

# THE EVALUATION OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IN TURKEY AND TURKISH POLITICAL ELITES

D. Ali Arslan

Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi, Turkey. E-mail: arslanali@gop.edu.tr

Recibido: 16 Noviembre 2004 / Revisado: 14 Diciembre 2004 / Aceptado: 13 Enero 2005 / Publicado: 15 Febrero 2005

**Resumen:** Turkey has a strategic place in world politics. As Ahmad said, Turkey's strategic location on the Straits and on the cross-roads between Europe and Asia will remain unchanged. Turkey is a meeting point between Europe and Asia not only geographically, but also ideologically between Eastern and Western civilisations. The Turkish secular and democratic system has provided a model to both the Islamic Middle East and the new Turkish states of the former Soviet Union. One of the major aims of this study is to examine the historical roots of the Turkish secular and democratic system. The second objective of the research is to realise sociological analysis of the Turkish political elites by using social background characteristics. The Turkish political elites will be examined within the five major periods from the beginning of the Republic up to date: 1. Single party era (1920-1946). 2. The period from the beginning of the multi-party regime to the 1960 military intervention (1946-1960). 3. From 1961 to the 1971 military intervention. 4. From 1971 to the 1980 military coup. 5. From 1980 to the present date.

**Palabras Clave:** Eastern civilisations, modernisation, parliamentary democracy, Turkey, Turkish political elites, Western civilisations.

## INTRODUCTION

Modernisation is a societal process which involves the whole of the society including its economy, belief system, culture and politics. It comprises industrialisation, rationalisation, secularisation and bureaucratisation. According to Jary<sup>1</sup>, the

overall contrast is usually drawn between pre-modern and modernised societies.

Modernisation began in Europe in the ages of the Renaissance and Reformation. Europeans experienced modernisation as a process of discovery and invention rather than of response and adaptation. The main interest will be in political modernisation, not modernisation in its general meaning. Political modernisation, according to Jary<sup>2</sup>, is the process usually seen as crucially affected by economic modernisation, in which traditional or colonial forms of political organisation and state forms, including modern political parties are involved.

Modernisation in general, and political modernisation in particular, are open-ended processes. In Huntington's words<sup>3</sup>, political development is never complete, and no political system ever solves the problems of confronting it. Huntington stresses these characteristics of a politically modern society; rationalised authority, differentiated structure and mass participation. Every modernising society confronts these major political problems which may be called the growth of authority and public service, the search for national identity and unity, and the demand for political equality and participation (Rustow)<sup>4</sup>. Atatürk followed this order in his modernisation of Turkey; authority, identity, equality.

The following section will concern itself with the political modernisation of the Turkish society from the early nineteenth century up to the present time. The late Ottoman Period (under the name of the pre Republic era) will be looked at, because the Turkish modernisation began in the Ottoman Empire in the time of

Selim III and Mahmut II. Nevertheless this period will be investigated only as far as is necessary, because our main subject matter is the Republican period.

## PRE REPUBLIC ERA

The Turkish historian Halil Inalcik divides the Ottoman Empire into 6 periods:

1. Formative 1300-1402,
2. Consolidation and reorganisation 1402-1481,
3. Attempt at world-wide empire 1481-1671,
4. Crisis and development struggle 1581-1699,
5. Defeat and acceptance of European superiority 1699-1826,
6. Abolition of Janissaries to Abdulhamid's overthrow 1826-1906<sup>5</sup>.

Turkish efforts at modernisation firstly began in the military area with Selim III and Mahmut II. Sultan Selim, who lost his throne and his life in the fight against traditional forces of resistance, established a body of new troops, entirely trained in the European style. Later, Mahmut II (1803- 1839) used the new army to destroy the anti-reformist Jannisaries (Yeniceri). Sultan Mahmut replaced the degenerate Jannisaries with a reorganised and modernised army model that was the *Assakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* (the victorious Mohammedan Soldiers) at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Social and political reforms followed the military reforms. Sultan Mahmut decided with Alemdar Mustafa Pasa to co-operate with the *Ayan* (Council of Notables) by the *Sened-i Ittifak*" (Deed of Agreement). With this document, the absolutist authority of the Sultan was beginning to diminish.

