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I. Introduction

A. Area of Research:

Academically and professionally there are new opportunities of research and development on the horizon, which are the studies, conducted on the new political organizations that are being developed in Egypt. Currently Egypt is going through one of its most unique eras in history. Egypt now is in the midst of a new defining revolution that was ignited on the 25th of January, 2011. Today, almost more than a year after the revolution erupted, the current thesis is designed to help, even if only symbolically, in the development of the political environment in Egypt. The field of Public Policy & Administration must play a very important role in the development of new Egyptian political institutions and therefore as researchers we must swiftly adapt to the new context.

The thesis focuses on a key element of these democracy building political institutions, which is a Political Party. Egypt suffered massively from the political monopoly of the National Democratic Party since it was founded by President Mohammed Anwar El Sadat more than three decades ago. Before that, political parties were prohibited during the Nasserite era since 1954 as a means to the one party system (El Hassan, 2011). This means that since the early 1950’s Egypt has not witnessed a healthy multiparty system and therefore, Egyptians will face a new set of
challenges such as: the foundation and governance of political parties, and the identification of the role of political parties in governing Egypt.

B. Importance and Significance:

The importance and significance of the research is derived from the following: first, the Egyptian Revolution and the importance of providing Academic and professional research that benefits the goals of this revolution\(^1\). Therefore, the thesis may represent added value to the body of significant volumes of research-work that include the January 25\(^{th}\) Revolution in perspective. Second, the thesis hopefully will qualify to aid those who want to start a 'new' or amend an 'old' political party. The thesis benefits them from both theory and practice supported by International experiences. Third, the International experiences with a focus on the Turkish Justice and Development Party (AK Party). Fourth, the thesis is one of the attempts to bridge a thriving democracy in Egypt with a more established democracy in Turkey, a country that enjoys multiple similarities with the Egyptian context as will be explored later.

The similarities in cultural and political conditions between Egypt and Turkey are one of the main important features that characterize this thesis. First, Turkey has a unique relationship with the Egyptian history and culture since the Seljuk and later on the Ottomans as a matter of fact for centuries they belonged to the same state (Aktay\(^2\), 2012). Second, recently, AK Party provides a great example for a successful political party in the Middle East (Özipek\(^3\), 2011), which was able to form a one party

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\(^1\) Political Parties are means to achieve “Bread (better standard of living), Freedom and Social Justice”.

\(^2\) Professor Yasin Aktay is the Director of the Institute of Strategic Thinking (SDE) and one of the notable Turkish thinkers and academicians.

\(^3\) Dr. Bekir Berat Özipek is a member at the T.C. Istanbul Ticaret University, Faculty of Applied Sciences – Department of International Relations. He is also a columnist at the Turkish newspaper Today’s Zaman.
government three times in a row as a result of three consecutive Parliamentary victories abandoning a long heritage of unstable coalition governments (Bailey, 2012). Third, Egypt post January 25th is heading towards a democratic environment and a civil rule after decades of Military rule. The relationship between AK Party and the Turkish Supreme Military Council is quite remarkable. The success of AK party in delivering its party promises, restoring civil rule in addition to the personality and leadership of the Prime Minister and AK Party’s Chairperson Recep Tayyip Erdoğan are quite remarkable and quietly affected the Arab World, hence Egypt (Ghosh & Turgut, 2011). The comparisons and associations between Egypt and Turkey were discussed and highlighted in several articles (Cook, 2007; Yılmaz, 2009; Akyol, 2011; Ayoob, 2011; & Tuğal, 2012). Some scholars and writers even highlighted that there are multiple lessons that Egypt should learn from Turkey (Akyol, 2011; Walker, 2011; Black, 2011; Alpay, 2011; ElSayed, 2011; Bender, 2011 & Cook, 2012). The great performance of the AK Party politically and economically that earned the respect of countries worldwide translated, for example, in President Barack Obama’s first trip abroad. AK Party succeeded to lead Turkey to be ranked 17th economy worldwide (The World Factbook, 2012).

It is important to note that this thesis is designed to help all political parties regardless of their ideologies or political affiliations. The aspiration behind this work is to provide academically professional material built on knowledge and information accumulated from international experiences that preceded Egypt in the democratization struggle. AK Party qualifies to be a case that benefits all political parties with different ideologies since in itself it is not an exceptional case but a successful case based on history and evolution as will be explained later on within the thesis.
C. The Major Research Question:

- What are the criteria for effective governance of political parties? And what lessons can be learnt from the Turkish AK Party to guide the Egyptian experience post the 25th of January revolution?

D. Investigative Research Questions:

- How is the concept of governance discussed in the literature?
- What are the different dimensions of good governance applicable to political parties?
- What are the international examples for the application or lack of application of good governance of political parties?
- To what extent the Turkish AK Party applies good governance indicators?
- What are the main lessons learnt and the recommendations for applying good governance indicators in Egypt?

E. Methodology:

I adopted a qualitative approach throughout the thesis. It is important to identify how exactly the necessary data was attained as a component to the thesis. Initially, chapter one of the thesis starts with a literature review of previous writings concerning governance of political parties or governance in general. Even though there were no explicit articles, books and journals that tackle the same aspects of my research, a great sum of literature discussing various aspects of political parties and/or governance that served essentially for the thesis was found. The second and third chapters of the thesis are dedicated to the case study of the AK Party. The second chapter includes necessary historical, political, sociological and economic background
of Turkey. This chapter also includes a section on the accomplishments of the Turkish government while AK Party served in power and the chapter ends with an illustrated description and analysis of the AK Party’s structure and functions. The third chapter then focuses on an analysis that synchronizes data gathered on governance and AK Party’s case and performance. The fourth chapter titled conclusion and lessons for Egypt provides recommendations and lessons for Egypt learnt from the case of AK Party.

Most of the literature reviewed concerning AK Party has different focuses than this thesis, which is the governance of AK Party. Therefore, collected data about AK Party were mainly through direct methods whether interviews, which required a field-research in Turkey’s Ankara and Istanbul, their electronic media tools and AK Party’s analysts. The process of data enquiry depended on an extensive background based on comprehensive literature review prior to direct investigations. The several face to face interviews were conducted including a Senior Leadership in AK Party, Senior Leadership in the Turkish Prime Ministry, the Governor of the Turkish Central Bank, a President of a Turkish Think Tank, a Turkish professor who is also an activist working on human rights and a Senior Turkish Professional working in the World Bank, titles and names are elaborated later. The main intention was to be able to grasp different perspectives that concern AK Party. These perspectives are both internal and external and vary between pro, against and relatively objective. As mentioned earlier, data collection process required a trip to Turkey in which these interviews were conducted in AK Party’s headquarters, the Turkish Prime Ministry, the Institute of Strategic Thinking and the Central Bank. Other interviews were conducted in Egypt. This thesis is designed to be a guide for «governance of political parties» post the Egyptian Revolution. As mentioned earlier, the thesis mainly discusses that there are a
number of good governance indicators/elements that must be available for each and every political organization specifically, political parties, to succeed. The first obstacle that faced this thesis was the lack of governance indicators/elements designed specifically for political parties. Therefore, the thesis relies on three governance indexes to be (after synchronization) the elements of my Political Party governance indicators. The elements of choice are based on studies conducted by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) which mainly adopts the United Nations’ perspective on governance, Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI, 2010) designed by the World Bank over the period of 1996-2010 after surveying governments and non-government organizations, and last but not least Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIFG) by the Mo Ibrahim foundation (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2010) developed for Africa. After synchronizing them together and formalizing those in a way that would be suitable for Political Parties the following indicators were developed:

1. Transparency & Accountability (Anti-Corruption Mechanisms)
2. Efficiency, Effectiveness and Political Responsiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNESCAP</th>
<th>WGI</th>
<th>IIFG</th>
<th>The Pillars</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>Control of Corruption</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Transparency &amp; Accountability (Anti-Corruption)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Efficiency &amp; Effectiveness</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mechanisms</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsiveness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Efficiency, Effectiveness and Political Responsiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rule of Law</strong></td>
<td>Rule of Law</td>
<td>Rule of Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participatory Participation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Party Members Development: Leadership &amp; Incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Stability and Lack of Violence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regulatory Quality</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Human Rights</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sustainable Economic Opportunity</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Human Development</strong></td>
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</table>
The indicators designed mainly bridge between the different models to build a 5 pillar model that consists of main elements that must be available in any organization that features good governance, hence political parties.

In order to enrich the indicators, they will be supported by various international experiences and literature review. In addition, as mentioned earlier, there is a focus on a Middle Eastern model, The Turkish Justice and Development Political Party (AK Party).

II. Exploring Governance of Political Parties

A. Literature Review:

On the 25\textsuperscript{th} of January 2011 Egypt has witnessed it greatest outcry for Freedom, Democracy, Social Justice and Human Dignity. Since that date and with all the obstacles facing this resilient country, there have been massive efforts by its citizens to create a new era of democracy, freedom and justice. Egypt in order to become a modern democratized country it has to build an institutionalized democracy, as mentioned earlier, that matches the advancement of the modern world, yet, provide a system that enhances economic development as both are quite crucial (Tupy, 2011). Institutionalized democracy consists of multiple institutions that help in the advancement of modern state. These institutions vary from governmental institutions to non-governmental and civil society organizations. However, a very important element of an institutionalized democracy is The Political Party, which is the focus of this thesis.

On reviewing the literature on political parties multiple diversified sources covering academic articles, books and reports were used. Most of them were issued
post the year 2000 in order to provide a fairly updated understanding of the area of research. The first element of literature review covered the basic historical background of political parties and what exactly makes a political party. The second element focused on understanding governance and facilitating the tools to be used to provide a complete view of political parties’ governance. The third focused on how to differentiate old parties from new parties. The fourth part illustrates international experiences that fall under the different categories illustrated by the **five** governance indicators of choice.

![Figure 1: The Five Pillars of Governance](image)

The foundation of political parties is said to go back to ancient Greece as the landowners constituted their political coalitions. However, we start to see political parties in the modern sense in the midst of the 18th Century with the political development of the West specifically France, England and the United States of America (Beck, 1997). A Political Party represents a group of citizens who share the same ideology, vision and policy mechanisms concerning the state governance. The party's ideology is derived from multiple political, social and economic
circumstances. Recently, with the advancement of management methods that have been affecting each and every institution, whether Profit or Non-Profit, political parties fail to be an exception. Political parties around the world, especially in democratic countries, have shown a great capacity of evolving as well. Today, political parties are complex, sophisticated and demand a lot of technical and administrative skills (Gunther & Diamond, 2003).

