes, leaders, administration, parliamentary candidates and candidate mayors are the channels of influence during the election times. The foremost goal is seizure of power. Political parties tend to concentrate on the candidates in the local elections whereas they head for a leader-oriented propaganda in general elections. As it is exemplified in Turkish politics at certain periods, specifically leadership-centered parties lose political influence in case of fall back of the leader. On the contrary, communities based on robust ideological grounds can render long-term devotedness. It is argued that a political formation that can pursue a rational, planned, longitude ideological education free of deductions may increase its advocates and constituent body.

The contribution of providing a well-planned ideological education to democracy is substantial. As the fact that ideological education ought to be planned and rational, the mass that will receive this education and staff that will provide it are significant determinants of the outputs of ideological education. This study evaluates the quality of education provided at party institutes, the background of the instructors and target groups of the political parties which currently hold a parliamentary group in Turkish Grand National Assembly.

1.1 Education and planning

Education is generally a process of transforming behaviors of individuals; an individual experiencing a process of education is expected to change his behavior. It is through education that persons' goals, knowledge, behaviors, attitudes and moral criteria are altered (Demirel, 2007:6). Education that plans to transform the behavior of individuals ought to be well-planned and rational. The concept of planning is "to establish how the teaching activities will be operated in the most rational and systematic manner" (Demirel, 2007: 11). Here, plan refers to presetting of which teaching techniques will be chosen, how these techniques will be applied and how primary and secondary sources will be employed. This issue refers to the role of the instructor. The nomination

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of the instructor is the first stage of planning. One of the significant conditions for an efficient and effective education is the instructor's experience in his field. Along with the instructor, the attribution of the target audience, their age intervals and environment are significant determinants of education planning. The planner is supposed to prepare content that appeal to all, in case the receivers of education come from different occupational group and educational level.

1.2. Education at political parties

The word political comes from the "polis" city and party means a part of a group, a group of people and is taken from French (Gökçe, 2013: 15). There are contesting definitions of political parties but they all agree on that political parties seek to come to power. The controversy is around the method they utilize to come to power. Heywood describes political parties as the organization of a group of people around a political purpose and argues that they may choose elections or any other methods to realize this purpose (Heywood, 2007: 356). Conversely, Tunaya defines political parties as organizations launched by a group of people to realize a particular program that they gather around, through elections. Hence, democratic methods are emphasized as the single way of struggle for power (Tunaya, 1975: 354). For Kapani, political parties are permanent formations gathered around a particular program to come to power or share power (Kapani, 2008: 176). Emphasizing on the organizational structure, Kapani differentiates political parties from other formations in terms of their organizing countrywide and rendering continuity.

In all these definitions, political struggle between parties requires the inclusion of voters, supporters, militants and members (Duverger, 1986: 38, 39). These four elements refer to Duverger's typologies and each has a particular significance within the political struggle. Supporters, members and militants work for political parties by participating their meetings, paying affiliation fees, and spreading their program and ideology in order to recruit more members and expand the party base. Then, what is the level of knowledge of these other components that are to spread the ideology and program of the party among people and drag them to the party. This is the collateral question tackled in this study. As the purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of political party education on democracy, the following questions will be investigated: How inclusive is education at political parties? Is education at political parties competent in terms of planning? What does the level of inclusiveness of education at political parties tell about their position at political party system conceptualized by Duverger? In this regard, a critical interpretative analysis of regulations, by-laws and curriculum of the political parties which currently hold a parliamentary group at Turkish Grand National Assembly will be undertaken. These parties are the governing party Justice and Development Party (JDP), the major opposition party Republican Peoples Party (RPP), the ultra-nationalist party Nationalist Action Party (NAP) and the Kurdish Movement-Sympathetic/Corroborator Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). According to Duverger's conceptualization of political party system, historically speaking, political parties can be categorized as mass parties or cadre parties. Cadre parties are established internally and they are organized through caucuses. Their constituency organizations disintegrate in between elections. The quality rather than the quality of party members is taken into account; therefore the members of these parties are "elites." More significantly, these parties are less ideological. Cadre parties historically correspond to liberal and conservative parties. On the contrary, mass parties refer to leftist parties historically and these are more ideological. These parties focus on the quantity of membership; aim at recruiting more and more people to the party base. Unlike cadre parties, they are externally established and they have permanent constituencies that do not disappear in between elections. A third category is added to this classification, namely devotee parties. Although devotee parties may be considered as mass parties, sharing more common grounds with mass parties than cadre parties, they are hybrid for certain reasons. In terms of member recruitment, they aim at mobilizing more and more, so they show the characteristics of mass parties. Nevertheless, the preservation of the purity of the party is sine quo non. Compared to caucuses, their organizational structure is more open, however, they are not as open as mass parties.