As Onulduran<sup>6</sup> discussed, following the abolition of the Jannisaries, reforms were introduced which intended to modernise the political structure and the economic and financial systems of the Empire. As Rustow determined, military reforms expanded into cultural transformation and defensive modernisation turned into an integral modernisation<sup>7</sup>.

Sultan Mahmut made great efforts to create a new bureaucracy in the machinery of

government, using those people who had Europeanised minds and a European style of education. As the result of the pressure of the new elite, *Tanzimat* (reorganisation) *Rescript* (*Gulhane Hatti Humayunu* –the Imperial Edict of Gulhane) was proclaimed in the reign of Sultan Abdulmecid. The Edict was engineered by Mustafa Resit Pasa who was a civil servant, a diplomat and the Ottoman foreign minister. With this document, as Onulduran stressed, all citizens –Moslem or non Moslem– would be treated equally before the law and criminal and civil trials would be conducted in public. To prepare the new legislation, the existing Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances (*Meclis-i Vala-yi Ahkam-i Adliye*) was to be increased in number, and the members of the Council would be charged with codifying the general principles of the Rescript into concrete law<sup>8</sup>. The Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances was an advisory body where discussion on the laws took place (like a quasi-parliament).

Another rescript was declared in 1856 which was the *Islahat* (Reform) Edict. This Edict emphasised the equality of all religious groups and forbade religious and racial discrimination in the empire. The military, medical and administrative academies, modelled on their Western counterparts, were established in the subsequent years of *Islahat* Edict. The European style educational system of the *Tanzimat* produced a new social elite that adopted European tastes in dress and in its social life, in literature and in thought. These new ruling elites were significantly different from the classic Ottoman ruling elites. They are known as the "Young Turks".

Following the *Tanzimat* period, the first attempt at transition into a constitutional monarchy was realised on the 23rd of December, 1876. This period is known as the First Constitutional period (I. Mesrutiyet). The first Constitution was modelled on the 1831 Belgian Constitution, with Mithat Pasa as its chief author. It defined the sovereign right of the Sultan on one hand and the basic rights of the individuals on the other hand. However, this was to be ended by the absolutist monarch Abdulhamid II in 1878. He suspended the 1876 Constitution and dissolved the parliament until 1908.

Hamidian repression brought its anti-thesis. Several secret revolutionary organisations against Abdulhamid rose up in the empire. By

far, the most effective one was "the Society (Committee) of Union and Progress" (*Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) which was organised by the Young Turks. This society was particularly effective among young army officers.

The first reaction against Hamidian despotism occurred in Monaster, orchestrated by Besneli Niyazi on July, 1908. Abdulhamid could not be successful in suppressing the uprising and he was compelled to sign the declaration of the Second Constitutional Period in 1908 (II. Mesrutiyet). The second Constitutional Government was established on July 23, 1908, and was the beginning of a new phase in the political development of Turkey. This period (1908-1918) covered four assemblies.

As Turhan mentioned (1991), these periods are of prime importance for Turkish political life; when many new social groups –such as civil and military officers, civil bureaucrats and professionals- first began to emerge among the political elites.

#### **TURKISH INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT AND THE TURKISH REVOLUTION**

As Rustow mentioned<sup>9</sup>, the Anatolian resistance movement was a civilian organisation with a military apex, because all the decisions are given by the TGNA since 1920. The occupation of Izmir by the Greeks in May, 1919 was the last blow that transformed the resistance movement into a true struggle for independence. A few days after this, Mustafa Kemal went to central Anatolia from Istanbul on 19th May, 1919.

Firstly, he went to Samsun, then to Erzurum and assembled a congress of people there. After the Erzurum Congress which took place between July 23-August 7, 1919, the "Declaration of Independence" (*Misak-i Milli*) was proclaimed. According to this declaration, "the people and territory of Turkey should form an indivisible and complete whole, mandates and foreign dominance were unacceptable, and the National Will of the people was to be the only valid power". This resulted in the establishment of the National Sovereignty Principle as the basis of the new state. Then, the second congress gathered in Sivas between 4-11 September. At that time almost the whole of Turkey was occupied. There were no regular armed forces and no powerful weapons. Mustafa Kemal organised small groups of people who fought for independence, and set up a regular armed force

in a very short time. He started a big counter attack. Under commander-in-chief Mustafa Kemal, the Turkish armies defeated the invading armies.