Political parties are not only ideological umbrellas to passionate citizens but they have become vital institutions that take part in the democratic governance of the state, sometimes without ideological inclinations. Political parties whether ruling, or taking part as oppositionists, are always exerting continuous relentless effort to bring out their best performance. The political parties struggle to increase: the number of supporters, funds and resources, political wins at different electoral levels and development of party leaders and representatives. Therefore, this requires the political party as an institution to be continuously on the run. It also requires the political party to adopt an organizational form with different departments that can continuously develop, serve, compete and ensure political advancement. In order to sum up their role and functions they can be clustered into the following: First, they target to ripen and spread specific ideological perspectives. Second, they target to enable political education and to embolden political involvement of both party members and electoral supporters. Third, they target to develop separable policies and to conglomerate them into a lucid general political platforms to be executed if the party is chosen by the people to govern or push forward by forming a strong opposition. Fourth, they take a vital part in political elections processes at the local, national and regional levels. Fifth, to win election they are obliged to find means to entice enough votes through the accumulation of interests. Sixth, Political parties are also considered to take a vital
part in the “institutionalization of conflict” as they offer contrivances or methods through which encounters can be “peacefully resolved” (Haggar, 2012).

The literature concerning political parties has been more than educating. The different international experiences enrich the understanding and study of political parties. Even though there is a shortage on studies considering governance indicators in relationship with political parties, yet we find a number of articles and studies on elements of governance and the internal management of political parties.

1. Understanding Governance

What is governance? According to Merriam Webster it is "the way a city, organization, country is controlled by the people who run it". In the simplest form of explaining this word we find that "governance" is one of the oldest acts that human beings were able to perform. "The concept of governance is not a new one. Early discussions go back to at least 400 BCE, to the Arthashastra, a treatise on governance attributed to Kautilya, thought to be the chief minister to the king of India. Kautilya presents key pillars of the “art of governance,” emphasizing justice, ethics, and anti-autocratic tendencies" (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2007). The importance of governance nowadays is no less important than it used to be back then. Governance has expanded as a field to cover major aspects of the human organizing activities whether Profit, Governmental or Non-Profit. Another definition published by the World Bank is “the exercise of political authority and the use of institutional resources to manage society’s problems and affairs” and therefore, the role of political responsibility is highly illustrated.
2. A New Political Party is Much More Than a New Name

What constitutes a new political party? The elements that identify a new party go beyond the choice of a new name. A new political party is defined by the newness of its members, voting pool, ideology, political/policy platform/program and political representatives (Barnea & Rahat, 2010). Professors Shlomit Barnea and Gideon Rahat developed an evaluation mechanism to evaluate new political parties. Why is it important to have a mechanism to identify new political parties from old? It is very important to be able to identify the difference especially in new democracies. First, the old guard of dictatorships can start a new political party in order to return to the political arena under a different cover. Second, new politicians can participate in the political arena adopting same old political party policies and governance mechanisms. Third, the characterization used by Barnea and Rahat helps in the identification of a political party and separating it from other political institutions that might play a similar role and to add on it also provide some guidance on how to formulate a political party instead of creating something in the abstract. Therefore, it is important to know that not all what shines is gold and not all newly founded political parties are new.
3. Good Governance Characteristics and the World’s Experience

The literature review is conducted in a format that matches the 5 pillars conceptual model developed earlier. Therefore, the data collected gives the reader a wide perspective on the pillars from the experience of other political parties and organizations.

a) Accountability and Transparency of Political Parties:

Financial, Administrative and Political actions by a political party are all subject to Accountability and Transparency. Transparency means that all of these actions must be done clearly to the public to decrease any kind of accusations that concerns the code of ethics of an organization. Accountability is that a clear process of ensuring liability, culpability and avoidance of conflict of interest is attained as much as possible.

Funding and financing transparency are very crucial for the administration of a political party and how they affect the structuring of party development (Booth &
Robbins, 2010). Money, usually, has the most focus that requires accountability and transparency as the resources of a political party are scarce. Biezen and Kopecký also focus on the development of political parties and their dependence on the state. They argue that the increasing role of the state in political parties has increased dependency and “incorporated” many political parties to public domain (Biezen & Kopecký, 2007). This becomes a problem when the State which is controlled by the government start funding the ruling party for example as in the Turkish example and it leads to the fear that both accountability and transparency are put in serious risk.

Another example is Japan which implemented a policy of providing financial assistance to political parties to provide more political party based politics rather than candidate based politics and electoral process. After performing a study on the effects of that system, Carlson provides us with the conclusion that there will always be politicians seeking loopholes to serve their agenda. The ruling party exploits the fact that it receives resources from the government which is under the ruling party control (Carlson, 2010).

b) Efficiency, Effectiveness and Political Responsiveness:

In any political party there are two critical selection choices made. The first is the selection of the party leadership and representatives (aka: party candidates) while identifying the role of the party membership. The choice of candidates is mainly designed according to the democratic norms in the political context. William Cross highlights the importance of five variables that constitute the candidates’ selection developed from a study performed on four Spanish political parties (Cross, Democratic Norms and Party Candidate Selection: Taking Contextual Factors into Account, 2008). The five variables are; the electoral system, the degree of inter-party general election competition, the openness of the system to the election of
independent candidates, whether representational demands are accommodated within or among parties, and the role of elected representatives in determining policy outcomes (Cross, Democratic Norms and Party Candidate Selection: Taking Contextual Factors into Account, 2008). In another article by William Cross and Andre Blais (2011) a beautiful quantitative analysis tackles the aspect of party leader choice. They conducted a huge study covering major political parties in UK, Canada, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. They found that the majority of the parties they studied there are more leaning to provide party members a greater influence in the party’s leader choice (Cross & Blais, 2010). This is very important as it shows a drastic difference from India as highlighted by Pradeep Chhibber (2011) on his analysis of the dynastic rule of political parties in India. This article shows that the dynastic rule and the lack of members’ voice causes political parties to be more volatile and less volatile. It is also highlighted that it opens rooms for corruption (Chhibber, 2011).

c) Equality and Inclusive Participation – The Voice

The empowerment of the members’ voices and participation in decision-making is a crucial relationship that defines the modern studying of political parties. Therefore, it is important to understand the empowerment of Party Members, Youth, Women and Minorities and last but not least local and Regional empowerment.

This is very important because it leads us to the first segment of “The Voice” which is concerned with the Youth. We find something that could be described as similar in William Cross and Lisa Young (2008) analysis on factors influencing politically engaged youth to join political parties. The study designed for the Canadian case provide very important information that non-political party-members do not join political parties because they are “suspicious” when it comes to the
political party’s “general democratic performance”, as well as their “efficacy in achieving social and political change” and the lack of belief that ordinary grassroots members can influence party decision making. Therefore when we get to understand that the youth party members are more likely to have a “parent” who is a party member, we are not really surprised (Cross & Young, 2008). Political parties in Europe are facing a decline in memberships, discrepancy in average age in comparison with country’s population (Scarrow & Gezgor, ScarroDeclining Memberships, Changing Members? European Political Party Members in a New Era, 2010).

The second segment of members who is considered to be relatively new is women (Kittilson, 2010). Miki Kittilson provided a systematic analysis of 142 political parties in 24 post-industrial democracies from 1990 focusing on the role of women in the midst of political parties. Kittilson’s work manifested that the rise of women’s role in political parties contribute more to an illumination on Social Justice, Gender Equity and the expansion of the Welfare State. However, women are still underrated and lack inclusiveness to the political parties as statistics show that women constitute only 19% of European parliaments (IPU, 2012) and not only women and youth who could be undermined in political parties but also, minorities. The third segment, Ethnic minorities, are generally underrepresented (Togeby, 2008). Lise Togeby emphasizes that ethnic minorities are usually undermined even in Europe but in Denmark 2001 and particularly in the local elections this was an exception. Togeby states that internal elections adopting a proportional or a preferential voting are the main explanatory elements behind this phenomenon. The fourth segment: In her study of the British and Spanish cases Elodie Fabre (2009) highlights the importance of this relationship and amplifies the importance of regional autonomy without losing a stake
in central decision-making (Fabre, 2010). Pieter Van Houten (2009) designed a similar study in which the role of delegation to regional levels was highlighted and showed to have improved the performance of the parties.

d) Party’s Stability

Margit Tavits (2010) discovered through studying the Estonian political case that local political ties are very substantial in the choice of a political candidate. She also notifies us that it provides the political representatives with more independency that sometimes erodes political party ties. The independency provided and the empowerment of the role of local political parties is very important and will be highlighted throughout the case study. Political parties that succeed in having independent strong branches at the local level create a school for future leaders and it allows the development of the members at the local level. This is also very important for the party’s political stability. Political parties with a capacity to absorb different opinions within and empowers its localities rather than the center gives more room for differences. Pedersen (2010) studies eleven political parties in the Denmark to understand the role of intra-politics in deciding and shaping parties’ political behavior especially in political coalitions. The study shows that even though political parties seem to act as a unitary body the internal politics decide the behavior of the political party. The rigidity towards parties’ ideals and the strength of the political party organization might decrease the tendency of smoothness within shared political coalitions and create divisions. Some Egyptian political parties have witnessed violence during the transition of power process. In 2006 a huge dispute occurred between the different Wafd leaders about the governance of the party and transition of power, which first exposed the party to the media as an infringed party especially when the members had to take their case to the court. However, things did not end
here and the escalation led to violence and flames at the Wafid headquarters (Pakinam, 2006).

e) Members’ Development

Development of members is a crucial element for good governance within any organization. It is very important that this process provide incentives for human development (UNDP, 1997). Members’ development and especially at the local level and youth is seen as something essential for sustainable good governance (Local Development Reform (LDR), 2011). Members’ development became more crucial than ever as the World Economic Forum projected that there will be serious talent voids in different parts of the world by the year 2020 (Aziz, 2011).

Different scholars discussed and studied political parties from different perspectives but I presented the literature review to conform to the different dimension of governance in my conceptual model: Transparency & Accountability (Anti-Corruption Mechanisms) / Efficiency, Effectiveness and Political Responsiveness. / Party Stakeholder’s Voice: Equality and Inclusive Participation. / Party Members Development: Leadership & Incentives / Political Party Stability and Lack of Violence: Peaceful Transition of Power. The literature review did not provide my research with all the information needed and therefore, I plan that my fieldwork will fill the gap of the literature needed.
III. **Turkey’s Justice & Development Party - Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AK Partisi)**

Turkey, the republic, was raised upon the ruins of the Ottoman Empire in 1923. The relatively new republic was based on extremely secular bases by its founding father Mustafa Kamal Ataturk⁴ (1881-1938) (Mansfield, 2003). Although he died seventy four years ago, Ataturk’s legacy still remains in the thoughts and imaginations of the Turkish people and this could be evident just by roaming around the cities of Ankara and Istanbul⁵. It is important to know that from general observation by the researcher and others it is quite palpable that this charismatic fatherly figure of an inspirational leader such as Ataturk has its shadows on Turkish politics until today. The republic, which replaced the Islamic caliphate back then,

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⁴ *Ataturk* means the father of the Turks

⁵ The researcher conducted field research in these two major Turkish cities.
based all its policies and principles of foundation around the Western secular model manifested in the tireless efforts of Ataturk to remove remarkable linkage with Islam starting from the language which was forced to change its letters from Arabic, the language of the Quran, to Latin (Mansfield, 2003). This was seen as a profound yet symbolic endeavor. It symbolized that Turkey was moving west with all its momentum under the leadership of its hero, Ataturk. A student of history might draw similarities between Ataturk’s and Nasser’s endeavors and the fact that both adopted secular populist policies and transferred their countries political systems into a one party system that controls everything. The military champion figure is also something that both share.