Education at political parties of JDP, RPP, NAP and PDP gives particular clues about the organizational structure and recruitment process of these parties. The content of education that they carry out also refers to their ideological preferences. Even the latitude of the topics covered in party trainings reveals to what extent a political party is ideological and hence a mass party. The extent of how much a political party can be considered ideological, yet, does not manifest its impact on democracy. In other words, a political party's being ideological means neither it is a more democratic party, nor vice versa. However, how education at political parties is organized renders their democratic tendency. In other words, the involvement of the grassroots in party education depicts features of participatory democracy. In search for these questions the organization, content and accomplishments of political parties will be scrutinized in this study.

1.2.1. Education at the Justice and Development Party (JDP)

The Justice and Development Party aim at institutionalizing trainings envisaging a coordinated study. The know-how is stated in the Party By-laws on Organization (Teşkilat İç Yönetmeliği, 2012: 180, Md 4.11). Party education is carried out by a unit called "Politics Academy." Initially, the practices of politics academy were

conducted by provincial presidencies of Ankara and İstanbul. Since 2008, it is conducted by each demanding province or district coordinated with the headquarters. In this sense, the organization structure is less centralized, which may be interpreted as a step for a more democratic restructuring.

The programs of Politics Academy were conducted in 76 provinces and 35 districts so far, and reached 70.000 people at the end of 15 semesters. These semesters were opened with the titles "Municipal Government, General Politics, Democracy, International Relations and Economy, Law, Democratization, Leader Country: Turkey" (Siyaset Akademisi, 2014). Politics academy intended to increase the quality and credibility of the party cadre, and also develop contact with people with various kinds of opinions and backgrounds (Siyaset Akademisi, 2014). In the course of politics academy, the instructors specialized on their fields are nominated by the headquarters in order to conduct education activities in provinces and districts. The publications related to the program covered are also prepared by experts (Siyaset Akademisi, 2014). Here is a selection of these publications: Textbook for Municipal Administration (2008, 2009), Textbook for Personal Development (2008, 2009), Lecture Notes on General Politics (Haziran- Kasım 2009), Lecture Notes on Leader Country Turkey (2012). The latest publication Lecture Notes on Leader Country Turkey included topics such as democracy and democratization, global system, localization dynamics and local democracy, local administration, economy, constitution and election manifests.

Within Politics Academy, a program called "Parliamentary Consultants Academy" was set out in order to increase knowledge and experience of the deputy consultants, especially to make up for the shortfall of the beginning consultants for a more professional consultation. The instructions and a brief of local and international agenda that deputy consultants need are provided by ministers, party administration and academicians. The program focused on law, constitution, economy, communication, protocol rules, correspondences and personal development (Siyaset Akademisi, 2014).

The Justice and Development Party identify itself as a conservative democrat party. Although some argue for its continuity with the National Outlook Movement-which claims that it represents truth, has, and calls for a synthesis of the morals of Islam with only technological and material progress of the Western world for a splendid Turkey as opposed to satellite Turkey- the party leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared that he took off the National Outlook Movement shirt. Taking into consideration the National Outlook Movement's stance towards ideologies that is objection to all –isms, the JDP may be regarded as a non-ideological party. However, it depends whether one evaluates political Islam as an ideology or not. So, leaving aside the ideological stance of the JDP, and focusing on the latitude of the subjects covered in education programs and the audience of education programs, it can be concluded that the JDP seems to be extrovert and expansionist, which aims t mobilizing more and more people by embracing a "democratic" discourse. In the light of this identification, the JDP shows the characteristics of mass party. However, from the point of view of those who argue that the JDP adheres to Political Islam tightly even though its recruitment policy is expansionist, it can be regarded as a hybrid party which does not compromise in terms of the purity of the movement for the sake of dissemination to the masses.