As a result of this victory, the Lousanne Treaty was signed on July 24, 1923. With the signing of Lousanne, the humiliating Treaty of Serves was abrogated and Turkey's independence, integrity and sovereignty were recognised by world powers. Mustafa Kemal had successfully completed the first step of the Kemalist Revolution: defending Turkish sovereignty (1919- 1922).

Now came the time of the realisation of the second but the most important step of his revolution –creating a totally new state, a new society and a new country. His real objective was to create a truly modern, democratic, secular (laic), republican and independent Turkey based on the sovereignty of the people. From 1923 to 1938, the main activities of Mustafa Kemal consisted of placing the state and Turkish society on the road to Western civilisation.

#### **ATATURK'S REFORMS AND BASIC PRINCIPLES OF KEMALISM (ATATURKISM)**

As a product of the Turkish Revolution, the new secular nation state of Turkey was established by Mustafa Kemal in Anatolia between 1919 and 1923<sup>10</sup>. In a country where the Ottoman Sultans had ruled for centuries, as Allah's Shadow on earth, Mustafa Kemal had the courage and vision to do away with centuries of tradition and corruption by announcing that: "The Turkish State is a Republic", on October 29, 1923. To achieve this first of all he separated the Caliphate (religious leadership of all Moslems) and Sultanate (political leadership), then abolished firstly the Sultanate, then the Caliphate. Later, he replaced the Sheriat, which is the Law of Koran, with a modern civil code adopted from Swiss civil code, and a penal code modelled on the Italian Penal Code. The new legal system was based on Roman Law (1925-6).

Another far-reaching cultural reform was the reform of the alphabet: he abolished the use of Arabic script and adopted Latin characters in 1928. After that, Ataturk gave to Turkish women complete equality in the society. They acquired the right to vote and to be elected to

parliament before the women of many European Countries.

Reform was carried out in every area of social life. The first political party of the Republic, the Republican People's Party, was established. As Frey emphasised<sup>11</sup>, the statement that Islam was the religion of the state was deleted from the constitution. Religious tribunals were done away with, the fez was outlawed, and the religious dervish order was proscribed. The wearing of religious garb outside of religious buildings was forbidden. The Western calendar and time standards were adopted. A national system of education was established, a national railway network was being built, and the expansion of secular higher education began.

Ataturk's Revolution accomplished the basic modernisation of the educated elite and brought it into active political participation. As Frey said, now the possibly more difficult task of modernising the ill-educated masses of the society and involving them in the political process was being undertaken. On account of these exceptional services, Turkish people gave to Mustafa Kemal the name "Ataturk" a venerable name, which means the father of all Turks.

As Dankwart Rustow said, Ataturk achieved the transformation of an empire into a nation, of a transitional into a western cultural image. Mustafa Kemal combined the three roles of victorious battlefield commander, state founder and chief sponsor of large-scale educational establishments (Rustow)<sup>12</sup>.

Ataturk was a man of action, a man of ideas and a pragmatic far-seeing statesman. The driving force of his life was science, particularly the positive sciences. He built up a socio-political system, called Kemalism/Ataturkism. These are the basic principles of Ataturkism:

- Full independence
- Anti-imperialism
- Rationalism and scientism
- Republicanism
- Nationalism (Patriotism)
- Etatism (policy of state control), which is very different to socialism and communism
- Laicism (Secularism)
- Revolutionism
- Contemporaneitism
- Populism

- Pacifism: Ataturk formulated the most essential principles of Turkey; "peace at home, peace in the world". This compact sentence carries Ataturk's thoughts about the internal and external policies of Turkey with absolute clarity.

## THE MAJOR PERIODS IN THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF CONTEMPORARY TURKEY

### Single party period (1923-1946)

There is a wrong but popular idea that Communism and Fascism constitute the only two possible types of single party. As Duverger said, such an idea does not correspond with reality. There are some single parties that are not really totalitarian either in ideas or organisation. The best example of this is provided by the People's Republican Party which operated in Turkey from 1923 to 1946 as a single party<sup>13</sup>. It had a democratic ideology, in which all the power was given to the Great National Assembly by the Turkish Constitution.

The Turkish single-party system did not give any official recognition to the monopoly and did not make any attempt to justify it by the existence of a classless society. In Duverger's words, it was always embarrassed and almost ashamed of the monopoly<sup>14</sup>. Mustafa Kemal attempted to end it several times.