A continuous struggle was created between the secular westernized forces and the religious based forces. After the adoption of multiparty system and the emergence of a fragile democracy, a government led by Adnan Menderes was elected. His government was more progressive when it dealt with Islam and was described to be at peace with Islamic values (Aktay, 2012). However, this was met by a military coup and Menderes was executed in 1960 after ten years of economic and political progress. The rise of Islamic oriented social and political movements was continuously met with military oppression. The military didn’t mind performing multiple coups against elected governments whether in 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997. As much as some would consider this to be a negative thing the Islamists themselves especially the moderate/reformists benefited from each experience and learned how to

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6 Adnan Menderes was the first democratically elected Prime Minister as the Democratic Party leader and created social peace with Islamic groups. Menderes’s party was center right just like AK Party and Menderes ruled for 10 prosperous years (Aktay, 2012).
evolve. Starting from the Welfare Party founded by, the Milli-Gorus\(^7\) Leader, Necmettin Erbakan to the Justice and Development party founded by his disciple, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Tezcür, 2010). In a way moderate and conservative Islamists founded two paths. The first was just like the old led by Erbakan himself which crystalized in Felicity Party\(^8\) and the other was more modern and more adaptive crystalized in the Justice and Development Party. “My party’s name is Justice and Development Party and my priority is justice and without justice you can never have development” Erdoğan emphasized in an interview hosted by Charlie Rose’s show (Erdoğan, Charlie Rose Show, 2011). Erdoğan’s leadership gave the Turkish people a biased government towards them that did not treat them in a snobish manner just like prior secular ones and Erdoğan administration and accomplishments resembeled the good days of Menderes and Turgut Özal (Aktay, 2012). The similarities between the Egyptian and Turkish context on this aspect are quite interesting. The state in Egypt which was led by military members dealt with Islamists in Egypt in the same manner and the iron fist was on only held still by the 25\(^{th}\) of January, 2011 revolution.

Erdoğan and his comrades drifted from the traditional school of thinking politics and Islam. They shifted their platform to the center and were able to touch upon the sensitive policy issues of the society, the socioeconomic aspect. They were also able to adopt a pro-European Union membership platform and they were able to attain multiple reforms on both the economic and political levels (Tezcür, 2010). AK grabbed observers’ attention as they pushed for liberalization and prodemocracy

\(^7\) Milli Gorus: “National Vision” (English). Identification: This is a Turkish Islamist movement founded by Necmettin Erbakan. Scholars relate the Milli Gorus ideas and behavior to the Muslim Brotherhood (Vidino, 2005).

\(^8\) Felicity Party, Saadet Partisi (Turkish), was founded just prior to AK Party and consists of Conservative Islamists. The party didn’t win Parliamentary seats and lost severely to Erdoğan’s AK Party (Nasr, 2005). The party denounce joining the EU, capitalism, relations with the US and Israel that used to rant AK Party as “traitors and corrupt” (Akyol M. , Meanwhile, in the Islamist Camp, 2010).
policies. They played an important role in including ethnic minorities especially the Kurds as part of the Turkish fabric and also became a vital force in facing the military’s oligarchy (Tezcür, 2010). AK party has taken a series of refined policies that achieved continuous high economic growth reaching an average of 7.5% to be the second swiftly growing economy after China (Turkey Becomes World’s Second Highest Growing Economy). AK party succeeded to retain Turkey’s foreign policy glamour through adopting policies championed by the statesman Professor Ahmed Davutoglu, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs. On the progress of the AK Party’s government the Economist published a report in 2007 that says that AK Party’s government is one of the best in decades. AK party, which was only founded in 2001, was able to achieve landslide victories in parliamentary elections in 2002, 2007 and 2011 (Akman, 2012). In each parliamentary election they were able to secure enough quorums to form the government unanimously (Cengiz & Hoffmann, 2011). All of these elements combined created a great appeal for Turkey, AK Party and Erdoğan in specific in Arab and Islamic countries and Egypt is no exception. “I am not a rock star, I am a politician” this is how PM Erdoğan replied to Fareed Zakaria when the latter stated that the former’s reputation and popularity reached sky high in countries Erdoğan visited post the Arab Spring especially Egypt (Erdoğan, GPS Program-CNN, 2011). However, perhaps Erdoğan’s political management played a very important role in such success. He was able to minimize the Turkish people’s expectations as he told them not to expect anything from AK Party till they finish 3 years of their first term and yet before the time was up he was able to reduce the budget deficit as well as the public debt and inflation rate and massively start on increasing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), a strategy well designed and implemented (Başçı, 2012).
Figure 3: AK Party achievements (Political, Economic and Social)

A. AK Party: A New Political Party?

AK Party is a model for the application or lack of application of the 5 pillars of governance. These pillars explain the main elements behind the AK Party’s success and also explain some of the criticisms directed towards AK Party. Before AK Party gets placed into the 5 pillars grid an important question must be asked: Is AK Party a new party? Going back to the grid designed by Professors Barnea Shlomit, and Gideon Rahat, we find that AK Party was designed to be selective when it comes to building its identity in which the party is mostly new however; it carries an old heritage until today (Barnea & Rahat, 2010).
Table 2 "AK Party: A New Political Party?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Face</th>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Operational definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Party in the electorate</strong></td>
<td><em>Party Label</em></td>
<td>Is the name (of the AK Party) genuinely new or does it contain an “old” party name? There has not been a party with the full name of “Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi”. However, there has been a party with the name “Adalet Partisi” (Justice Party) and it was a descendant of the legendary (banned by the Military) “Demokrat Partisi” (Democratic Party). DP was headed by the first democratically elected Turkish leader Adnan Menderes (Dodd, 1992). There was also a party called “Milli Kalkınma Partisi” (National Development Party) which was one of the first opposition parties to the Attaturkian Secular Left Republican People’s Party aka “Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi CHP” (Özgişi, 2011). AK Party created a correlation between the party and the popular DP (Aktay, 2012). The adoption of the party’s name could be one of the reasons. However, it is generally attributed to the similarities between the two parties’ policy platforms (Aktay, 2012). Prime Minister Erdoğan insists that the abbreviation to the party shall be “AK Partisi/Party” and he called those who name it “AKP” as “shameless”. There is a reason behind that, a smart one indeed, which is that “AK” in Turkish means “spotless white” or “Clean” (Uzer, 2009).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Ideology** | How different in the ‘new’ party platform from the old one’s? As mentioned above it is actually seen |
that AK Party is the heir to the Center-Right policy platform in Turkey (Aktay, 2012). However, things are disputed when it comes to the political Islamic ideology. Abdel Kader Önen (2012), one of the major AK Party leaders and also a member of parliament stressed that AK Party positions itself as a “modern Conservative Democrat”. The same thing was illustrated by AK Party Leader Erdoğan in his television 2011 interview with Egyptian presenter, Mona El Shazly. In this Interview he highlighted the concept of “Conservative Democrat”. He also highlighted his understanding of “secularism” as “the state holding the same distance from all religions” however this does not negate the people’s right to be religious and that he identifies himself as a Muslim. Even though many “western” literatures present AK Party as a continuation to Erbakan’s Welfare and Virtue Party, key members of the party and the regime as well as political commentators insist that they are beyond that, they are Muslim keen on Islamic ethics but not Islamist by which they do not seek an “Islamic State” that imposes a one view on Sharia law. “The secularists are shocked by this change, which they see as the end of the good-old hyper-secular Turkey. But the ideological Islamists
are shocked, too, for they think that their fellow Muslims are becoming too pragmatic and worldly. And that is perhaps where the most interesting part of the story lies” (Akyol M., How 'Islamist' is the AKP?, 2010). As a matter of fact MP Abdulkadir Önen as well as Prime Ministry Undersecretary Efkan Ala⁹ (2012) highlighted that AK Party is a party for all Turks. This was rather explained in Professor Hakan Yafuz’s interparty statistics which state that 27% of AK Party label themselves Islamists, 15% Rightists, 14% Democrats, 10% Conservative, 10% Social Democrats, 6% Nationalists, 3% kemalists and 3% Nationalists Conservatives (Uzer, 2009). It is important to note that the government that resigned in 1997 due to military pressure, included a coalition of the Welfare party and the Democrat Party in which AK Party was able to absorb both streams and more.

| Voters | How different is the new party electoral base from the old one? If AK Party is being correlated with the Welfare Party or Virtue Party then the answer would be: it is definitely wider. Erbakan’s parties were never capable of securing enough votes to take on government unanimously. However, from its first |

⁹ Efkan Ala is the Turkish Prime Ministry Undersecretary. He also served as a Governor and he enjoys a long history of public service.
elections AK Party was capable of securing a landslide victory to form the government unanimously. This hegemony continued for three consecutive parliamentary elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party as Organization</th>
<th>Formal and Legal Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is the party registered as new?</strong> Formally and Legally AK Party is a separate entity. Erdoğan and his reformist comrades took a distinct path from their leader Erbakan after the shutdown of the Virtue Party. Two different paths that resulted in AK Party and Felicity Party.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Were the party institutions separated and differentiated from those of the old party/ies?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is no organizational connection between AK Party or the disbanded Virtue Party or Democrat Party.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activists and Representatives</th>
<th>Does the ‘new’ party have new activists or did they ‘immigrate’ to it from old parties?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starting from the leadership this is definitely the case (Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül). However, as it was mentioned above the party was capable of adopting new figures and various ideologies within it. Solid Islamists constitute only 27% of the Party (Uzer, 2009).</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party in Government</th>
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</table>
How different are the ‘new’ party’s policies from the old parties?

When it comes to a comparison between AK Party and Virtue Party, it is fair to describe them as less vocal on Islamism (Uzer, 2009) and more focused on the application of their economic, social and political policies (Tezcür, 2010) in which their advancements and accomplishments can only be resembled by Menderes even though AK Party’s progress has reached further horizons (Aktay, 2012).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: "Erbakan and Erdogan go different ways"

The literature about AK Party mostly revolves around the secular vs. Islamist debate completely disregarding analysis of the internal mechanisms and methods of governance of this giant successful machine. Thus, my research focuses on filling the gaps. I find through my governance indicators the secrets of the strengths and weaknesses of this party. The thesis provides a new understanding of the party’s
characteristics as an enormous political machine; it explores the party’s internal powerful efficient structure which is often based on the character of its leader, its strong grassroots that forms a strong political organization, clear tangible strategy, and “leadership in the context of its organizational environment—including its constitution, major veto players as well as international actors are also important to understand the context within which the AKP flourishes” (Byraz, 2010). The thesis also investigates pitfalls attributed to lack of good governance that enhances autocratic behavior and limits intra-party democracy (Musil, Authoritarian Party Structures and Democratic Political Setting in Turkey, 2011).

