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Political Apathy: An Evaluation in the Context of the 1982 Constitution and the 1983 General Elections[1]

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Abstract The aim of this study is to analyze whether the 1980 coup d'état moved the Turkish public away from politics in Turkey. The hypotheses of the study can be listed as follows: "The activities of those who made the 1980 coup d'état aimed at distancing the people from politics were reflected in the 1983 general elections", "The 1982 Constitution contains provisions aimed at distancing citizens from participating in politics" and "The political parties participating in the 1983 general elections have similar policies". Qualitative content analysis and questionnaire study were used to test the hypotheses of the research. Within the scope of qualitative content analysis method, the election declarations and programmes of the three parties that participated in the 1983 general election were coded and analyzed in MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024. The data obtained from the qualitative content analysis were then tested through a questionnaire survey. As a result, it can be said that the hypotheses of the study have been confirmed due to both the provisions in the constitution that restrict citizens' participation in politics and the restrictions on the right to elect and be elected that arise as a result of the participation of only permitted parties in elections.

Keywords Political Apathy · 1980 Coup · 1982 Constitution · 1983 General Elections

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Political Apathy: An Evaluation in the Context of the 1982 Constitution and the 1983 General Elections[2]

On September 12, 1980, the Turkish Armed Forces seized power and the Turkish Grand National Assembly was dissolved. The National Security Council (NSC), formed after the coup, carried out legislative and executive activities until 1983. All political parties were dissolved by the NSC in 1981, and their assets were transferred to state treasury (Akşin, 2007: 275). The NSC gave itself almost unlimited freedom to do whatever it deemed necessary to restore law and order and to restore state authority and prestige (Karpat, 2017: 301).

The declared aim of the military administration, by themselves, was to end the anarchy that existed before September 12. In their opinion, the source of anarchy was the excessive freedoms provided by the 1961 Constitution. A period of disciplined democracy had to begin with a new constitution. In this context, the Constituent Assembly was formed to prepare the new constitution. While the new constitution strengthened the executive branch on the one hand, it imposed restrictions on rights and freedoms on the other (Akşin, 2007: 276). The NSC adopted the draft constitution prepared by the Constituent Assembly with significant changes. Discussion of the constitution before the referendum was prohibited. Moreover, it was not clear what would happen if the constitution was rejected. In the referendum held under these conditions, the new constitution was accepted with 91.4 percent of the votes (Erdoğan, 2001: 119-120). The bicameral structure implemented since 1961 was abolished, and the 1982 Constitution established a unicameral parliamentary system. The number of parliamentarians was set at 400, and the election period was extended to 5 years (Sezen, 1994: 264). Political parties, which are one of the important instruments in the exercise of the right to vote and be elected, were regulated in detail in the 1982 Constitution and were subject to some important restrictions compared to the 1961 Constitution (Gözübüyük, 1999: 169). The 1982 Constitution weakened the constitutional guarantees of freedoms, which are both a guarantee of civil society's autonomy and a basis for public debate and political participation (Erdoğan, 2001: 148). The 1982 Constitution tended toward an authoritarian understanding of the state and established a less participatory model of democracy (Sabuncu: 2002: 3).

On April 24, 1983, after the adoption of the 1982 Constitution, the prohibitions on political parties were lifted; however, restrictions were imposed on the leaders of pre-1980 political parties. Some of the newly established parties during this period were closed down because they were similar to the AP or CHP. As a result, only three parties (Nationalist Democracy Party (NDP), Populist Party (PP), and Motherland Party (MP)) that could be considered close to the military government were allowed to participate in the 1983 general elections (Akşin, 2007: 280-281).

This study aims to examine whether the 1980 coup d'état has alienated the Turkish public from politics in Turkey. In the literature, there are many studies analyzing the effects of the 1982 Constitution on freedoms and prohibitions on political participation. However, we have not encountered any study analyzing the first general election held in the post-coup period under the 1982 Constitution in this context. Therefore, the concept of political apathy is analyzed with the example of the 1982 Constitution and the 1983 general elections.

[2]This work was supported by Trakya University under the scientific research project numbered 2022/105.

The work plan is designed as follows: Firstly, the concept of political apathy is explained. Then, information about the methodology of the study is provided. The effects of the 1982 Constitution on political participation are discussed. Within the scope of the concepts of democracy and political participation, 1983 elections were evaluated in general. Then, the election declarations and programmes of the parties participating in the 1983 general election were compared in terms of similarities. Lastly, the findings of the survey conducted within the scope of the study are explained, and the results obtained are presented.

Political Apathy

Political apathy refers to citizens' indifference toward their attitudes toward political activities, such as elections, public opinion, and civic responsibilities. An apathetic person is not interested in the social and political issues of their country (Yakubu, 2012: 39). Political apathy does not merely mean not-voting in elections. When analyzing political factors and elements that simulate political apathy, the issue of discouraging people from political participation should be taken into account, as well as the premises that reflect the difficulties of political participation and the difficulties of political representation (Latifi, 2015: 193).

Wood and Flinders (2014: 159) claim that the process of decline in the participation of people in politics and political disengagement has developed since the 1970s. In this context, one of the hypotheses about the emergence of disengagement from politics is that people move away from politics when they have better living conditions and prosperity. According to another assumption, the public is frightened by problems that are beyond their understanding and knowledge and inevitably distances itself from politics with the idea that their solution should be left to technicians (Kapani, 1998: 135). In other words, citizens' lack of sufficient information about political issues may cause them to distance themselves from politics (Heywood, 1994: 181). In cases where political participation fails to provide objective satisfaction to the individual, does not give the impression that it is sufficiently effective, and it is believed that participation or non-participation will not change anything, the tendency to move away from politics increases (Kışlalı, 1998: 188-189). Sometimes political authorities do not want citizens to be very interested in political affairs and may impose prohibitions that prevent or limit their political participation (Daver, 1993: 204).

There may be several rationales for people to be in a political apathy situation. According to Dahl, since the vast majority of people pursue their biological and psychological needs, they do not show much interest in political activities. In other words, people are indifferent to politics if they do not encounter any political obstacles while fulfilling their basic needs. The thinkers of participatory democracy theory, on the other hand, argue that political indifference is not a characteristic of human nature but rather a conditioning of the society in which people live. In their opinion, people who believe that all fundamental decisions are determined by an elite cadre that constitutes a small minority of the society and that they cannot influence these decisions are disengaged from politics (Uygun, 2003: 167,168).