Any similarity cannot conceivably be drawn with Hitler's Germany, nor the Italy of Mussolini. Factions were developed freely inside the party without destroying it. The Grand National Assembly has had an opposition since the establishing of the first National Assembly (23 April 1920), such as "Second Group". But the first opposing political party was founded officially on November 17, 1924 by the two former commanders, Kazim Karabekir and Ali Fuat Cebesoy: it was the Progressive Republican Party (Trakkiperver Cumhuriyet Firkasi). It was abolished by cabinet decree on June 5, 1925 because its members were neither republican nor progressive. Their linkage with the Sheikh Said Rebellion, which was an extremely religious fanatic and anti-revolutionist revolt, brought about their end.

The second enterprise in the transformation to a multi-party system took place in 1930. The Liberal Republican Party was established by

Fethi Okyar, at Ataturk's suggestion on August 12, 1930. In a short time, fanatics joined the Liberal Party and started to campaign against to secular state. As the result of this, the Liberal Party was abrogated by its president Fethi Okyar on December 17, 1930. Nevertheless, the opposition continued with their activity in the Parliament up to 1946 under the name of the Independent Group.

The last but successful experiment in the transition to a multi-party system would be realised in 1945, with the establishing of the Democratic Party and with their peaceful triumph in the 1950 elections. Turkey passed from a single-party system to pluralism, as Duverger said<sup>15</sup> with neither checks nor disturbance.

### Multi-party period (1946-1995)

#### a) 1946-1960 period

Although many political parties were established between 1945 and 1950, only the Democratic Party was successful. As mentioned by Tezic<sup>16</sup>, the first party was the National Development Party, a religious conservative party. It was established by Nuri Demirbas, Huseyin Avni Ulas and Cevat Rifat Atilhan on July 18, 1945, but they did not achieve to be a part of the democratic system.

The Democratic Party was established by Adnan Menderes, Celal Bayar, Fuat Koprulu and Refik Koraltan who were the members of RPP, on January 7, 1946. It grew rapidly in a very short time, with the election of 61 deputies in the 1946 elections. The eighth Assembly (1946) was the first real multi-party Assembly, but the first completely free and openly contested election in Turkey was not achieved until 1950. The period of 1946-50 could be named as the "Transitional Period" to the multi-party system.

The Democratic Party won the election with 53.35% of the popular vote and 83.57% of the Grand National Assembly seats while RPP gained 39.78% of the votes and 14.40% of the seats. The populist politics, good weather conditions, inflationary economic policies and foreign capital brought the social and economic welfare for the people. Menderes' Democratic Party won a splendid election victory in the 1954 elections. Whereas the Democrats won 503

seats, the Republicans had only 31 in spite of 34.78% of the popular vote.

This honeymoon did not continue very long. In the late 1950s, like the social and economic indicators of the society, the vote rate of the Democratic Party had begun to decline. However, the Democratic Party still won the 1957 election with a 47.3% vote rate while RPP achieved 40.6 %.

Adnan Menderes' despotic and neurotic behaviour and politics led to his downfall and his party's end by the 27th May 1960 overthrow. According to Ozbudun<sup>17</sup>, the deviation from democracy, privilege given to his own supporters, and a declination from Kemalist principles, all together, was an invitation to young patriots and Kemalist soldiers.

#### b) 1960-1971 period

This announcement heard from the radio at 7:00 am on 27 May 1960:

«Honourable fellow countrymen! [...] The Turkish armed forces have taken over the administration of the country. Our armed forces have taken this initiative for the purpose of extricating the parties from the irreconcilable situation into which they have fallen [...]!»<sup>18</sup>.

Armed forces re-obtained their old respected status in the societal hierarchy. The Junta (the National Unity Committee-NUC) prepared a new constitution for the professors Commission. This Constitution was very civilised and radical. Under the 1961 Constitution, as Ahmad said<sup>19</sup>, Turkey enjoyed a greater degree of freedom than ever before. People had more civil rights, the universities had greater autonomy, and students were given the freedom to organise their associations. Workers were given the right to strike.

Turkey had been thoroughly politicised in the 1960s and ideological politics were permitted. The ultra-nationalist and neo-fascist National Action Party (NAP) and the Socialist Workers Party (WPT) had been founded in those years. The Socialist Workers Party would get 16 seats in the Parliament in 1960s. It was the first and the last great successes of the Turkish Socialists in Turkish modern history. The Islamist movement had also become quite powerful.