Table 3 "The AK Party Structure"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural Skeleton</th>
<th>Organizations</th>
<th>Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Assembly</td>
<td>- Women</td>
<td>- Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head</td>
<td>- Youth</td>
<td>- Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Board</td>
<td>- Other</td>
<td>- Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Board</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Provincial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Town</td>
<td>A Replica Unit</td>
<td>- Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- District</td>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>- group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Province</td>
<td>Borders If</td>
<td>- Municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Central</td>
<td>Necessary</td>
<td>- Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- General Assembly</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Party Leader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Central Decision</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Administrative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Central Executive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Party structure is based on democratic principles that empower the different elements of governance within the party. The party is based on multiple levels that we can classify as bottom-up approach. The highest decision-making and supervisory body is the General Assembly followed by the Central Decision-making and Administrative committee (CDAC), then the Central Executive Committee and the party is led by the Party’s Chairman and Chairman’s Deputies (Önen\textsuperscript{10}, 2012). The structure is replicated on the different levels (State, Province and District) as elaborated in the table above as long as the existence of other organizations and entities as it is elaborated later. “We have people in every city and almost everywhere in Turkey and we are as organized as a military” Önen assertively described his party. The party’s structure strongly emphasizes a great desire by the architects to ensure efficiency, effectiveness, political responsiveness and members’ development. However practices within the party that represents its attitude on: inclusiveness, transparency and accountability remain questionable if not harshly criticized by different experts. However, the structure in itself provides room for the repair of some of these practices if implemented.

\textsuperscript{10} Abdulkadir Emin Önen is a Member of Parliament and a member at the foreign affairs committee. He is also Vice-Chairman of AK Party’s foreign affairs committee.
B. The Central General Assembly

The Central General Assembly is composed of representatives of the different Turkish provinces. The General Assembly is responsible for electing the Party Chairman, the members of the Central Decision-making and Administrative committee (CDAC), the Central Disciplinary Board and the members of the Central Referee Board for Democracy. The General Assembly has the authority to amend the program and Charter of the Party, to approve or reject final revenue and expense accounts, to discuss and finalize next year’s budget and the CDAC’s annual report and to release the Party management from responsibility. In addition, the Central General Assembly takes binding or non-binding decisions of a general nature regarding matters concerning society and the state, public activities and the Party’s policies, as well as taking decisions regarding the dissolution of the Party, its merging with another Party and to determine how the assets of the Party should be disposed of in case of dissolution. It can also perform other duties specified in laws and the
Party’s Charter and to discuss and finalize items on its agenda (Organization - AK Party, 2007).

C. The Central Decision-making and Administrative Committee (CDAC)

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 6 "Illustrators to different roles on General Assembly meetings"

The Central Decision-making and Administrative Committee consist of 50 elected members. They are elected by the General Assembly as mentioned above. The term for their rule is almost three years and the scheduled ordinary meetings by the General Assembly confine the terms unless they were replaced in an extraordinary emergency meeting. They are responsible for implementing or requesting the implementation of the provisions of the Party Charter and Program and the decisions of the General Assembly. They are also responsible for taking measures to ensure that the entire Party organization is in a state of productive and effective consensus through facilitating the necessary coordination between all ranks of the Party. They also take lead in preparing documents related to Party policies and making them effective by setting up specialized committees and offices that work on these policies at the same time they determine working methods and principles as they authorize the Central Executive Committee. They also ensure that the Party’s organizational different
positions and executive authorities are upholding democratic procedures. The CDAC carries out all necessary organizational tasks and creates needed measures and regulations within the framework of the law. They also have the authority to set up a Party organization where redeemed vital. Additionally, they are required as elected from the General Assembly to stimulate the Party’s values and objectives and to design, instrument or enquire for the operation of the tasks essential for this mission.

Figure 7 "Central Decision and Administrative Committee"

- The Implementation of the Party Charter, Plan and Program. By which it supervises the organizations performance and coordinate between its different levels
- Prepare policy papers and making sure they get implemented by designing the framework of the Central Executive Committee
- Supervise party’s different ranks and make sure that they are working in a democratic manner
- Responsible to find necessary means to initiate a political school to train, educate and develop party members
- Organize meetings with Parliamentary group to makes sure that platform is well communicated
- It takes part in elections strategy and in the choice of candidates for Parliament, Mayoralships, Municipal and Provincial General Assemblies
- It is responsible of supervising the annual plan/report before submission to the Central General Assembly
- Manages Party's assests
- Dissolve the party in case of General Assembly’s absence
- Determine the number of executive members as proposed by the Committee’s leader (Party Leader)
- Takes the decision when it comes to international organizations membership as well as foreign based offices

The Party’s website refers also to their desire to create an Academic institute and gives the right of founding this Political Academic Institute to the CDAC. The political school is intended predominantly to offer those working as part of the Party, whether leaders or members, the chance to “train, educate, develop and adopt a culture of democracy” (AK Party Website). The CDAC by far is an essential committee in constructing the Party’s platform. The platform includes strategic policy issues that involve Turkey, the region and the entire world. The Party’s Charter also
puts a responsibility of political communication and transparency in which CDAC is entitled “to announce these (Policies) to the general public, if necessary” (Charter - AK Party, 2007). They are also responsible for transcending these policies to their political arms. This makes the CDAC the critical engine in AK Party that communicates the platform to the Party’s Parliamentary Group. The CDAC as an elected body along with CEC and the Party leader have a mandate of the preparations of the budgets necessary for the party’s plan. They have mandate as well to review and take decisions concerning the budgets. Together with the plans and budgets at hand CDAC is responsible to inform the different departments about their different tasks. This gives the different Party ranks the capability of being continuously aware of the different departments’ work. The CDAC exclusively makes all key resolutions associated with elections, a rule heavily criticized by specialists in that field such as Pelin Musil. The CDAC has the authority regarding the choice of “candidates for membership in Parliament, mayoral-ships and for municipal and provincial general assemblies” (AK Party Charter). Musil believes that this is part of AK Party’s great downfalls as it proves itself to be another “authoritarian” political party in Turkey (Musil, Authoritarian Party Structures and Democratic Political Setting in Turkey, 2011). Elections strategy and performance is by far a very vital affair that is why the CDAC is responsible by the doctrines of the Charter to constitute all types of election instruments, tasks and strategic plans related to elections and to supervise or ask a specific entity for the administration of the Party’s election-related activities (Charter - AK Party, 2007). As covered before in the General Assembly section, the GA is the one responsible for approving the budget and the annual report but the CDAC is the one responsible for the final submission. The purchase and sale of the party’s assets is rather given to the CDAC than the CEC. This sustains a very important equation that
includes two variables; accountability and efficiency. The Charter gives the CDAC
the role “to terminate the Party and take all necessary decisions, except for
amendments to the Program and Charter, at times when the Party General Assembly
is unable to convene due to circumstances beyond its control” as elaborated in the
Charter (Charter - AK Party, 2007). The CDAC as an elected body from the General
Assembly, headed by the Party Chairman (Leader), decides upon the number of
executive seats on the Central Executive Committee (CEC) and the lower execution
offices. This process is done upon the proposed scheme of the Party Chairman
(Leader), the CDAC can also add or remove seats from the CEC when redeemed
necessary (Charter - AK Party, 2007). The CDAC has the authority to take decisions
regarding “the membership of the Party in international organizations, within the
confines of the law, as well as upon the proposals for foreign-based representative
offices, as per Article 20 of the Charter” (Charter - AK Party, 2007). The CDAC
exercises all authority between the commencements of two General Assemblies or at
times of recessions, given that all decisions and tasks carried on do not go against AK
Party’s laws, regulations or the general national Turkish law (Organization - AK
Party, 2007).
D. The Central Executive Committee (CEC)

The Central Executive Committee is the highest executive board of the AK Party. The board is chosen by the Party Chairman from amongst the members of the CDAC upon the proposal of the Party Chairman (Charter - AK Party, 2007). The composition of the board consists of the main elements of governing the party. This includes the Party Chairman himself, his deputies who head the different committees, the General Secretary, the Parliamentary Group (PG) President, the Municipalities and Provinces (MPG) Deputies Group President, the Youth Organization Chairman and the Woman Organization Chair Woman. As mentioned above the members of the CEC are appointed by the Party Chairman (Leader), however, it is worth noting that this is with the exception of the PG and MPG Presidents (Charter - AK Party, 2007). This is very important to understand especially as it is explained later on in the Charter that the Party Chairman (Leader) has the right to dismiss a CEC member (appointed). This right is also given to the CDAC if two thirds of its members give a
vote of no confidence to a member of CEC. The members of the CEC have the right to appoint specialists and associates after the approval of the Committee’s Head, the Party’s Chairperson. The CEC is considered to be an agile committee with few members and a requirement to meet at least once per week and its decisions are usually conducted by a simple majority with a quorum that includes the majority of its members (Charter - AK Party, 2007). However, a lot of critique is directed towards this aspect as the CEC leaves many decisions to the Party Chairman, PM Erdoğan, to take decisions in an autocratic fashion (Musil, 2010, 2011). The functions of the CEC are focused on execution of goals and strategies set by both the General Assembly and the CDAC. Its relations with the rest of the boards as well as the CDAC and the General Assembly, are very

![Figure 9 "Central Executive Committee Structure"](image-url)
important, because these relationships magnify whether the principles of checks and balances and balance of power exist or not. The CEC is responsible for training AK Party members and developing them in order to provide the highest level of proficiency for the party. The CEC coordinates the work between the different committees at all levels and synchronizes their work together. It also directs the relations with the government, other parties and organizations. Logically enough, the CEC is the one responsible for political responsiveness as it develops stances on emerging issues and presents them to the Party Leader (AK Party Charter). As the executive arm developed from within the CDAC, the CEC is responsible for informing all members about CDAC decisions and strategies. This is also apparent in conducting the General Assembly meetings. Even though the General Assembly meetings have fixed dates or can be called for by other means specifically by the CDAC, as the Charter states, the CEC is the one responsible for conducting and organizing the General Assembly meetings. The AK Party Charter organizes the work between the CDAC and the CEC in which it leaves room for the CEC to present its own views and strategies; however, they cannot overlap CDAC specialties. These ideas are set immediately as part of the CDAC’s agenda. However, the CDAC can alter them or reject them if enough votes were secured. On big project like the constitution amendments you would find them both working side by side and the CEC has a role in that (Yavuz, 2008). The work of the CEC is divided amongst its eleven departments, headed by the Chairman’s
Deputies, in addition to a Secretary General and the two affiliated organizations; Youth and Women.