Yakubu (2012: 48) stated in his study analyzing Nigeria between 1999 and 2011, that bad state governance was responsible for people's political apathy. Yakubu emphasized that bad governance can be caused by administrators who do not represent the interests of the people and are not sensitive to them.

Numerous studies have analyzed the apathy of young people to politics. O'Toole believes that there has been a recent decline in interest and participation in politics among young people all over the world, which calls for the development of approaches and research methods that examine young people's relationship with the concept of 'the political' (O'Toole, 2003: 71-73). When the results of O'Toole's field research conducted by interview method are analyzed, it is seen that there is no clear difference between political apathy and

non-participation in politics. It was also concluded that young people are not indifferent to politics, are willing to voice political problems that will affect their lives, and consulting them brings them closer to politics (O'Toole, 2003: 88).

Henn, Weinstein and Wring, however, use the terms 'apolitical' and 'apathetic' interchangeably to describe the level of engagement of young people living in the UK. They stated that young people are enthusiastic about political concerns, such as discussing political issues with others. They also revealed that young people are not actually very apolitical or apathetic toward politics. Political inertia goes beyond being interested in politics. Young people prefer to participate in politics informally rather than formally, and the vast majority (over 70 per cent) disagree with the statement that voting is a waste of time (Henn, Weinstein and Wring, 1999: 19-24).

Sarfaraz, Ahmed, Khalid and Ajmal (2012: 63), in their study of Pakistani university students, listed the reasons for disengagement from politics as lack of true leadership, corrupt leaders, corrupt electoral system, corrupt bureaucracy, presence of feudalism, lack of awareness regarding politics, ignoring public demands, pre-poll raging and learned helplessness.

In his study 'Some Determinants of Political Apathy', Morris Rosenberg (1954) found that social constraints, a sense of futility, and a lack of incentives to act tend to discourage involvement in the democratic process.

In light of all this information, the following comments can be put forth for Turkey: According to Metin Heper, there is a general view in Turkey that only elites have knowledge about political issues. In this framework, elites decide what is best and then tell the public about it. The public, in turn, will learn what is best for the benefit of the country and vote for those who tell them what they believe is best (Heper, 1992: 198). Accordingly, a large part of society perceives political participation in Turkey as voting in certain periods of time. In addition, both the repressive environment created by the 1980 coup d'état and the provisions restricting political participation in the 1982 constitution distanced the public from active political participation.

Methods

The aim of this study is to determine whether the 1980 coup d'état moved the public away from politics in Turkey. This study is limited in terms of period and content, and only the 1983 general elections and the regulations in the 1982 Constitution are analyzed. In the literature, there are many studies researching the effects of the 1982 Constitution on freedoms and restricting political participation. However, we have not encountered any study analyzing the first general election held in the post-coup period under the 1982 Constitution in this context. The fact that there are not many studies on this subject in the literature makes this study important.

The study first tested whether the 1982 Constitution has an effect on the removal of individuals from politics. In this context, the relevant provisions of the 1982 Constitution were evaluated. Apart from the 1982 Constitution, the 1983 general elections, which were the first elections held after the coup d'état, were analyzed within the scope of this study. In the 1983 general elections, similarities between the policies of the participating parties were examined. The reason for analyzing party policies can be explained as follows: The fact that political parties have similar policies may drive people away from politics. Voters who know that the same policies will be implemented regardless of which party they vote for and who do not see much ideological difference between the parties may not want to participate in politics when they think that they

cannot make a difference as a result of the elections they will make. Therefore, such similarities between political parties may push voters away from politics.

The following questions were researched in the study:

1983: What are the similarities between the policies of the political parties that participated in general elections?

Does the 1982 Constitution include provisions that alienate citizens from politics?

The aim of analyzing these questions is to investigate public participation in politics in Turkey after the 1980 coup. For this reason, this study does not include all the events of the pre-1980 period, such as student events and the situation of political parties, but only the effects of the 1980 coup on political participation are analyzed.

In connection with the study questions, the main hypothesis of the study was formulated as "The activities of the 1980 coup plotters to remove the people from politics were reflected in the 1983 general elections." The secondary hypotheses of the study, which support this main hypothesis, can be defined as "The 1982 Constitution contains provisions that aim to remove citizens from participation in politics" and "Political parties participating in the 1983 general elections have similar policies".

In order to test the hypotheses of the study, qualitative content analysis and a questionnaire survey were employed. With the qualitative content analysis method, the declarations and programmes of the three parties (Nationalist Democracy Party (NDP), Populist Party (PP) and Motherland Party (MP)) that participated in the 1983 elections were coded and analyzed in MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024. A total of 482 sections were coded with 163 sub-codes under 10 main codes. The main codes of the study can be listed as “purpose and principles”, “economic policy and economic structure”, “rural works, agriculture and forestry”, “energy, mining, trade, industry”, “social justice”, “public administration”, “culture and art”, “environment, tourism and transportation”, “safety, security and justice”, “foreign policy and national defense”. Within the scope of declarations and programmes, 187, 130, and 165 coding were made for MP, 130 for NDP and 165 for PP. Following the coding, the declarations and programmes of the parties were first compared by similarity analysis. Document portraits were also used in this comparison. Then, which policies are similar is presented with "two case models". Through these analyses, it was determined to what extent and of which issues the policies of the parties are similar. The findings of the qualitative content analysis were tested through a questionnaire survey.

The survey was conducted within the scope of the Trakya University scientific research project numbered 2022/105. A questionnaire consisting of eight questions was applied by a professional company in 27 metropolitan cities (Adana, Ankara, Antalya, Aydın, Balıkesir, Bursa, Denizli, Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Eskişehir, Gaziantep, Hatay, İstanbul, İzmir, Kahramanmaraş, Kayseri, Kocaeli, Malatya, Manisa, Mardin, Mersin, Muğla, Sakarya, Samsun, Şanlıurfa, Tekirdağ, Van). Between July 13, 2022 and August 7, 2022, 474 people participated in the survey. It was ensured that the participants were at least 18 years old by the year 1983. In other words, those born in 1965 and before were included in the sample. However, at this point, it should not be forgotten that the respondents were asked questions about 30 years ago. The reliability of the answers to those questions constitutes an important limitation of this study. The survey data were analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics and crosstabs were used in the analyses.