Two new political parties were formed as the inheritors of the Democratic Party in 1961: the New Turkey Party (NTP) and the Justice Party (JP), for the first election realised under the new election law. The two biggest parties were RPP and JP in all the elections during this period. The 1960s could be named the period of coalition governments.

As a result of high inflation, high political tension, rising unemployment, and rapid social political change, Turkey dissolved into chaos. As Ahmad emphasised<sup>20</sup>, the Islamist movement had become more aggressive and its party, the National Order Party, openly rejected Atatürk and Kemalism. On account of this, the generals presented a memorandum to the President and the chairmen of the two chambers in 12 March 1971. The Generals demanded the formation of a strong, credible government capable of implementing the reforms envisaged by the constitution.

#### c) 1971-1980 period

Following the Demirel's resignation, the ex-leftist new rightist Nihat Erim constituted the government in 1971. According to Erim and the Military High Command, the liberal constitution of 1961 was a luxury for Turkey. They started an operation against civil rights and liberties. This modification covered every institution of the state, such as the union, the universities, the press, radio and television, the Council of State, the Constitutional Court, the Court of Appeal, the Assembly and the Senate. The philosophy and activities of the 12 March regime was totally different from the 27 May regime. It could be named the anti-thesis of the 27 May spirit.

Youth organisations, meetings and seminars of professional associations and unions, and all the publications of the left were prohibited whereas the publications of right could be circulated freely. Thousands upon thousands of Kemalist and socialist intellectuals, writers, scientists, university students and unionist leaders were arrested under the twin regime of Erim-Tagmac<sup>21</sup>.

Ecevit's populist and "peace and unity" policies did not enough for the cease fire. Political terrorism had become a regular feature of Turkish social life. As Ahmad discussed<sup>22</sup>, there were a fundamental differences between the terrorism of the left in the early 1970s and the

terrorism of right and left in the mid/late 1970s: In the first period, the action was against imperialism, western influences and capitalism whereas in the second period, the aim was to create chaos and demoralisation. The aims of the Grey-wolves (Commandos), who are the militants of the neo-fascist Action Party, were to destroy the electoral potential of RPP by demoralising the RPP's supporters. In addition, rising unemployment, increasing inflation and declining wages incited the conflagration.

Ecevit's RPP (Republican Populist Party) won 41.4% of the popular votes and 213 seats as compared with 36.9% for Demirel's JP in the 1977 election. Ecevit established a minority government but he could not get a vote of confidence. This was the beginning of one of the darkest periods of Turkey in her modern history which would eventually bring the 12 September 1980 Coup D'état.

#### d) 1980-1995 period

The Junta set up the National Security Council (NSC) under the chieftainship of the chief of Staff Kenan Evren. The other members of the National Security Council were the chiefs of the armed forces that were army, navy, air force and gendarmery. They ruled Turkey until November 1983. They attempted to change all areas of social life except foreign policy and the economic stabilisation programme which had been in place since 24 January 1980. In the first place, they suspended the Constitution and dissolved Parliament, then they closed down the political parties, detained their leaders and suspended the professional associations and confederation of trade unions. As Ahmad mentioned<sup>23</sup>, arrests and trials were the principal features of daily life.

As the result of external and internal repression, the Junta decided to hold general elections in November 1983. Evren and the Junta openly supported the retired general Turgut Sunalp's Nationalist Democratic Party (NDP) in the 1983 elections. They did not want to allow the government and on account of this, they did not permit free competition in the elections. They always vetoed the powerful rival of the others preferred. However, the Junta could not prevent the victory of Ozal's Motherland Party, because Ozal had the support of patrons and America.

In Ahmad's words "Turkey had selected a salesman and not a statesman" in the 1983

general elections<sup>24</sup>. Ozal had a colourful political identity like his party, the Motherland Party which was a transitional period political party. They claimed that they were conservative like the Justice Party (JP), Islamist like the Nationalist Salvation Party (NSP), nationalist like the Nationalist Action Party (NAP), even social democrat. Is it possible to be everything at the same time for either an individual or a political party? Certainly, according to the saying "everything means nothing!"

The period of Motherland governments would continue until the 1991 general elections. These brought the coalition government of Demirel's True Path Party (TPP) and Inonu's Social Democratic Populist Party (SPP).