1. The Women Wing (WW)

   The WO is one of the organizations affiliated to AK Party as stated by the AK Party Charter (Kadin Kollari - AK Party, 2011). The organization mainly performs variant activities that guarantee the eminent participation of women to public and political domains and to take a participatory role in improving “educational, health and employment opportunities” (Affiliated Organizations - AK Party, 2007). The AK Party’s WO plays a very important role by instituting partnerships and networks with relevant NGOs and both national and international women’s organizations. The WO conducts projects designed to enhance the lives of the Turkish women. The WO plays a very important role in policy making within the party as it conducts activities that keep AK Party always updated with the vital policy issues relevant to women in Turkey as well as help in formulating solutions for them (Affiliated Organizations - AK Party, 2007). Their vital role within AK Party increased the party’s credibility and derived the Economist to publish an article telling Turkish women that AK Party is better for women more than they think (The Economist, 2007). The WO Chairwoman, currently Ms. Güldal Akşit, is also a member of the Central Executive Committee as constituted by AK Party regulations (Affiliated Organizations - AK Party, 2007). The numbers of female Members of Parliament increased significantly in 2011 election to become 78 (14%). Even though this is considered the highest numbers to be reached they are still less than the European average (19%). It is noteworthy to highlight the role of AK Party and its Woman Organization was quite significant as they are represented by 45 members of the 78 which is highest among other parties (Senkyr, 2011).
2. Youth Wing (YW)

The YW is established with the aim of developing a new generation of politicians who would serve Turkey as well as AK Party (Yönetim - AK Parti Gençlik Kollari, 2008). The YW or the “Gençlik Kollari” as it is called in Turkish is very similar in structure to the Party’s main organization and they are given the capacity to exercise management and leadership within their scope. They also work on identifying Youth strategic issues and problems and providing solutions for it and submitting them to the Party specialized committees. The YW is very important in spreading the Party’s principles and beliefs amongst the youth especially university students who have a specific department within the YW (Affiliated Organizations - AK Party, 2007). “The ranks, management and executive boards of the Women’s and Youth branches exercise within their organizations the same authority as that of the Party’s main tier organizations” (Affiliated Organizations - AK Party, 2007). These are the departments one can find in the YO: Political and Legal Affairs, Organization, Electoral Affairs, Publicity and Media, Foreign Affairs, Social Affairs, Universities Presidency, Public Relations, Local Governments, Economic and Financial Affairs, Research and Development and finally the General Secretary.

An Explanatory Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AK Party (Organization)</th>
<th>Youth Organization</th>
<th>Women Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political and Legal Affairs</td>
<td>Political and Legal Affairs</td>
<td>Political and Legal Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electoral Affairs</td>
<td>Electoral Affairs</td>
<td>Electoral Affairs</td>
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<td>Publicity and Media</td>
<td>Publicity and Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign Relations &amp; Foreign Representative Offices</td>
<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Foreign Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Affairs</td>
<td>Social Affairs</td>
<td>Social Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Administrations</td>
<td>Local Governments</td>
<td>Local Governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Affairs</td>
<td>Economic and Financial Affairs</td>
<td>Economic and Financial Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
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<td>Financial and Administrative Affairs</td>
<td>Financial and Administrative Affairs</td>
<td>Financial and Administrative Affairs</td>
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<td>Research and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Secretary</td>
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<td>General Secretary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Universities Presidency</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11 "AK Party's Executive Committees (Explanatory Table)"
3. Political and Legal Affairs

This department is responsible for setting the general policy and political framework derived from the political context in addition to the Party’s Charter and platform. This department is also responsible for developing political expressions that would be correlated to AK Party or to a certain phase as part of the political communication design. This is coordinated with the Spokesmen as well with the publicity and media engines (CEC - AK Party, 2007).

4. Organization

This is the department that coordinates between the different levels of the structure; towns, villages, counties and provinces. It makes sure that they are aligned on the same vision and party principles. It trains the different ranks on their positions and job functions within the party and gives them a general orientation about the Party’s Charter, principles and rules. They also train them on understanding the Party organs, political context, political ethics and policies. Additionally, they are responsible for very important procedures which are general evaluation meetings. These meetings are for AK Party members at all levels in which they evaluate AK Party progress and democratic culture (CEC - AK Party, 2007).

5. Electoral Affairs

This is a vital department for an organization that aims to assume power. The department is responsible to keep the party always at state of readiness for any electoral endeavor. They are responsible for designing electoral campaigns and monitoring them to ensure excellent implementation. They are the ones who are always ready to know who would serve as AK Party’s candidates to serve its plans. They also represent AK Party at the Higher Elections Board of Turkey that supervises elections procedures in Turkey. Since this is a very dynamic department, we find it
joining forces with other departments in order to achieve AK Party superiority in elections. One will find this department working with the Organization department on the roles of the members during the elections. One will also find it working with the Financial Affairs department on the elections’ budget preparations. The department trains the volunteers and specialized members on the elections process and equips them with finest and latest techniques and methods. This is a very instrumental department as its affect is evident in AK Party electoral results (CEC - AK Party, 2007).

6. Publicity and Media department

This is responsible for publicizing AK Party policies as well as the advancements of the government. It is also responsible for dealing with media agencies and other mass communication tools. The department also compiles all media material concerning AK Party. This way AK Party analyzes everything that entangles AK Party in the various media (CEC - AK Party, 2007).

7. Foreign Relations and Foreign Representative Offices:

This department is responsible for dealing with organizations and institutions that shape foreign policy making. It is also responsible to deal with other parties around the world. Lately with the increase in the importance of the European Union countries, the department has been playing a very important role when it comes to deals with parties in these countries. They also increase relations with parties in different countries in the region (Önen, 2011). The department conducts a very important role in lobbying for both AK Party and Turkey in strategic countries. The department works on developing favorable connections in these countries to facilitate economic and political relations. One of the very special tasks for this department is that it is responsible for creating an “interflow” of information between the public and
AK Party when it comes to foreign policy. Another very important role is that the department acts as a hub for AK Party officials, civil society, Academic institutions and relevant institutions to create AK Party foreign policy platform. The department is also responsible to set, manage and supervise AK Party offices abroad (CEC - AK Party, 2007).

8. Social Affairs Department

It prepares projects related to social issues in line with the principles of the Program and Charter of the Party as well as the concept of “social state” as set forth in the Constitution. It develops policies and organizes activities related to several aspects of social life such as education, culture and the arts, health, social security, employment, women, family, social services, youth and sports. Promotes activities and devises projects aimed at alleviating poverty and corruption, establishing contacts and engaging in cooperative efforts with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) related to social issues as well as acting as a bridge for dialogue between the Party and such NGOs (CEC - AK Party, 2007).

9. Local Administrations Department

It serves as an agent for integration between the different municipalities and the party. They also train them and equip them with latest tools and information relevant to their work. The department in a way acts as a consultant to the Provincial Chairmen in which they estimate the problems and guide them into solutions. The department organizes data for local elections, conducts fieldwork and interviews in
coordination with the Electoral Affairs department. They also play a very technical role when it comes to studying local administration and proposing best practices to help enhance the Turkish system. They work with civil society to understand their needs and they also work with NGOs specialized in local governance and decentralization (CEC - AK Party, 2007).

10. The Economic Affairs Department

It observes monitors and evaluates economic development in Turkey. From its name this department is concerned with economic affairs. Therefore, it is not surprising to find this department working on developing all kind of documents relevant to the economy of Turkey or the world. According to AK Party’s website these documents (research results, policy papers, analyses, etc.) are shared with “the Party Chairman, the Party Administration, the Parliamentary Group and related commissions” which plays a very important role in forming the Party’s economic policies. The Department is also responsible to intermittently provide economic data to the CEC (CEC - AK Party, 2007).

11. Public Relations

The department carries out the responsibility of communicating with the different stakeholders. These are classified as individual citizens, NGOs, government institutes and other social groups. The department is responsible to conduct periodic meetings with the various stakeholders to keep in touch with the public. The department also manages the AK Party Communications Center (AKİM) which is discussed below (AKİM - AK Party, 2007).
12. Financial and Administrative Affairs:

Financial accountability has always been one of the important aspects of any organization. This department is created to oversee all “financial affairs, expenses and revenues of the headquarters in line with appropriate accounting principles” it also manages financial agreements as defined by law, regulations and the Party’s Charter. The department formulates the annual budget and submits it to the CEC which then submits it to the CDAC before it gets presented at the General Assembly (CEC - AK Party, 2007).

13. Research and Development

Strategic planning is a concept that transcends business corporations and is now very evident in the various non-profit organizations (Bryson, 2004). Political parties are no exception. This department conducts strategic planning to provide the best path for the implementation of the principles specified in the Party Program and Charter. This is the department where new ideas get developed through adopting modern methods of polling and understanding the people’s needs. The department is responsible to create the Party’s image and how it shall be perceived. It can also create think tanks and organize Party training activities (Organization - AK Party, 2007).

14. General Secretary

It is headed by the Secretary General is responsible to keep track and document all procedures and decisions taken by the CDAC and the CEC. The office is therefore assigned for the agenda settings of the two boards. “The Office of the Secretary-General is the Party’s correspondence and contact unit. All official and intra-party correspondences of the Party are conducted under the surveillance and supervision of the Secretary-General and by the mediation of the Unit of the Secretary-General”.

Figure 13 “AK Party Budget Process”
The office is also responsible for the organizational memory of AK Party (CEC - AK Party, 2007).

Furthermore, there are other organizational compositions in AK Party that add to its dynamics and good governance. These minor organizations are very important for instance AKIM, a great tool to understand and respond to the citizens’ needs. OKM an organization aimed to serve Turkey’s handicapped. This organization was formed after a suggestion from an AK Party member and Erdoğan only condition was for her to head this organization (Musil, Authoritarian Party Structures and Democratic Political Setting in Turkey, 2011). In addition to these two organizations there are two important boards; an Arbitrary Board and a Disciplinary Board. These two are very important to ensure checks and balances with the party as well as good governance.

a) AKİM (AK Party İletişim Merkazi)

AK Party founded a specialized communication center that is entangled with working with the public in a professional method. AKİM is one of the tools that replicate the corporate culture to achieve accountability and communicate the people’s voice. For instance AKİM “records all requests, claims and opinions that are incoming to the Party via telephone, fax, e-mail, post or in person and conveys these to the related Prime Ministry, party body or MP” (AKİM - AK Party, 2007). One of AKİM’s many tasks is to provide the public with an instant response to their

Figure 14 "AKİM within AK Party"
enquiries and complaints. Similar to a multinational company, this service is provided twenty four hours a day for the seven days of the week. AK Party understands that their citizens want to be heard and therefore this service gives them a chance to be heard and transmit their thoughts, complaints and ideas to the specialized entity. Not only that but also the gist of this service is to get back to the citizens. This is very similar to customer service concept in business endeavors. This is what AKİM have to say about their mission: “Our goal with this system is to hear each one of our citizens and record all of their requests, demands and complaints. Citizens applying to the AKİM can find out if their requests can be realized and, if not, are given the opportunity to know why” (AKİM - AK Party, 2007).

b) OKM
Disability is a serious issue in Turkey, the Prime Ministry of Administration for Persons with Disabilities, stated that 12.29% of the Turkish population classified as disabled, 1.25% classified as “orthopedically impaired”, with 0.37% classified as visually impaired and finally 0.48% as mentally impaired” (Karabat, 2009). AK Party regarded these important figures with care and therefore created a center for the Handicapped. The center works with the Social Affairs committee on identifying their problems and coming up with permanent strategic policies and solutions (Organization - AK Party, 2007).

c) YKM
Elderly citizens in Turkey are estimated to be 6.3% of the Turkish population (The World Factbook, 2012). AK Party founded a specialized center for Elderly citizens in order to deal directly with this segment of the Turkish society and a segment of AK Party’s electoral pool. As the other organs of the party this center is responsible to
identify their problems and provide solutions. The center has smaller branches at the provincial level in the Republic of Turkey (Organization - AK Party, 2007).