The Effects of the 1982 Constitution on Political Participation

On September 12, 1980, when the Turkish Armed Forces seized power, the military government saw the 1961 Constitution, which allowed citizens to participate in politics to a large extent, as the cause of the anarchy and wanted to change this situation with a new constitution. In this context, the main reason for the amendments made after the 1980 coup d'état was that politics and the 1961 Constitution were at the root of the conflicts. The military administration believed that it was time to hand politics over to politicians and to change the 1961 Constitution. In this framework, it was decided to exclude students, women, faculty members, and trade union members from politics. The 1982 Constitution, which was drafted with this in mind, left politics to the elite, and the ban on politics was designed to cover the widest sections of society (Birand et al., 2010: 213-215). According to Abdurrahman Eren, the 1982 Constitution, which, like the 1961 Constitution, was drafted with a casuistic method, aimed to remove social organizations from politics by limiting freedoms through detailed regulations. The 1982 Constitution, which strengthened the executive against the legislature and the judiciary by giving more importance to the concepts of strong state and authoritarian administration, increased the weight of authority in favor of freedoms and imposed restrictions on the ways of organized participation (Eren, 1997: 114-118).

Although the 1982 Constitution was adopted through a referendum, it is not possible to assert that this vote was democratic. The first reason for this opinion is that propaganda in favor of "No to the Constitution" was not allowed. The second reason is the use of white ballot papers for yes votes and red ballot papers for “no” votes and the thinness of the envelopes in which the ballot papers were to be placed, allowing the identification of those who voted “no” (Çavdar, 2008: 271). In this constitution, which was adopted through an antidemocratic method, provisions restricting political participation were included in order for the military government to remove citizens from politics. For example, the 1982 Constitution prohibited associations, trade unions and professional organizations, which are the basic elements of a pluralistic society, from engaging in politics, supporting political parties and receiving support from them. It also prevented associations from acting jointly. These restrictions aim to prevent collective or group participation, which is perhaps the most effective means of political participation. This leads society to move away from the pluralist and libertarian model (Kapani, 1998: 137).

A reduction in citizens' participation in politics to voting in elections can be observed after the 1980 coup d’état. In this framework, it is noteworthy that the 1982 Constitution, which replaced the 1961 Constitution, which was seen as the cause of the conflicts, adopted a less participatory and less pluralistic model. As a matter of fact, the desire for political activity to be carried out only by political parties and elected state organs and thus to ensure a certain degree of de-politicization at the national level is one of the main objectives of the National Security Council, which finalized the 1982 Constitution. This desire can be seen in various provisions of the Constitution (Kayaçağlayan, 2011: 453-454). These provisions in the Constitution, which are mentioned below, were intended to ensure that political activities are carried out only through elected state organs and political parties and to ensure a certain degree of detachment from politics at the national level (Özbudun, 2019: 65). Again, contrary to Dahl’s assertion that freedom of expression is necessary for citizens’ active participation in political life (Dahl, 2001: 101), the 1982 Constitution included provisions that prevented citizens from actively participating in politics by restricting freedom of expression in various dimensions.

In this context, although there were provisions in the first version of the 1982 Constitution to disqualifying individuals from politics, the constitutional amendments repealed some of these provisions. Article 68,

paragraph six of the Constitution, which was repealed by the 1995 constitutional amendment, prevented citizens from participating in politics through organizations by stating that "*Political parties shall not organize and function abroad, shall not form discriminative auxiliary bodies such as women's or youth branches, nor shall they establish foundations*". The second paragraph of Article 69 of the Constitution, "*Political parties shall not have political ties and engage in political cooperation with associations, unions, foundations, cooperatives, and public professional organizations and their higher bodies in order to implement and strengthen their party policies, nor shall they receive material assistance from these bodies*", which was repealed in 1995, restricts the relations between political parties and some other organizations. One of the other provisions repealed in 1995 was the statement "*Associations shall not ..., nor shall they pursue political aims, engage in political activities, receive support from or give support to political parties, or take joint action with labor unions, with public professional organizations or with foundations*" in Article 33. The other is the provision in Article 135 stating that "*Public professional organizations shall not engage in activities outside the aims for which they were established, nor shall they engage in political activities or take joint action with political parties, labor unions, or associations.' Political parties, labor unions and their higher bodies shall not nominate candidates in elections for the organs of public professional organizations or their higher bodies, nor shall they engage in activities or propaganda for or against particular candidates*". Both provisions restricting the relations of associations and professional organizations with political parties were repealed. Furthermore, the 1995 amendment repealed the provision in Article 52 that prohibited the political activities of trade unions. With the 2001 constitutional amendments, the phrase "*Associations, foundations, labor unions, and public professional organizations shall not hold meetings or demonstration marches exceeding their own scope and aims*" in Article 34 was removed. The 2010 constitutional amendments did not include the provision in Article 54 stating that "*Politically motivated strikes and lockouts, solidarity strikes and lockouts, occupation of work premises, labor go-slows, production decreasing, and other forms of obstruction are prohibited*" (Constitutional Court, 2019; Gözler, 2000: 101-102; 2010; Özbudun, 2019: 66).