The Turkish journalist Emin Colasan describes very accurately the social situation in Turkey in the 1980s and also in the 1990s: "The Motherland Party has destroyed all the values we held sacred. Ten years ago we as a nation used to consider swindling, theft, bribery and corruption as dishonourable. Now, they are normal things; Yalcin, whom we would have criticised and disgraced a few years ago, has become everyone's darling today. Where will it all end, dear sir!?"<sup>25</sup>. I also agree with Ahmad<sup>26</sup> that, the 1980s created a society of "the haves, the have nots, and the have lots" in Turkey.

### **THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE MODERN TURKISH REPUBLIC**

The Turkish Republic is based on a democratic laic (secular), pluralist and parliamentary system where human rights are protected by laws and social justice. The National Assembly is elected by popular vote (the election law is going to be changed nowadays) and the nation is governed by a Council of Ministers directed by the prime minister. The Turkish Grand National Assembly, the Presidency and the cabinet are the main state organs of the Turkish Republic:

The Turkish Grand National Assembly has been Turkey's 450 (recently increased to 550) seat unicameral Parliament since 1980. It is the sole legislative authority. Its members are elected for a five years term through universal suffrage, however, the Parliament can decide on early elections before the termination of this period. Besides its legislative power, the Parliament elects the president, has the authority to declare war, proclaim Martial Law, ratify international

treaties and debate requests for parliamentary investigation against high ranking state officials. The Parliament can also amend the constitution with a two-thirds majority. All Turks who are at least 30 (recently this is decreased to 25) years old and are not disqualified according to Article 76 of the Constitution, are eligible to become candidates for election to the parliament.

The President of the Republic is the Head of the State. He represents the Turkish Republic and the integrity of the Turkish nation. The President is elected by secret ballot and a two-third majority plenary session of the Parliament for a term of seven years. He is elected from among the members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly who are at least 40 years old and have had a higher education or are from among Turkish citizens who fulfil these requirements and are eligible to be deputies.

The Council of Ministers or Cabinet is led by the prime minister and is made up of his/her ministers. The prime minister is appointed by the President from among the members of the Parliament.

Once the President has approved the cabinet list, the government programme has to be read in Parliament within a week. Then a vote of confidence is taken two full days after the reading in Parliament of the government programme and one full day after the debate over the programme has ended. In the event of general elections, the Prime Minister is required to replace the ministers of the interior, justice and communication with independents.

In the event of early elections, the Prime Minister is also required to replace these ministers within five days of the Parliament's decision to hold new polls

### **POLITICAL ELITES IN THE MODERN TURKISH HISTORY**

As discussed in the earlier pages of this paper, the modern Turkish Republican era could be divided into 5 sub-periods according to major social-political phenomena. The first period is the single party era (1920- 1946), the period from the beginning of the multi-party regime to the 1960 military intervention could be accepted as the second period, the third one is from 1961 to the 1971 military intervention and the fourth

is from 1973 to the 1980 military coup. The last one is from 1983 up to the present date.

The younger generation (30-39), the firstly and lastly, had the predominance in the First Assembly (1920). After this, the middle aged group has always had a heavy domination in the parliament. As clearly seen in Table-1, the dominant group is middle aged people (40-54) for all the periods. The second biggest group was the advanced aged from period-1 to

beginning of the third period. Then, by 1961, young people had risen to the second rank and this situation continued during the last three periods. The rates of young generation and middle ages always showed an increase whereas the older generation's group declined until the last period. However, in the last period, the situation changed and the proportion of the advanced aged group began to increase.

**Table 1. Proportions of Age Groups for the Major Periods.**

| AGE GROUPS (%)                 | MAJOR PERIODS            |                        |                         |                        |                       |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                | <i>I</i><br>1920-1946(*) | <i>II</i><br>1946-1960 | <i>III</i><br>1960-1970 | <i>IV</i><br>1973-1980 | <i>V</i><br>1983-1995 |
| <i>Youth</i><br>(30-39)        | 22.7                     | 23.8                   | 30.1                    | 31.1                   | 28.8                  |
| <i>Middle Aged</i><br>(40-54)  | 43.2                     | 49.5                   | 58.4                    | 61.8                   | 53.8                  |
| <i>Advanced Aged</i><br>(55,+) | 33.8                     | 27.1                   | 11.1                    | 7.2                    | 17.2                  |
| <i>Average Age</i>             | 44.1                     | 45.5                   | 44.5                    | 45.7                   | 45.4                  |

(\*) Period-I includes 1920, 1925 and 1943 Assemblies

Table-1 clearly shows that, Turkish parliamentary are middle aged with average age of 45. Average ages of the Turkish deputies are

more or less the same for all the parliamentary seasons. The first season has the smallest size of average age that is 44.1 among the five periods.