E. AK Party Central Referee for Democracy (CRD)

All organizations seek to resolve conflicts and conduct peaceful methods of settlement. The AK Party has created an arbitrary board that works on settling disputes between the different organs or individuals of the party. The board’s jurisdiction binds all AK Party’s entities including the central organizational organs, parliamentarians, politicians and public administrators. The CRD does not interfere unanimously but it has to be officially assigned by one of the conflicting parties. The different parties have to accept the results of the arbitrary board are officially announced and the different parties are committed to the board’s decision. However, it is important to note that the board’s decisions are not legally binding therefore; it only qualifies to be an arbitrary board (Organization - AK Party, 2007).

F. AK Party Disciplinary Board

There are several disciplinary boards within AK Party on the different levels of the organization. They are entitled to take disciplinary measures against those who violate the charter, party’s principles or general codes of ethics. The boards have the authority to warn, sentence or expel members who were found guilty and the members do have the right to appeal (Charter - AK Party, 2007).
IV. The ‘5’ Governance Pillars and AK Party (Analysis):

After providing the 5 pillars of governance with substantive literature review and international experiences in chapter 1 and elaborating clearly on AK Party’s internal governance in chapter 3 a more of an analytical approach that bridges the two is conducted.

A. Transparency & Accountability (Anti-Corruption Mechanisms)

Transparency and Accountability are considered defining characters within every political party. Within AK Party there are several methods followed to ensure the highest levels of Transparency and Accountability. AK Party’s structure in itself follows a delicate formation of checks and balances and oversight (Önen, 2012). AK Party creates a very important direct relationship between a supervisory body (General Assemblies) and the executive office (Executive Committees and Decision and Administrative Committees). This is well observed in AK Party’s different levels of governance as well as its existence in affiliated organizations as explained earlier. AK Party’s Decision and Administrative Committees create a middle ground between the General Assemblies and the Executive Committees to provide optimum revision for the Executive Committees. It also precludes the committee from taking autonomous decisions which would necessarily lead to lack of both Transparency and Accountability and create room for corruption. However, there are claims that even though the structure is clear on this part yet the Party’s Leader is quite criticized (Musil, 2011). It is perceived that within the Turkish context, Leaders of Political Parties have great power that qualifies them to be described as dictators and AK Party is no exception. However, voices within AK Party deny that and insist that the process is very Transparent and Accountable and the reason behind the illusion that AK Party is run as a dictatorship is that the Party Leader has an incredible approval rate that
exceeds any other party and can only be matched by Atatürk himself (Musil, 2011). AK Party leadership, Erdoğan, insists that the Party Leader follows the principle of “Shoura” and therefore, AK Party Leader’s decisions cannot be describes as autocratic (Önen, 2012). Therefore, Erdoğan as the party leader adopts more of a modernistic approach of the Islamic tradition rather than being totally absorbed to a western perspective of governance one could argue. Erdoğan does not only listen to members of his party or consultants of his government but also intellectuals and thinkers on vital policy issues “Other than Erdoğan, no other Turkish prime minister has shown the courage to sit down with intellectuals to hear their views on the crises that are affecting Turkey (...) And Erdoğan’s goal, as it turned out, was to listen to different views rather than air his own (...) Most writers who were invited to the working breakfast, which extended until late afternoon, were novelists or poets. Others, including me, were political commentators who have written on the Kurdish issue. And not all of these people were fans of Erdoğan” Akyol adds that Ayşe Kulin, a famed novelist and a staunch secularist, stated that frankly to AK Party’s leader as she said that she never voted for him and will never vote for him but she respects that fact that he cares to listen to what she thinks. In this specific meeting “Turks, Kurds, Armenians, Jews, liberals, Islamists, conservatives, Marxists and more” were present and shared all of their views and critique (Akyol M. , A Morning with Erdoğan (on Kurds and more), 2010). So is he a democratic consulting leader? The fact that the selection of AK Party’s Parliamentary candidates is quite centralized is still a sensitive issue. Erdoğan once told suspended deputies that his decision to remove them was not out of personal reasons but it was very objective and professional on

11 “Shoura” is consulting (Arabic Translation). It is part of Islamic guidelines in leadership and decision making. “Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular Prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance” (Quran 42: 38).
how things should be done. People should not stay in their seats forever; he stressed (Musil, 2011). The same action was again repeated prior to 2011 elections when Erdoğan substituted half of the AK Party’s Parliament members to introduce new faces. It also could be for other reasons. Research has shown that in the Canadian and the British models MPs with long tenures tend to become more extreme when it comes to ideology, and this creates a status of isolation (Garner & Letki, 2005).

Democracy with its classical form might be absent from AK Party, however, there is a different projection of democracy in which opinions are considered on one by one basis (Musil, 2011) leaving no room for intra-party clustering. However, absence of real democracy in AK Party is not unique but it is a general characteristic in Turkish parties (Yılmaz, 2012).

Prior to President Abdullah Gül’s ascent to the Turkish Presidency there was a debate within AK Party on whether Erdoğan (who is said to want the position) or Gül should run for it. AK Party members supported Gül nomination because they did not want Erdoğan to leave the party which shows how much the members are attached to their leader (Musil, 2011). The continuous comparison with other Turkish parties (Musil, 2011) will, in my opinion, result in AK Party’s regression. When MP Önen was asked how you measure the success of your governance he instantly highlighted elections as the supreme measurement definition. Also when asked about how AK Party ensures transparency and accountability he assertively argued that the Turkish parties’ national law ensures transparency as well as submitting all financial statements annually to the constitutional court. He also added that the roles of the internal supervisory organs within the party as explained earlier in the previous chapter. He also illustrated the role of technology in ensuring transparency and accountability as all statements and party procedures including the party’s leadership
is placed on the AK Party website. AK Party’s richness was explained as a result of their higher share in the states grants to political parties as stated by the law as well as the generous contribution of the party members (Önen, 2012). However, on the other hand Dr. Serdar Yılmaz¹² believes that like all parties AK Party fails to be an exception. In his perception AK Party lacks necessary transparency and accountability simply “there is not internal democracy with the party” he said a point he agrees on with Pelin Musil. Dr. Serdar goes further and accuses AK Party of being corrupt from within however, their work and accomplishments carries their failure on this issue. This is also magnified by the leaders autonomous decisions of candidate and leadership selection without any real internal democracy (Yılmaz, 2012).

B. Efficiency, Effectiveness and Political Responsiveness

According to the Economist, a poll was conducted in Turkey enquiring what would be AK Party’s electoral percentage if it ran again for elections in 2012 and the results were “54%” which is 4 points more than their results in 2011 (Economist, 2012). AK Party measures its success as an efficient, effective and politically responsive party through elections and polls (Önen, 2012). For three electoral terms the numbers have been on AK Party’s side. Even though AK Party won the 2011 elections, it did not quite meet its target of 367 seats which were necessary to achieve AK Party’s vision of the constitution. According to PM Erdoğan this would be a constitution that belongs to everyone and goes beyond political calculations in the parliament and includes NGOs as well as parties that were not able to secure the minimum requirement to enter the parliament. A constitution that protects human rights, strengthen women and gives more empowerment for workers’ unions (2011).

¹² Dr. Serdar Yılmaz is a Turkish Senior Social Development Economist at the World Bank specialized in decentralization and accountability issues.
Can Paker, the head of the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV), denied that AK Party is by any means drifting towards authoritarian rule and that it will always be sensitive towards voters’ aspirations and expectations. It is also noteworthy to highlight that Paker is a renowned liberal figure in Turkey (Yinanç, 2012). AK Party dedicates multiple elements to make sure that the party is always efficient, effective and enjoys politically responsiveness. These could be amplified through its organizational engines such as the R&D department and the Public Relations Department as specialized departments. However, never the less we find that in almost all policy related departments one can find an interest in involving NGOs and Turkish citizens in policy making. Paker is just a classic case of Turkish liberal intellectuals who are not afraid to side with AK Party as they see the potential in AK Party as the best among the worst. They also do not mind siding with in by voting for it or approving constitutional amendments suggested by the party (Akyol M., Pro-AKP liberals: Useful idiots?, 2010). “AK Party is by far the most efficient effective and politically responsive party in Turkey” but still this is mainly because of two reasons the first is that they are doing a good job that can be better and the other is that the other parties are really awful (Yılmaz, 2012).