Despite the constitutional aforementioned amendments made in 1995, 2001 and 2010, many restrictions on the purpose, organization and activities of political parties are still included in the constitution (Demirci, 2008: 657). In addition, the 1982 Constitution restricts the political sphere in terms of political party activities and adopts a militant democracy approach (Özbudun, 2019: 93). In this context, for example, Article 68 of the 1982 Constitution restricts the participation of the professional groups mentioned in the article and students in political action with the provisions that "*Judges and prosecutors, members of higher judicial organs including those of the Court of Accounts, civil servants in public institutions and organizations, other public servants who are not considered to be laborers by virtue of the services they perform, members of the armed forces and students who are not yet in higher education, shall not become members of political parties." The membership of teaching staff in higher education to political parties is regulated by law. This law shall not allow those members to assume responsibilities outside the central organs of the political parties, and it also sets forth the regulations which the teaching staff at higher education institutions shall observe as members of political parties in the higher education institutions.*"

In conclusion, the National Security Council's making the 1982 Constitution more restrictive than its predecessors was aimed at keeping society away from politics. In order to prevent conflicts, restrictions were imposed on social and political spheres. Social institutions, political parties, universities, trade unions and non-governmental organizations, which are considered to be the main culprits of terrorism and conflict, have been kept under control. In this direction, systematic methods were used to alienate the public from politics. The transformation of political culture and institutions was aimed at first, and the transformation

of these concepts made social transformation inevitable. Another feature of the 1982 Constitution is that it adopted a less participatory democracy model than the 1961 Constitution. In other words, it preferred to distance itself from politics to a certain extent. The 1982 Constitution also restricted political parties' activities. In the 1982 Constitution, the highly politicized institutions before September 12, 1980, played a major role in the inclusion of such provisions. These articles were introduced as a reaction to them. The Constitutional amendments, with the legal regulations, almost completely limited and restricted the mechanisms introduced by the 1961 Constitution. Since the justification for these limitations and restrictions was to prevent society from becoming overly politicized, one of the most important results of all regulations was to ban politics for the relevant organization, institution or institution (Kongar, 2005: 199). In this framework, political participation was also restricted, and voting was considered sufficient.

1983 General Elections Within the Scope of Democracy and Political Participation

Regarding the definition of modern democracy, Robert Dahl stated that there are at least seven conditions for the existence of democracy. First, control over governmental decisions on state policy must be constitutionally vested in officials elected by citizens. Second, elected bodies should come to power through frequent and fairly administered elections in which coercion is relatively rare, and third, practically all adults should have the opportunity to be elected to elective positions in government. Fourth, citizens have the right to express themselves on broadly defined political issues, including criticism of the authorities, the government, the regime, the socio-economic order and the ruling ideology, without danger of severe punishment. Fifth, citizens have the right to seek alternative and independent sources of information. There are also alternative sources of information that are not under the control of the government or any political group to influence the political beliefs and attitudes of the population, and these alternative sources are effectively protected by law. Sixth, practically, all adults have the right to vote in political bodies' elections. Finally, citizens should also have the right to shape relatively independent institutions and organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups (Dahl, 2005: 188-189; Demir, 2010: 600). In this context, when the 1983 general elections are taken into consideration, it is possible to say that the authority to control government decisions is constitutionally vested in the authorities elected by citizens. However, the 1983 general elections were held in a repressive environment under military rule, and political bans restricted people's ability to be elected. During this period, it cannot be said that people whose freedom of expression was restricted had the opportunity to criticize the existing order and administration. The coercions on the press also restricted the public's access to independent sources of information. Although the right to vote was granted, the people had to choose among the limited number of political parties allowed by the military government, and their ability to shape these organizations was also limited. In conclusion, it is not possible to say that the 1983 general elections were held in a fully democratic environment. In addition, the participation of individuals in politics was restricted by the provisions of the 1982 Constitution and was tried to be limited to voting as much as possible.

Accordingly, political participation means that the public elects the people who will govern them, participates in the decisions of the political power occasionally through their organizations, influences those decisions, and changes them when necessary (Demir, 2010: 603). Political participation does not only mean voting in elections; it can be realized in different ways, and even an individual who does not vote in elections can actively participate in politics through other means (Lorch, 1992: 59). In addition, the fact that modern democracy is a democracy of parties should not mean that political participation should be reduced to elections and that political parties' duties to ensure participation should be limited to election times.

Different forms of participation should be produced and citizens' awareness should be raised (Öztoprak Sağır and Karkın, 2005: 4).

Political participation behavior studies conducted after the 1950s have shown that citizens' participation in politics at all levels in modern developed industrial societies is much more intense and conscious than in traditional societies. In other words, in industrial societies, citizens and all kinds of social organizations formed by citizens are constantly interested in the formation, control, and change of hands of political power outside elections; they put their weight, and moreover, they can be effective even at the stage of making political decisions (Öztekin, 2003: 224). To sum up, as the level of modernization increases, the rate and intensity of political participation by individuals also increases. Thus, the most important factors affecting political participation are the level of economic development, high status roles in society, economic income level, the existence of political organizations and associations and the rights granted to them, the conflict of interests of social, political and especially economic classes, conflicts between social classes, regions and community groups, urbanization, political values and ideological structure of the state (Çetin, 2003: 136).

In line with this information, political participation in Turkey can be evaluated as follows: First of all, although political participation cannot be reduced to the act of voting, participation rates in elections should be taken into consideration. In this context, the ratio of participation in elections, the number of voters who participated in elections, and the number of registered voters in Turkey since 1950 are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Indicators of Participation in Elections

Period	Ratio of Participation in Elections (%)	Number of Voters Who Participated in Elections	Number of Registered Voters
2023	88,9	53.994.049	60.721.745
2018	86,2	51.189.444	59.367.469
01.11.2015	85,2	48.537.695	56.949.009
07.06.2015	83,9	47.507.467	56.608.817
2011	83,2	43.914.948	52.806.322
2007	84,2	36.056.293	42.799.303
2002	79,1	32.768.161	41.407.027
1999	87,1	32.656.070	37.495.217
1995	85,2	29.101.469	34.155.981
1991	83,9	25.157.089	29.979.123
1987	93,3	24.603.541	26.376.926
1983	92,3	18.238.362	19.767.366
1977	72,4	15.358.210	21.207.303
1973	66,8	11.223.843	16.798.164
1969	64,3	9.516.035	14.788.552
1965	71,3	9.748.678	13.679.753
1961	81,4	10.522.716	12.925.395
1957	76,6	9.250.949	12.078.623
1954	88,6	9.095.617	10.262.063

Period	Ratio of Participation in Elections (%)	Number of Voters Who Participated in Elections	Number of Registered Voters
1950	89,3	7.953.085	8.905.743

Reference: Supreme Election Council, 2023; Turkish Statistical Institute, 2012, p. 5; 2021.

The average participation rate in general elections in Turkey is 81.8 percent. Since 1950, the lowest participation in general elections was in 1969 (64.3 percent) and the highest was in 1987 (93.3 percent).