**Table 2. Educational Level and Average Number of Foreign Language for the Major Periods**

| EDUCATIONAL LEVEL                         | MAJOR PERIODS            |                        |                         |                        |                       |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
|   | <i>I</i><br>1920-1946(*) | <i>II</i><br>1946-1960 | <i>III</i><br>1960-1970 | <i>IV</i><br>1973-1980 | <i>V</i><br>1983-1995 |
| <i>University</i>                         | 74                       | 72.7                   | 75.8                    | 76.8                   | 84                    |
| <i>Lycee</i><br>(High School)             | 3.5                      | 8.4                    | 10.4                    | 9.4                    | 7.6                   |
| <i>Middle</i><br>(J. High Sc.)            | 10.5                     | 10.1                   | 8.9                     | 7.9                    | 4.3                   |
| <i>Primary School</i>                     | 4                        | 5.1                    | 3.9                     | 7.3                    | 4.2                   |
| <i>Average Number of Foreign Language</i> | 1.3                      | 1.02                   | (-)                     | (-)                    | 0.99                  |

As seen in Table-2, the university-educated group has a devastating domination and their trend is always on the increase<sup>27</sup>. High school educated deputies had become the second biggest group by the third period and they have occupied second position up to the present day. The trend of those people who received middle school education has been steadily downward

over all the periods. University educated deputies have their largest proportion which is 84% in the period-5. This situation is highly related to the general increment of the ratio of literate population in Turkish society. The average number of foreign language known at its highest rate in the first period that is 1.33. The curve of this peculiarity is downward.

**Table 3. Rates of Genders, Marital Status's and Number of Children of Deputies for the Major Periods**

|                                   |                    | MAJOR PERIODS         |                            |                         |                        |                       |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
|                                   |                    | <i>I</i><br>1920-1946 | <i>II</i><br>1946-1960 (*) | <i>III</i><br>1960-1970 | <i>IV</i><br>1973-1980 | <i>V</i><br>1983-1995 |
| <i>GENDER</i>                     | <i>Male</i>        | 1.5                   | 1.1                        | 1.1                     | 1.3                    | 1.8                   |
|                                   | <i>Female</i>      | 98.5                  | 98.9                       | 98.9                    | 98.7                   | 98.8                  |
| <i>MARITAL STATUS</i>             | <i>Married</i>     | 86.7                  | 91.4                       | 92.6                    | 94.5                   | 97.3                  |
|                                   | <i>Wid.-Single</i> | 13.3                  | 8.6                        | 7.3                     | 5.5                    | 2.7                   |
| <i>AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN</i> |                    | 2.66                  | 2.45                       | 2.53                    | 2.75                   | 2.42                  |

Another important phenomena which affects the elite recruitment process in Turkish society is gender. When Table-3 is examined, it can be clearly seen that males take a huge proportion in all the periods. Like males, the proportion of married deputies is always very high and its trend is without exception on the increase. The average number of children is biggest size in period IV while the fifth period has the lowest number.

All Turkish assemblies presents masculine character: Male parliamentary elites<sup>28</sup> have almost always very huge dominance in all periods. The proportion of males is always higher than 98%. The female deputies have their

slightly largest proportion amongst the Turkish parliamentary elites in the first and the last periods.

Turkish people ascribes an important role to the marriage in the social life. This phenomena can be observed easily in elite recruitment process. The trend of those people who is married has been upward since 1920 up to present time. Whereas the proportion of the married political elites was 86.7% in the first period, the average rate of married deputies is 97.3% in the last period. Another important finding about the family structure of the Turkish political elites is that they have their smallest family size which is 2.42 in the last period.