C. Party Stakeholder’s Voice: Equality and Inclusive Participation

Inclusiveness to all party members when it comes to the choice of party leadership is vital for the nourishment of intra-party democracy (LeDuc, 2001; Scarrow & Kittilson, 2006 and Hazan & Rahat, 2006). All members in AK Party share a similar status (Önen, 2012) there was no reference in literature concerning AK Party that shows inequality within the party. The party’s structure is based on multiple ideologies and thoughts and therefore, gluing these different political orientations can only be provided by an equation between the different voices. However, the question
still remains on whether this is the dominant culture of AK Party or whether this is something imposed by Erdoğan’s leadership. Erdoğan had to conduct two surgeries between 2011 and 2012 in this period AK Party was put under severe pressure and it seemed like Erdoğan is the glue that brings the party into harmony. On the issue of match-fixing scandal which occurred while Erdoğan was on a leave of absence because of his sickness, dispute and lack of harmony was clear to outsiders. The dispute included President Gül himself. The row was resolved as PM Erdoğan was back and put things to order and taking decisions that were implemented even though it opposed Gül’s initial decision (Yesilada, 2012). The voices in AK Party are equal; including President Gül, but the party needs its leader. However, there are concerns that the strong Islamist movement led by Imam Fethullah Gülen, a renowned Sufi Scholar, has more influence than other groups on AK Party. Even though this issue is often raised in the Turkish context both sides aim to make it clear that the Party does not accept to be the political arm of the social movement and the Gülenists as well do not accept to be a tool of the government (Akyol T., 2012). Minorities, specifically the Kurdish minority, remain a serious issue that threatens the strength of AK Party (Yılmaz, 2012). According to Dr. Yılmaz, AK Party tried to win the minds and hearts of the Kurdish people and when they failed they did not give much attention as they used to because they thought of them as a waste of time. He added, these issues should be dealt with in a Statesmanship manner otherwise it will create more dispute and defragmentation. He also adds that women are not represented as they should be in the parliament even though AK Party achieved a historic representation for women this term. He believes that “the competition is unfair” and that women should have a quota in offices especially that they are at despair on the local level where they are severely marginalized (Yılmaz, 2012). This perception is challenged by Prime Ministry
Under-Secretary, Efkan Alaa, who believes that women should strive for their empowerment and should not wait for men to help them out (Ala, 2012). However, the problem still remains when it comes to women. Another important sect is the Alevis which is an important Islamic sect in Turkey, heavily marginalized by AK Party (Yılmaz, 2012). Another sect is the Armenian sect. Historically Turkey and Armenians have been in a relationship based on blood and pain based on historical feud that Armenians strongly label as “genocide” while Turkish state denies. This huge problem results in AK Party’s shaken strategy of dealing with the problem to the extent of threatening the existence of illegal Armenians in Turkey. This is Turkish nationalistic legacy that AK Party failed to dodge (Akyol M., Unveiling Erdoğan's Real Face, 2010). AK Party has lately been captivated in more serious acts of nationalism and illiberalism by emphasizing Turkey’s “oneness” disregarding Turkey’s diversity. They have also been detaching themselves from liberals by passing harsh laws on consumption of alcohol and suing liberal journalists who were once supportive to AK Party. They have rejected providing Alevis with the right to have their worshiping areas based on “Ataturk’s codes” (Akyol M., What Just Happened to the AKP?, 2011). AK Party is losing its reformist appeal and the new generation needs to take place, “the problems now need second generation reformists” as the current stagnant performance is causing multiple disappointments (Yılmaz, 2012). It might be the fact they know that they are doing well when it comes to elections and this over confidence stopped them from aspiring for more reform and the progression of a more liberal democracy. An analysis that Mustafa Akyol agrees with but yet adds the possibility that this is an attempt to build on conservative votes as their appeal to minorities did not result in more votes (Akyol M., What Just Happened to the AKP?, 2011). Both Dr. Yılmaz and Mr. Akyol point out that AK
Party might be dealing with “voice” as a variable in the elections warfare. “This is very dangerous” Dr. Yılmaz adds as these things should be dealt with in a “statemanship manner” rather than mere politics. AK Party’s obligation to be more open, inclusive and reformist has become more important than ever. The reason is not just the expectations of the Turkish people but also the Middle East and especially the Arab Spring countries. AK Party members need to understand that whether they like it or not their responsibilities have increased and they’d better be up to it (Akyol M., 'Erdoğan, Turkey, Muslim!', 2011). AK Party promised that their third termed will be characterised as the ter, of “consensus” in which they will exert every effort to bring the harmony needed for the Turkish fabric and therefore, they need to keep that electoral promise as it will affect Turkey for generations to come as well as AK Party’s credibility (İlhan, 2012). AK Party might have won the votes of 50% of the Turkish voters but they are a party for all of Turkey and after all it is important to note that AK Party just like Motherland Party and Democrat Party (Previous Center Right Parties) builds it strength on uniting “conservative landowners, progressive businessmen, Turkish nationalists, Kurds, the pious, a scattering of liberals” into one platform (Pope, 2012).

D. Party Members Development: The Battle for Tomorrow

There are two main policies that define how member development is important within AK Party. The first is putting a ceiling in the number of terms an AK Party parliamentarian can serve which gives a chance for other members to take their chance as Party leaders. The other policy is the strengthening of AK Party Youth. Youth are empowered in AK Party something that could be discovered by mere observation in AK Party’s headquarters but can also be seen through the empowerment of the youth wing which upholds significant roles in the party’s
advancement. The Youth wing takes part in electoral and policy making endeavors, two vital roles in any political parties. MP Önen, “I was part of the youth wing and then I took a position at the municipalities level and now I am a parliament member as well as a Deputy to Foreign Affairs Deputy” and by far Mr. Önen is not the only case. Zelkif Kazdal, the head of AK Party’s Electoral Affairs department, was born in 1975 (37 years old) and used to serve as the head of the Youth Wing (Merkez Yürütme Kurulu - Ak Parti, 2012). İsmail Karaosmanoğlu, the head of the Youth Wing and a member in the CEC, was born in 1982 (30 years old) (Başkandan - AK Parti Gençlik Kollari, 2008). A Third example and an impressive one indeed, is MP Bilal Macit. MP Macit was born in 1984 (28 years old). At the age of 27 he became the youngest member of the Turkish Parliament in history (Macit, 2012). These examples show how critical membership development is important and as it was mentioned earlier AK Party dedicated a department, Organization department, to the development and nourishment of its members. It also provides the greatest incentive of all which is empowerment and opening a room for ambition as it is evident from the efforts AK Party’s youngsters. However, there others who perceive members’ development into two different segments the first belongs to the members of local administration and the other belong to the youth (Yılmaz, 2012). When it comes to members at the local level some perceive it as a room for the party leader to abuse his power and override democracy (Musil, 2011) as well as overwhelmed with corruption (Yılmaz, 2012). However, perception towards the youth is different as they are more educated and well trained by the party. They are the ones who will provide “innovations” within the party. Erdoğan himself was young when he stared his political career and this reflects clearly on AK Party. Additionally a second generation of reformist who will work on
more freedoms of expression, joining the EU and solving the Kurdish problems are strongly needed (Yılmaz, 2012).

E. Political Party Stability and Lack of Violence: Peaceful Transition of Power

Even though AK Party is relatively new (founded in 2001), it went through leadership transition. The transition was not on the party’s leadership which always belonged to Erdoğan but rather on the Turkish premiership back when Erdoğan was not able to assume it because of legal reasons. Back then President Gül was the PM until Erdoğan was able to take over the office after an alteration in the law resulting in one of a kind resignation from Gül’s side so that Erdoğan can assume office. Vital transition of power was also evident between the members of parliament as it was mentioned earlier and as it was explained it went smoothly especially because of Erdoğan’s role. However, there are many questions regarding what will happen after Erdoğan leaves office or leaves party leadership for a reason or another. The Party’s bylaws clearly limit members’ rights to hold office in the parliament to three consecutive terms even though the Turkish law does not put this limitation. Erdoğan. AK Party’s leader views that this policy rejuvenates the party and sets important principles to the Turkish context that creates a culture of transition of power. Erdoğan believes the Party’s strength and development of Turkey must be based on principles, not individuals (Today's Zaman, 2012). The Prime Minister knows what he is talking about. Earlier and prior to the 2011 elections he dropped the nominations of “160” of his incumbent deputies and replaced them. The same deed was also done in 2007 elections (Today's Zaman, 2012). “Turkey should know from now on to continue its development based on principles, not based on individuals who are mortal. Tayyip Erdoğan is a mortal, he will die; our nation should do now what it is going to do when he [Erdoğan] is dead. If we try to associate it to mortals, the [AK Party] movement
can never gain the strength we expect” yet it is still worthy to note that members can run again after waiting for an electoral term. However, Dr. Yılmaz has serious doubts that the party can survive post Erdoğan. He believes that instability will dominate and that President Gül is too clean for dealing with “unclean politicians” within the party. “The party is about Erdoğan and just like prior successful parties it will vanish just like they vanished” a prediction by Dr. Yılmaz that is based on the historic parrallism of political parties history in Turkey. The party is strongly linked to Erdoğan a notion that is shared by many commentators (Pope, 2012). His strength since he recited “the mosques are our barracks, / the domes our helmets, / the minarets our bayonets, / and the believers our soldiers” have captured the minds and hearts of his followers, giving him strength through imprisonment and the years of withdrawn political rights. Gül’s influence and straightness are not dismissed by all commentaries. He balanced Erdoğan’s role back in 2002 and they both gave strength to AK Party (Akyol M., 2010). Gül’s reappearance in the party might help in bringing stability and ending the autocratic manner in AK Party.

So why the bad record of freedom of speech does not get in the Party’s way? It is simply because when compared to economy, stability and international prestige these things come as minor issues to the AK Party voter, but this will have to change in the future (Akyol M., Why the AKP Always Rocks?, 2011).

Önen describes the reasons behind AK Party’s success as an inevitable result of understanding the people and exerting all efforts to provide them with a government they deserve. He also emphasized that AK Party positioned itself in the center of the political spectrum allowing them to benefit from the platforms of the right and the left and therefore, they positioned themselves as Turkey’s party. He adds that the numbers to do not lie and they are the best witness for AK Party’s work.
Accomplishments speak well for themselves and add credibility to the party. It also makes the members of the constituency understand that the party is a party of action not just slogans. AK Party has used the popularity and credibility of their leader, Erdoğan, to build a strong connection with the members of their constituencies (Önen, 2012). Working on specific goals identified in the European Union’s standards was also another factor for people’s trust (Önen, 2012). Even though the target of joining the EU itself might be a fading goal, yet reaching the targets definitely is enhancing the Turks lives (Başçı, 2012) as well as increasing the credibility of AK Party. AK Party might not have achieved what some expect from the party’s as inclusiveness however, by no doubt their rhetoric is more diverse and more inclusive than other political party. This is the inclusiveness recommended for newly founded parties. Their organizational skills as well are something that is quite needed for a newly founded party in an Egyptian context. They built a strong civil country that was able to put an end to the NSC. “The NSC was not merely a parallel government where top civilian and military officials hammered out Turkish national policy, but an entire military-dominated apparatus with a 600-man secretariat that monitored sensitive areas of the administration and had eyes in all state institutions. Pushing ever further, Erdoğan announced in 2012 that the ‘national security’ lesson in schools would end” (Pope, 2012). However, AK Party’s methods of confrontation with other political entities as well as their minimal efforts for second generation reforms are advised to be avoided (Yılmaz, 2012). Another aspect would be for parties to avoid basing judgment based on kinship, religious bias or any other aspect of emotional affiliation. This is something AK Party and precisely PM Erdoğan is criticized for his continous support to tyranical Muslim leaders such as the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmed Najad and the Sudanese President Omar El Bashir (Akyol M., AKP is not Islamist,
but somewhat Muslimist, 2009). However, this is actually is an exception as AK Party shows strong positions towards Syria’s Bashar El Assad as well as Iraq’s Nouri El Maliki. Another aspect would be refraining from attacking liberties even if the party is successful. This is an element that AK Party’s leadership does not refrain from as they interfere even if just vocally in journalists’ liberty (Akyol M., Confessions of a Recovering AKP Fan, 2010). A Party should always know what to inherit and what to dodge from old regimes. Etyen Mahçupyan, Turkey’s most prominent Armenian intellectual described that by saying “Most people look at the reformism of the AKP, compare it with other parties, and give the government more credit than what it deserves. But the AKP is a result of liberalization [among Muslims] rather than being its driving force. On the other hand, it has the blocks, worries, fears, and the state reflexes caused by its position as the governing party in Turkey. That’s why its attitude on the Armenian issue is increasingly falling behind the ethical norms of the Muslim camp… [Yet] as Turkey’s Muslims build the self-confidence to face themselves, the dullness of the party which represent them will also decrease.” (Akyol M., Unveiling Erdoğan's Real Face, 2010).