On September 12, 1980, the Turkish Armed Forces seized power within the chain of command. The Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) and all political parties were closed down. The National Security Council, which seized the country's administration, passed laws by replacing the TBMM and ruled the country like a government until 1983. In 1983, many parties could not participate in general elections due to political bans. The 1980 coup d'état, which was declared to have been carried out because of political instability and social conflict, caused many changes in the process that followed. In this context, when the rates of participation in elections before and after the coup d'état of September 12, 1980 are evaluated, it can be seen that the rate of participation in general elections increased after the coup d'état. However, the fact that participation in elections increased after 1980 is not sufficient information to conclude that participation in politics has not decreased. It should not be forgotten that the conditions of the period can affect the rate of election participation. For example, it is observed that the participation rate in the general elections held in 1983 immediately after the coup d'état was high. Regarding this situation, it should be noted that the Nationalist Democracy Party (NDP), the Populist Party (PP), which were founded by the military, and the Motherland Party (MP), which was also founded with the permission of the military, participated in the general elections in 1983. Moreover, the elections were held under the supervision of the military (Kongar, 2005: 219). The aim of military rule was to narrow the base of political participation and restructure Turkey's political organization in such a way as to limit the tendencies toward polarization and division (Turan, 2004: 129). According to Saim Sezen, the 1983 elections were held in an atmosphere of fear, frustration, oppression, and terror in which all organizations of the people were dismantled and destroyed, the organizations of the ruling classes were expanded and strengthened, political parties and candidates who would express the demands of the people were kept out of politics, democratic institutions and the free order were denigrated (Sezen, 1994: 267). Within this scope, considering the fact that the government was in the hands of the military from September 1980 until November 1983, it is not surprising that citizens who wanted a civilian government to accede participated in the 1983 elections at a high rate. In the end, while it is useful to endeavor to change the negative factors that cause apathy toward politics, it should be kept in mind that trying to force the masses who are completely disinterested in political life to go to the polls by force will cause these people to vote on issues that they are uninterested and uninformed about and in a completely guided manner (Kışlalı, 1998: 185).

Evaluation of the Election Declarations and Programmes of Political Parties

The fact that political parties have similar policies may alienate people from politics. Voters who know that the same policies will be implemented regardless of which party they vote for and who do not see much ideological difference between the parties may not want to participate in politics when they think that they cannot make a difference as a result of the elections they will make. Therefore, such similarities between political parties may alienate voters from politics. In this part of the study, election declarations and programmes of political parties were evaluated. In this context, the election manifestos and programmes of

NDP, PP, and MP, which sent representatives to the parliament in the first general elections (1983) after the 1980 coup d'état, were compared through similarity analysis after coding in MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024.

Table 2

Similarity Analysis of Party Programmes

	MP	NDP	PP
MP	1,00	0,52	0,44
NDP	0,52	1,00	0,48
PP	0,44	0,48	1,00

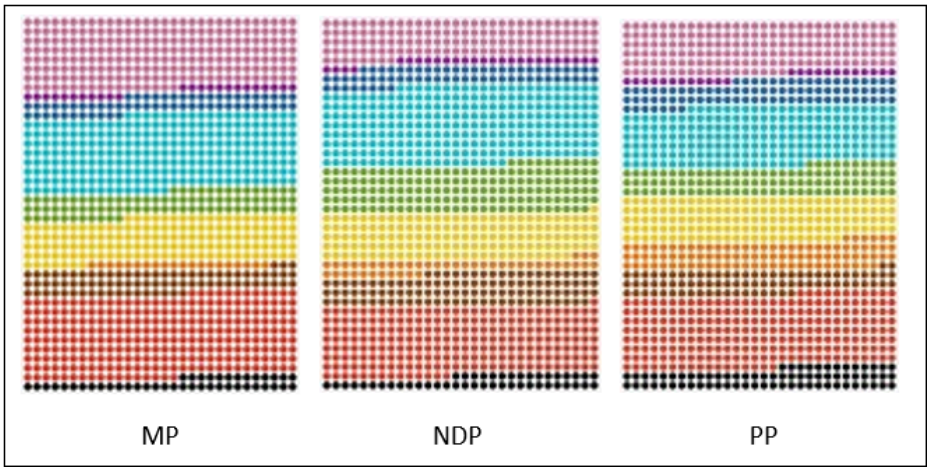
Reference: This table was created by the author of the study in MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024 programme.

As seen in Table 2, it is possible to say that the election declarations and programmes of political parties are similar at an average of 48 percent. The highest similarity rate among the analyzed texts is 52 percent for NDP and MP. The election manifestos and programmes of the PP and MP, which are the least similar to each other, contain the same goals and policies at a rate of 44 percent. At this point, the conditions of the period affecting the similarity should not be ignored. In the 1983 general elections, political parties authorized by the National Security Council could participate. Therefore, political views that the coup regime did not approve of were not given the right to representation. In other words, the fact that only political parties that remained within the boundaries drawn by the NSC were allowed to participate in the elections inevitably led to the development of similar policies.

At this point, the issues emphasized by the parties within the scope of the main codes are depicted in the document portraits in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Document Portraits



Reference: It was created by the author of the study in MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024 programme. The main codes expressed by the colors are respectively as follows: Pink: Public administration, Purple: culture and art, Navy blue: Purpose and principles, Blue: Economic policy and economic structure, Green: Rural works, agriculture and forestry, Yellow: Energy, mining, trade, industry, Orange: Safety, security and justice, Brown: Environment, tourism and transportation, red: social justice and black: foreign policy and national defense.