1.2.2.. Education at the Republican People's Party (RPP)

The purpose of intra party education in the Republican People's Party is "*to make the party ideology, purpose and principles, politics, political and social goals comprehensible to all party members, to inform them about party action, organizational structure, program and by-laws, and to increase knowledge and sensitivity for social and political issues among the members and executives from all ranks*" (CHP, 2012: 14).

The statutory basis of intra party education is Article 83 of CHP Regulation which was revised on February 26, 2012 through an extraordinary general assembly. Intra-party education was formulated through "Regulation on Intra-Party Education" which was prepared and ratified by the party assembly in a meeting on June 8, 2012 (CHP, 2012: 16). Participation and enjoyment of intra-party education is prerequisite to ascend. Intra-party is programmed at the levels of principal office, province and districts whereas the topics and curriculum are established in the headquarters (CHP, 2012: 17-18). "Party School" is entrusted with training instructors for delivering lectures in the provinces and districts, and prescribing the content of instructions and make plans for these activities (CHP, 2012: 21).

Intra party education is conducted by instructors called "party instructors" who are trained at instructor training program planned by the headquarters. Education is carried out through the programs held at the headquarters party school, programs resumed in the districts, programs carried out by municipal and county commissions, plus distance-learning methods using communication technologies (CHP, 2012: 25-26). 6 types of education program are organized by CHP: training for instructors, basic political education of members, education of candidates, of party administration and local administration, education for returning office and special trainings. (CHP, 2012: 30-34). Basic political education held by instructors involves issues such as "History of CHP," "CHP By-laws," "CHP Program," "Social Democracy," "Gender Equality," "Human Rights," "Communication and Public Relations," and "Social Project Management." Candidate trainings and education for party administration and local administration are held at the headquarters (CHP, 2012: 30-34).

Since 2011, 44 education programs are organized in various provinces and centers by Party School and education unit (CHP Eğitim, 2014). The resources used for these program are "To be a Good Politician" (a

translated book," "Organization of Polling Clerk for Elections" and another book prepared by the headquarters "Republic from Foundation to Tomorrow" which covers the speeches made at a seminar organized on October 28, 2011 (CHP Kaynakça, 2014).

As education at the RPP is programmed at principal office, province and districts, the organizational structure seems to provide a democratic form. However, the content of education is prepared at the headquarters and this manifests the relatively strict ideological stance of the party. The organization of education at the RPP is quite rigorously integrated, as it conveys the training for instructors, basic political education of members, education of candidates, of party administration and local administration, education for returning officers and special trainings. The emphasis on the program of the party and its history indicates that the RPP is more ideologically organized introvert party. Besides, the topics covered in intra-party education such as Social Democracy clearly expresses the social democratic frame of the party. Than mobilizing more and more people, the RPP aims at helping its constituency become inured to its ideology and history. The history of the RPP, as the founding party of the Turkish Republic provides the backbone of party ideology which may evolve at different periods but always encounters the "reminders", namely the Six Arrow; republicanism, statism, secularism, populism, reformism and nationalism. Besides, founded by the state elite and its historical attachment with them creates a perception that membership at the RPP is based on quality. In this sense, the RPP may be considered as a cadre party.

1.2.3. Education at the Nationalist Action Party (NAP)

Political education in the National Movement Party is conducted through "Politics and Leadership School" opened at the headquarters. The foundation basis and its organizational ties are regulated with the Articles 16 and 48 of the party by-law (MHP Tüzüğü, 2009, Md. 16, 48). The purpose of the politics and leadership school is, within the framework of MHP, to ensure the training of young, honest, and scrupulous politicians internalizing national and moral values, who will shape the future of the country (MHP, 2014).