AK Party provides a quite interesting model for studying. The party shows relative advancement when it comes to its governance (Musil, 2011) than other Turkish parties and it also shows its competitive advantage of delivering a great sum of its promises (Yılmaz, 2012). However, this does not deny the fact that AK Party still has elements regarding its governance that needs to be enhanced. This rich experience qualifies to be a great model of study in general and specifically for the Egyptian case.
V. Conclusion and Lessons for Egypt

The Egyptian Context

Post the revolution parties have been described as lack genuine intentions and practices to build a strong party system and the superiority of religious practices rather than political practices within the political arena (Cropsey & Milikh, 2011). However, it is the aspirations of the Egyptian youth to build a strong democracy based on political institutions such as political parties that make these entities a cornerstone to face Egypt’s challenges (Anderson, 2011). There is no advantage for a party over another to apply the AK Party experience because of its political or ideological affiliation but rather for its readiness and professionalism. There are some scholars and analysts who would automatically compare AK Party to Freedom and Justice Party, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, (Yılmaz, 2009) yet this is incorrect. Why? Because AK Party itself adopted ideas for its model from the Conservative Democrats in Germany and Austria to become more like a modern Conservative Democrat party something that was illustrated by Erdoğan several times (Erdoğan, GPS Program-CNN, 2011) and senior members at AK Party (Önen, 2012). Another aspect is the separation between religious activities and political activities that AK Party highly shows through its separation from the Gülenist movement, the mainstream religious group in Turkey (Yılmaz, 2009). Therefore, lessons inspired from the case of AK Party are for all those who are keen on understanding how a successful Middle Eastern political party functions.

Are the Egyptian and Turkish Systems compatible?

Turkey adopts a democratic multiparty parliamentarian Republic system with a ranking of 88 on the Democracy Index of the year 2011 (Economist Intelligence Unit,
2011). While Egypt still is defined as a “Hybrid Regime” ruled by the transitional military junta without a clear system as the Egyptian constitution has not been written yet. Multiparty elections takes place in Turkey since the 1960’s as Menderes became the elected Prime Minister back then however, it was ended with his execution by the military junta as mentioned earlier. However, many scholars and speculators are speculating that Turkey might shift to the Presidential system or a mixed system as the new constitution being drafted away from the current constitution that was imposed by the military post the 1982 Coup (Seibert, 2011). Therefore, there is definitely a lot of similarities yet there are differences when it comes to levels of stability as the last Coup in Turkey was in 1997 which destabilized the country and its political parties back then while Egypt is still going through its revolution and multiple political turbulences. However, to understand a learn from a political party within a different country does not only mount on its political system but by understanding it governance and achievements mechanisms.

*How do we evaluate the governance of a political party?*

Election is a universal method of expressing peoples’ approval of a political party, and by the record winning of AK Party in three successive elections from 2002 to 2011, this means that AK Party must be doing very well. It is also the method that MP Önen emphasized as part of his views on the same issue. AK Party has made a historical achievement by winning elections for three times in a row with an increasing number of votes. How do they do that? A question asked by many. Some like the CHP claim that it is because the people are uneducated and ignorant. However, the reason is much deeper than that shallow answer. AK Party remains in adherence to its principles than other Turkish political parties. AK Party chose modernity over westernization. Their work and success is evident in the
“shantytowns” transformed into modern public homes. It is also evident in the great boost in economy as well as infrastructure all over the country. AK Party decision of positioning itself as a Center Right party appealed to many segments of the Turkish society. Turkey is now more proud than ever to compare itself with Europe in which the Turks are doing much better than the rest of the European economy which is struggling from the worldwide financial meltdown.

The religiosity of AK Party definitely as a boosting element to their strength as Turkish people, like Egyptian people, care immensely about their religion even if it was indirectly. For example: Erdoğan used a religious concept in which some saw as the right move to cleanse politics. Erdoğan used “helalleşme” which is forgiving one another for mutual wrongdoing (Akyol M . , Why the AKP Always Rocks?, 2011). Another important factor is AK Party and especially Erdoğan extreme interest in public polls and market surveys which is well known that AK Party takes seriously (Pope, 2012).

Also it is important to note that his opponent condescending patronizing language towards those who vote for AK Party actually adds to the latter’s strength especially when AK Party’s Leader keeps on reminding his constituency based on the poor and marginilized that he is one of them “In this country, there is a segregation of Black Turks and White Turks,” Erdoğan once said. “Your brother Tayyip belongs to the Black Turks” Erdoğan said to his people (Pope, 2012). However, what Egypt needs to learn as well is that AK Party’s case falls with the Turkish context in which other political parties help AK Party success because their governance deteriorated with time. Therefore, depending on elections in not enough especially if the competition is weak. A party to maintain its success must conduct several regulating policies as well as increase democracy within the party (Musil, 2010 & 2011).
1. Transparency & Accountability

AK Party’s work on Transparency and Accountability can be very beneficial to other political parties in Egypt. Their work is mostly updated on their website and financial statements that include the party’s leader are always submitted to the responsible authority on time (Onen, 2012). The party leadership in the CDAC or CEC is subject to the supervision of the General Assembly that makes this leadership accountable to the party members. However, there are multiple accusations of corruption on the local level and that AK Party is exploiting its power on that level and that it hides its cards well from the public (Yilmaz, 2012). Another accusation would be that the Party Leader is not questioned (Yilmaz, 2012) and that he exploits his “appointment power” and avoids internal elections whenever possible creating a party of followers rather than members and therefore serious accountability is questioned (Musil, 2011). Egyptian political party especially those who are in power might benefit from that experience by avoiding a policy of “state-funding” to political parties which lead to a confusion between what is for the party and what is for the government. It also can apply strong regulatory policies that ensure Transparency and Accountability within parties. They can also provide multi-party committees that supervise the process of funding whether from the state or in general. On accountability issue elections is very important not only parliamentary, local government, presidential elections but also internal elections. Even though direct appointments and post surveying appointments might show efficiency yet it lacks accountability. Parties that depend on appointment and internal connections will lead to supporters’ apathy on the long term especially from youth (Cross & Young, 2008). Egypt has experienced internal elections when it came to Al Wasat Party however, the
leadership was not challenged and the leader remained Eng. Abou El Ela Mady without being challenged.

2. Efficiency, Effectiveness and Political Responsiveness.

“We are amongst the people and we know exactly what they want” MP Önen (2012) said. The party’s top leader Erdoğan, has a profound interest in conducting of regular polls to always have a grasp of what the people need (Pope, 2012). There is by no doubt that AK Party get to know promptly what the people need and they swiftly and effectively meddle in to provide the people with what they need especially their constituency which is something that supercedes all of its competitors, they get things done (Yılmaz, 2012). As MP Önen (2012) described earlier AK Party is as organized and well distributed as an army. Egyptian political parties can learn from that understanding the public is not a subject prerequisite prior to elections only but it is a continuous duty. The party also needs to be pragmatic as it is highest goals is to serve it people as a democracy should be even if it collides with their ideologies. The people have the right to rule themselves and a pragmatic witty party is the one that provides people with what they desire. AK Party does not mind borrowing policies from the left if the people require so (Önen, 2012). There is a worldwide example of the Danish party Venstre which means the “left” as it is now the representative of the Center-Right in Danish politics after decades of changing it policies to match the Danish expectations (Evans, 2001).


AK Party has built a very strong system in which they include the people’s voice in policy making progress. The party’s consistency on using polls and focus groups also plays a vital role in creating a strong policy base supported by their grassroots.
The party has also played a very important role in trying to bridge gaps with Turkey’s minorities. The party came in 2011 with the largest representation of women within the Turkish parliament as well as winning the largest percentage in Kurdish areas that won by none Kurdish based party (Akyol M., 2011). The party bases a lot of weight on meeting with intellectuals and academians to grasp their input on domestic and international policies something that is seen as being pioneered by AK Party (Akyol M., 2010). However, Egyptians observers must wary of the decline of this sentiment and the increase of national notion in AK Party rhetoric. AK Party succeeded for so long to build an image larger than one specific race, religion or ideology and the blow to this success would be the loss of this essential bond. Egyptian parties face similar diversities within the Egyptian context and a good governance pillar for the ultimate success for a political party is to ensure that it transcends any insignificant barriers that marginalize social cohesion. Equality and inclusiveness within political parties is by far essential (Pedersen, 2010).

4. Party Members Development.

AK Party sets standard for other political parties in the region with the vigorously enthusiastic youth that take responsibility in the advancement of their party. PM Erdoğan was considered to be a young leader when he founded and led the party. He was also considered to be quite young to premier Turkey’s government in 2003 (Yılmaz, 2012). The party’s leadership also seems to enjoy the blending of youth with experiences members quite well. AK Party was able to secure a seat for the youngest member of parliament in Turkey’s history and shows much youth empowerment to the youth at local level. The youth ascend swiftly within the party based on their capabilities not their age and many of those who served as youth leaders now serve as members of parliament or in other official offices such as MP Önen himself (Önen,
Members development whether to youth or other groups is quite essential because you create a diversified leadership that makes a party capable of handling the strategic issues of tomorrow. Also it is very important to notice that each phase has its men/women that are capable of making the future better. The youth are probably the ones who will take on the “second generation reforms” that were not pursued by the older generations. It is very important to the Egyptian counterpart that with no investment in members’ development probably the party will regress with time. It is also important to notice that the menace of aloofing youth and local members from the party’s decision making within the party will only lead to its weakness (Fabre, 2010).


Does the party depend on one man? Does the party have a coherent organizational body that acts as one? Does the party enjoy clear sustainable democracy that ensures stability and smooth transition? All of these questions are very important in identifying this pillar of governance. AK Party’s case definitely stirs some of these questions while leaving most of them unanswered. The transition of power between Gül and Erdoğan back in 2003 gave a clear righteous case of giving up on personal gains for the sake of the group. However, definitely Erdoğan’s late sickness in the late 2011 and early 2012 brought back these question on what will happen if he retires or just respect the fact this is his last term, which might create internal diffusion. There are those who percieves that this is Erdoğan’s party and it will vanish after him just as it happened to the Motherland Party or to the Democrat Party (Yılmaz, 2012). I would argue that Gül’s presence would help in sustaining its presence. However, these are individuals not an organization that we are discussing here. This is wrong. Political parties make sure that it transcends individuals and that
the people’s interest in it is quite sincere. The Egyptian case can learn a lot from the smoothness in rotation of roles within the party’s senior and junior leadership and it can also learn a lot from Gül and Erdoğan shift back in 2003. However, they must also be cagey when it comes figures who become larger than the party or actually become the party.

Turkey’s AK Party is an important case on how the 5 pillars of governance can enhance the performance of political parties. It also shows how the lack of these pillars might constitute a problem for the party’s affairs whether domestic or foreign, present or futurisitic. Turkey and AK party are great experiences for Egypt and its political parties to learn from without blindly copying all of the experiences mistakes along with its benefits. Each country and each political party has their own circumstances and characteristics. However, there are general features within governance that ensure fairness, advancement and prosperity that must be available within all institutions and never the less political parties.

Figure 16: Conclusion Summarized
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