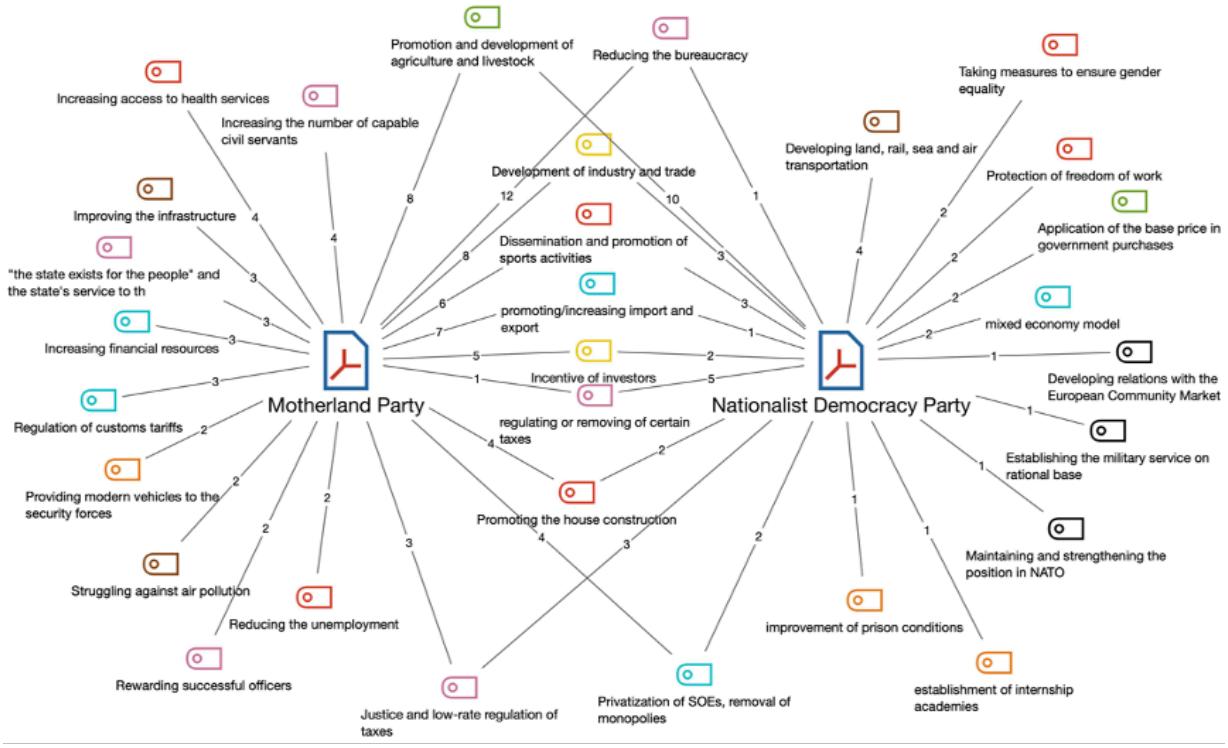
It is possible to say that there are similarities in the election declarations and programmes of the parties within the scope of the main codes. The PP is the party that focuses the most on the main code "Foreign policy and national defense". The MP has produced more policies under the title of "Public administration"

than other parties have. While the PP focuses on "Safety, security and justice" the most, the MP emphasizes it the least. The NDP was the party that focused the most on "Rural works, agriculture and forestry".

This evaluation was performed within the scope of the main codes (Figure 1.) provides an idea about the party policies but does not reveal exactly where the similarities lie. In this context, two case models created with Maxqda Analytics Pro 2024 programme were used. In both case models, the ten most frequently used codes in the parties' texts were included in the figure.

Figure 2

Two-Cases Model (MP-NDP)

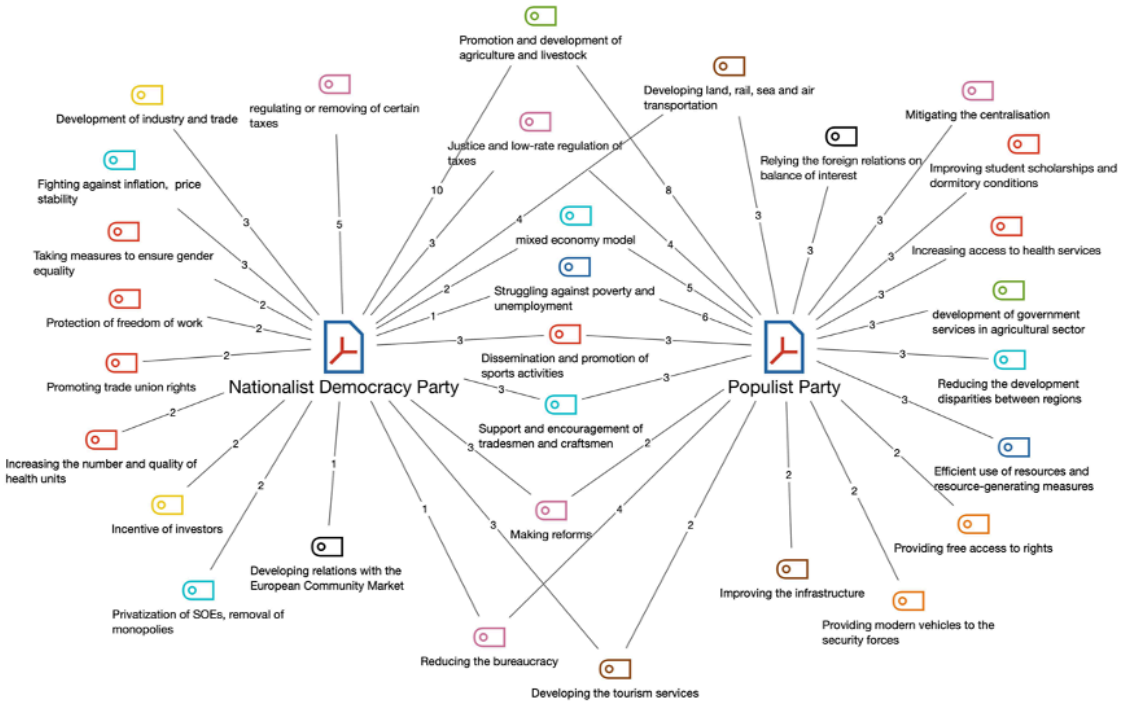


Reference: It was created by the author of the study in MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024 programme.

In the similarity analysis, the policies that are the same and different in the election programmes of MP and NDP, which have the highest similarity rate (52 percent), are presented in Figure 1, together with their repetition frequencies. In this context, the similar policies of the two parties can be listed as the promotion and development of agriculture and animal husbandry, reduction of bureaucracy, encouragement of investors, development of industry and trade, promotion and encouragement of sports activities, increasing imports and exports, fair and low-rate regulation of taxes, privatization of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), abolition of monopolies, encouragement of housing construction, abolition of some taxes and regulation of some taxes. The biggest difference between the two parties' policies is that the MP has adopted the liberal economy model, while the NDP has adopted the mixed economy model.