The education duration at politics and leadership school is 12 weeks. Topics covered are "Organization and Propaganda," "Turkey-EU Relations," "Efficient Communication," "Politics and Media," "Constitution," "The Art of Public Speaking," "History of Turkish Republic," "Comparative State and Political Systems," "Political Parties and Election," "Turkish and Global Economy," "International Relations and Turkey," "Turkish Political Life," "Strategy Method," "Leadership," and "State, Society and Citizenship in Turkey." The courses are held by academics specialized on their field. (MHP, 2014).

The admission requirements for the Nationalist Action Party Politics and Leadership School are to hold a university degree, to be 25-40 year-old and to provide three recommendation letters. The main objective of education at the NAP is to raise future leaders for the party. This may lead us to conclude that the content of education should necessarily be highly ideologically loaded, yet, that is not the case. The subjects covered in education programs are quite volume, ranging from theoretical-intellectual issues to more policy-oriented issues such as Turkey-EU Relations. However, that the admission to education program requires three recommendation letters indicates that organizationally the NAP wills for an introvert structure. Taking into account only the organizational structure of education at the NAP may indicate that it can be regarded as an elite party. Nevertheless, this issue should be assessed with the allies of the party, Ulku Ocakları, the youth organization. In the light of this clarification, it can be concluded that despite the elite organization of the party education, the NAP represents caucuses formation. Including the robustly ideological stance (See., Landau 1982) of the party to the analysis, it can be deduced that the NAP represents the characteristics of cadre party.

1.2..4. Education at the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP)

The purpose of the Peace and Democracy Party Politics Academy is to train administrators and members within the framework of party ideology and program and to socialize these values in question (Siyaset Okulu Yönetmeliği, 2014: Md.2).

The headquarters education practices are decided, planned and organized collectively with "the headquarters education committee" under the chairmanship of the Vice President responsible for education (Siyaset Okulu Yönetmeliği, 2014: Md.1). The training of the prospective members of party assembly or administration is provided by the headquarters.

Intra party education is compulsory for all members plus every cadre of the administration. The main center of education is set as politics school. In the case of insufficient material and technical conditions, education may be held in provinces and districts as well. Participation in the politics academy opened in the municipalities is free. Besides, recommendation is not considered as prerequisite and university students are regarded as a target audience. Yet, the person who wants attends this school ought to be known by other party members. For education organized by provincial units, instructors are trained in accordance with the party by-laws and ideology. For education held in the headquarters or provinces coordinated by the headquarters, academics specialized on history, Middle East and ecology are invited.

Along with education organized in western cities such as İstanbul, Ankara, Mersin, education in eastern cities such as Diyarbakır, Van, Mardin, Şanlıurfa and Batman is held as well (Siyaset Okulu Yönetmeliği, 2014: Md.4). The works of local and international authors on "Women, Enlightenment, Anarchism, Modernity, Democracy, Confederation, Religion, Quantum, Ideology, Politics and Art" and also lectures edited by academy are used for intra party education.

One striking planks of the PDP is that intra-party education is compulsory for all members and ranks of the party, which shows that the party aims at a tightly knitted organization. Another substantial feature of its organization is that the headquarters education practices are decided, planned and organized *collectively* with "the headquarters education committee" under the chairmanship of the Vice President responsible for education. The emphasis on collectivity refers to the party's stress on democratic participation. Nevertheless, admission to intra-party education programs requires certain conditions; the person who wants attends this school ought to be known by other party members. This requirement connotes the PDP's reservation due to the presence of police detectives. This reservation brings along certain deficits to democratization will of the party as it keeps the number and background of the audience limited to party constituency and closed to potential electorates. In terms of ideology, whether the PDP embraces the masses due to its focus on human rights and democracy or it is a highly ideological party has been subject to much debate in Turkish political life. For this reason, when the first group's argumentation is taken into account and the PDP is regarded as a less ideological party, it can be concluded that it represents partly a cadre party due to its ideological character and also internally organized structure. If the PDP is considered as a vastly ideological party, it can be assessed as a mass due its highly ideological stance.

2. Conclusion

Intra party education has a significant influence on the both education of party administration and party members in accordance with party program and ideology. A party base and administrative cadre passing through intra party education would contribute to democratization of political culture as well. Political education acquired on the street will be shaped by ungrounded opinions and nonacademic knowledge and hence would contribute to confrontational political culture. Education provided by political parties will help political culture be shaped by systematic knowledge and render prospective politicians adopt this perspective.

The intra party education systems of political parties that hold a parliamentary group in Turkish Grand National Assembly bear resemblance to a great extent despite some minor differences. Although the Republican People's Party and the Peace and Democracy Party organize the provincial education through the instructors trained at the headquarters, the Justice and Development Party benefits from academics expertise on their own fields. The Nationalist Action Party organizes intra party education at the headquarters. The lectures at the headquarters are held by academicians. The RPP and PDP benefit from academicians for education held at the headquarters. The intra party education of PDP organized at the municipalities focuses on party by-laws and ideology and also held by academicians specialized on democratic politics, history, Middle Eastern politics.

The Justice and Development Party do not require recommendation for participation to lectures, and do not have a particular target audience. Whoever wishes to participate is allowed in. The target audience of the Republican People's Party is party administration, members and prospective administrators and functionaries. There is no restriction for participation to lectures. The purpose of the Nationalist Action Party's intra party education is to raise young politicians and it requires a certain age, education and also recommendation. The target audience of the Peoples' Democracy Party is university students. Although the party does not require reference, the person who wants to participate need to be known in the locale. All parties have a preparation of resources, some focus on party program and ideology, some benefit from experts on the issues of democracy, public relations and communication, and constitution. Differently, the Republican People's Party has training programs for polling clerks as well. In this sense, the organization of intra-party trainings at the RPP is thoroughly structured.

In conclusion, whether strictly ideology bounded intra-party education stays outside of the scope of this research. Nevertheless, how the lectures are prepared and how much inclusive intra-party education seeks to be may provide certain patterns of democracy for us to interpret. In the light of these questions, education at the JDP is considerably inclusive, aiming at expanding the party base, embracing masses. In this manner the JDP can be categorized a catch-all mass party, in spite of the fact that there have been a proliferated debate whether the party has preserves its ties with Political Islam tradition or reflects a continuity with center-right tradition of Turkish politics (See., Hale&Ozbudun 2009, Dagi 2008). The RPP has a well-organized education program and as the founding party of the Turkish Republic, its historical baggage- Six Arrows- comes along with the party as the check point over against radical changes. For this reason, it is defined as highly ideological by some scholars. For exactly the same reason, some scholars regard Kemalism as the only ideology of the RPP, if that is an ideology at all (See., Karal 1981, Parla 2004). As to the inclusiveness of intra-party education, what has been found demonstrates that it is not as extrovert, and is rather organized for party members and cadres, yet, in a democratic manner. The NAP does not seek extension of education to its all ranks, leave aside potential party constituencies. The major and single purpose of intra-party education seems to be to lift up equipped future leaders. In this sense, it is difficult to say something on the impact of intra-party education on democracy in the

case of the NAP. As to Duverger's party system, the NAP can be considered as a cadre party, if its focus on leadership leads us to conclude that it is an elite party. Nevertheless, the infamous youth organizations of the party and its radical ideological stance clearly make it a mass party. The PDP organizes the intra-party education program in a very democratic manner. Its emphasis on participatory democracy is remarkable. Nevertheless, the requirements for the admission to the education programs curb its inclusiveness and curtail the potential constituency of the party. In the broader spectrum, yet, the party can be considered as a mass party of a certain segment, due to its stress on Kurdish identity. In short, it has been found that ideologically loaded parties display democratic attitudes within the party whereas this attitude may not be found in the broader spectrum of Turkish political life.

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