Figure 3

Two-Cases Model (NDP-PP)

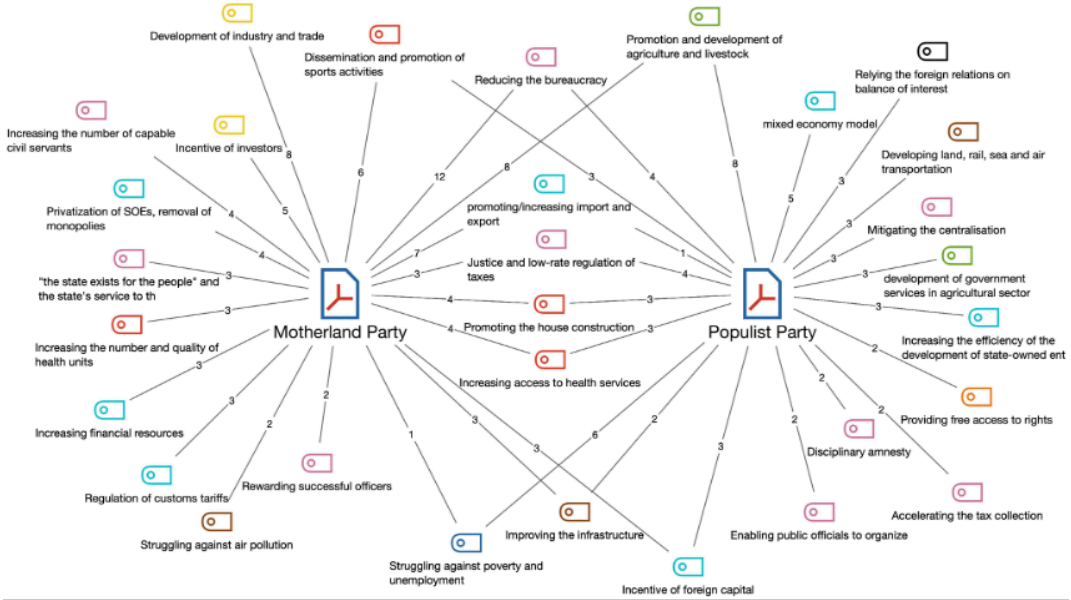


Reference: It was created by the author of the study in MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024 programme.

NDP and PP adopted a mixed economy model. Apart from their economic approaches, the similar policies of the NDP and PP can be listed as the promotion and development of agriculture and animal husbandry, fair and low-rate regulation of taxes, combating unemployment and poverty, expanding and encouraging sports activities, supporting artisans and craftsmen, reforms, and reducing bureaucracy.

Figure 4

Two-Cases Model (MP-PP)



Reference: It was created by the author of the study in MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024 programme.

Finally, the policies of MP and PP, whose policies are the least similar to each other (44 percent), are similar in terms of promoting and developing agriculture and animal husbandry, reducing bureaucracy, promoting and encouraging sports activities, encouraging imports and exports, regulating taxes fairly and at low rates, encouraging housing construction, increasing access to health services, combating unemployment and poverty, encouraging foreign capital, and improving infrastructure.

The common issues mentioned at least once in the programmes of the three parties examined in this study are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Common Issues in the Declarations and Programmes of MP, PP and NDP

Immediate justice and deterrent punishment	Supporting workers abroad or returnees	Promotion and development of agriculture and livestock
Preserving and developing forests	Dissemination and promotion of sports activities	Support and encouragement of tradespeople and craftspeople
Developing tourism services	Promoting house construction	Protecting Turkish Lira
Justice and low-rate regulation of taxes	Improving working conditions	Legislative changes
Increasing public officials' social support	Vocational training	Incentive for foreign capital
Reducing bureaucracy	increasing state inspections and taking measures	promoting or increasing import and export
Making reforms	development of mineral exploration activities	Reduce income disparity
Support for housing purchases	Increasing oil production	Promotion of private enterprises
Focus on mass housing construction	Solving the energy problem	Struggling against poverty and unemployment
Justice in wages	Increasing and supporting exports	Accelerating economic development

Reference: It was created by the author of the study in MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024 programme.

As Table 3 shows, the 30 policies of MP, PP, and NDP are identical to each other. When the figures in which the parties are compared in pairs are taken into consideration, it can be said that the party policies are similar to each other, and the citizens may have the idea that similar practices will be implemented regardless of which party they vote for. Although the 1983 elections had high participation rates, the lack of ideological differences between the parties and the expression of similar policies may have led voters to the polls only for the sake of transition to civilian rule.

Results of Field Research

The questionnaire applied within the scope of the study contains two demographic questions: year of birth and gender. In this context, the respondents were born between 1932 and 1965. Besides, 38.6 percent of the participants were female and 61.4 percent were male.

In addition to demographic questions, respondents were asked questions about the 1983 general election. In this context, 76.6 percent of the respondents stated that they voted in the 1983 general elections. Furthermore, 43.5% of the respondents thought that the policies and promises of the political parties participating in the 1983 general elections were not similar to each other. Similarly, 49.8 percent of the respondents stated that MP, PP, and NDP are ideologically different. The party that respondents saw as ideologically different was MP (Table 4).

Table 4
In your opinion, which of the political parties that participated in the 1983 elections were more different from the others in terms of ideology and party policies?

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	MP	256	54,0	54,0	54,0
	PP	126	26,6	26,6	80,6
	NDP	92	19,4	19,4	100,0
	Total	474	100,0	100,0	

When respondents were asked which parties' policies were more similar to each other, 35 percent stated that the parties' policies were different from each other. The respondents believe that the parties with the most similar policies are MP-NDP (29.7 per cent) (Table 5).

Table 5
In your opinion, which parties were closer to each other in terms of party policies in the 1983 elections?

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	The policies of the parties were quite different from each other.	166	35,0	35,5	35,5
	MP-PP	62	13,1	13,2	48,7
	MP-NDP	141	29,7	30,1	78,8
	PP-NDP	78	16,5	16,7	95,5
	MP-PP-NDP	21	4,4	4,5	100,0
	Total	468	98,7	100,0	
Missing	System	6	1,3		
Total		474	100,0		

When the similarity analysis conducted in the qualitative content analysis (Table 2) is compared with the survey results in Table 5, it can be seen that there is an overlap between the two data. MP and NDP, which are the parties most similar in terms of party programmes, were also seen as being close to each other by the respondents. The similarity ranking determined in Table 2 in terms of party programmes (1-MP-NDP; 2-NDP-PP; 3-MP-PP) is the same as the ranking in Table 5, which reflects respondents' opinions. In this context, it is possible to say that the similarity in the party programmes affected the opinions of those who participated in the 1983 general election.

Finally, in order to measure whether the respondents distanced themselves from politics after the 1980 coup d'état, they were asked in which period they participated more actively in politics (Table 6).

Table 6

In which period do you think you participated more actively in politics?

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Valid	Pre-1980 (1970-1980)	78	16,5	16,5	16,5
	Post-1980 (1983-1990)	185	39,0	39,1	55,6
	No difference in all periods	210	44,3	44,4	100,0
	Total	473	99,8	100,0	
Missing	System	1	,2		
Total		474	100,0		

When the results in Table 6 regarding political participation are evaluated, it can be stated that the majority of the respondents stated that they did not move away from politics in the period after the 1980 coup d'état.

Conclusion

Coup d'état staged on September 12, 1980, led to changes in several spheres in Turkey. Within the scope of this study, the impact of the Coup on citizens' political apathy is analyzed. In the literature, there are many studies analyzing the effects of the 1982 Constitution on freedoms and restrictions on participation in politics. However, we encountered no study that analyzed the general election first held in the post-coup period under the 1982 Constitution in this manner. Therefore, in this study, the concept of political apathy is analyzed in the context of the cases of the 1982 Constitution and the 1983 general elections.

Within the scope of the study, three hypotheses were tested.

The hypothesis "The 1982 Constitution contains provisions that aim to remove citizens from participating in politics" was evaluated within the scope of the 1982 Constitution and the literature on this subject. In this context, the 1982 Constitution adopted a less participatory understanding of democracy and included provisions that prohibited the active participation of the public in politics. In addition, ways of organized participation have also been significantly restricted. With the help of the 1982 Constitution, freedom of expression was restricted on the one hand, and political participation was reduced to being conducted through elected state organs and political parties on the other. The military government believed that by restricting the ways in which individuals and collective participation of the people, the conflicts experienced before 1980 could be prevented. However, the damage that these restrictions would cause to the functioning of democracy was not taken into consideration. It is also not possible to say whether the referendum process on the 1982 Constitution occurred in a democratic environment. In the section of the study on political apathy, it is stated that political participation cannot be reduced to voting. In line with these findings, the 1982 Constitution includes regulations that discourage the active participation of the public in politics. It is possible to say that there are many provisions in the 1982 Constitution aimed at dissuading the public from politics, although some of them were later abolished. In this context, this hypothesis of the study was confirmed.

The hypothesis "Political parties participating in the 1983 general elections have similar policies" was tested with the analyses conducted in MAXQDA and SPSS programmes. Within the scope of the similarity analysis performed in the MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024 programme and two case models, it was determined that approximately half of the policies of the political parties participating in the 1983 elections were similar. The parties have similar policies, especially on the main problems and expectations that concern the whole

society. The issues on which the parties differ are mostly on specific issues. At this point, it should not be forgotten that political parties that remained within ideological boundaries established by the military government were allowed to participate in elections. Parties that were far from the political understanding of the military government could not participate in the elections anyway. Therefore, it is not surprising that there are similarities between the party policies. Within the scope of the survey, 474 people living in 27 metropolitan cities were asked eight questions. According to the answers given by the respondents, the parties that participated in the 1983 elections were not seen to be similar to a great extent in terms of ideology and policies. However, as mentioned in the methodology section, the passing years may have changed responders' opinions about the past. The similarity ranking determined in the similarity matrix made within the scope of qualitative content analysis and the ranking in the questionnaire study reflecting the opinions of the respondents were the same. In this context, it is possible to state that the results of qualitative content analysis and the questionnaire study overlap. As a result, this hypothesis of the study was partially confirmed.

The evaluation regarding the main hypothesis of the study, which was formulated as "The activities of the 1980 coup plotters to remove the people from politics were reflected in the 1983 general elections", is as follows:

With the coup d'état that occurred on September 12, 1980, Turkish democracy experienced a significant interruption. During this period, political parties were closed down and political party leaders were banned. In addition, the military government closed down many newly established parties. Under these circumstances, only political parties authorized by the military government could participate in the 1983 elections. Therefore, voters had to choose between parties that were not very different from each other ideologically. Although citizens who wanted to transition to civilian rule after nearly three years of military tutelage showed high participation in the elections, they had to choose among limited alternatives. In Turkey, where the democratic process has been interrupted by military coups, the public's feeling that they do not have enough influence in the government and their belief that participating in politics or not will not change anything may be the reason for their political apathy. Although the 1983 elections had high participation rates, the lack of ideological differences between the parties and the expression of similar policies led voters to the polls only for the sake of transition to civil government. Moreover, the 1982 Constitution, drafted by the military government, contains provisions prohibiting many individuals and groups from participating in politics. In addition, freedoms were limited and ways of organized participation were restricted. With the 1982 Constitution, citizen participation in politics was reduced to voting in elections. In a period when even the minimum conditions necessary for the existence of democracy are not fully met, it would not be surprising if the public choose political apathy under constitutional and military restrictions. As a result, it can be said that the main hypothesis of the study is confirmed due to both the provisions in the constitution that restrict citizens' participation in politics and the restrictions on the right to vote and to be elected that arise as a result of the fact that only permitted parties can participate in elections.

Researchers who wish to work on this issue may be advised to analyze whether there has been a change in the levels of political participation after the constitutional amendments. Again, for a selected election period, the policies of different parties can be compared in terms of similarities. Although the voting rates of the public are high in elections, it can be investigated why they do not prefer active ways of participation very much.

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