**Table 4. Rates of Occupations for the Major Periods**

| OCCUPATIONS                   | MAJOR PERIODS         |                        |                         |                        |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
|                               | <i>I</i><br>1920-1946 | <i>II</i><br>1946-1960 | <i>III</i><br>1960-1970 | <i>IV</i><br>1973-1980 | <i>V</i><br>1983-1995 |
| <i>Civil Bur. and Mng.</i>    | 21.3                  | 11                     | 18.3                    | 23.6                   | 30.3                  |
| <i>Law</i>                    | 13.1                  | 24                     | 27.4                    | 23                     | 15.8                  |
| <i>Engineering &amp; Arc.</i> | 1                     | 3.3                    | 1.9                     | 3.1                    | 2.6                   |
| <i>Medicine</i>               | 8                     | 11.7                   | 6.5                     | 4.5                    | 3.1                   |
| <i>Free Contractor</i>        | (-)                   | (-)                    | (-)                     | (-)                    | 7.9                   |
| <i>Medical Sciences</i>       | 1.3                   | 2.3                    | (-)                     | (-)                    | 4.6                   |
| <i>Education</i>              | 10.1                  | 8.3                    | 5.6                     | 7.5                    | 8.4                   |
| <i>Military</i>               | 16.9                  | 7                      | 6.9                     | 3                      | 3                     |
| <i>Trade &amp; Industry</i>   | 10.7                  | 17.7                   | 16                      | 15                     | 15.4                  |
| <i>Trade Union</i>            | (-)                   | (-)                    | 1.6                     | 1.6                    | 2.2                   |
| <i>Others</i>                 | 17                    | 14.3                   | 16                      | 16                     | 5.8                   |

Occupational background is another important component that affects the elite circulation process in Turkish society. Table-4 clearly shows that the two occupational groups of law, and civil bureaucracy and management, are the biggest groups in the last three periods. The target group in the first period is civil servants, however, the military officers are the second

largest group. In the second period, the largest group is law whereas the trade and industry group takes second place.

Civil bureaucrats and administrators have always an important proportion among the Turkish parliamentary elites. The second

substantial occupational group is law, that is lawyers, judges and public prosecutors; and the third group is trade and industry which included merchants, businessmen and other related vocations. Military officers, educators and doctors follow these three.

As Ergil discussed, the most under-represented occupations are agriculturists and workers in the parliaments over the whole period. The Turkish agriculturists are mostly small-scale peasant farmers. The proportion of large scale landowners in the Turkish population is being insignificant. Whereas the small scale landowners have been under-represented, the large scale landowners have probably been over-represented.

A category was not created for the religious group because this group occupied an important number of posts not only as clerics but also within all the other occupational groups. Clerics were the second largest group in the Constituent Assembly in 1920, but as a result of Ataturk's secularist modernising reforms, they virtually disappeared in the late 1920s. However, they reorganised and cultivated themselves within Democratic Party in the 1950s and later in Justice Party in the 1960s. Finally, they established their own parties, firstly the National Order Party (NDP) in 1970, later the National Salvation Party in 1971 and finally the Welfare Party (WP-RP).

## GENERAL FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Modernisation efforts in Turkey were begun by Selim III and Manmut II in the Ottoman Era. Subsequently the first parliament opened in the First Constitutional Period (1876-1878). But this process was interrupted by the absolutist monarch Abdulhamid II.

The second experience of transition to parliamentary monarchy was realised by the beginning of the Second Constitutional Period (1908-1918). This period contains three parliamentary sessions –assemblies of 1908, 1914 and 1918. The last Ottoman Chamber of Deputies assembled between 12 January 1920–18 March 1920 and they then decided to join the Grand National Assembly in Ankara. Following by the invaders had physically occupied Istanbul, and arrested and deported many deputies of the Last Ottoman Assembly, Sultan Mehmed VI (Vahdettin) dissolved the parliament.

The first transition to real parliamentary democratic life in Turkey was realised with the Kemalist Turkish Revolution which was achieved under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's charismatic leadership. The first Democratic Turkish Parliament opened on April 23, 1920 and three years later, the parliament declared the Turkish Republic in 29 October 1923.

The Ataturk Revolution was a civilian Revolution in spite of its military apex. It comprised every sphere of Turkish Society. Not only were all the social institutions of Turkish Society reorganised but also all social and political values and ideology of the state were replaced with new and modern ideas. The period of 1920-1946 passed under the single party rule of the RPP, but this regime was very different from the regime of Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy. The first successful transition to a multi-party system was achieved by the 1946 general elections and power changed hands for the first time in the Republican period with the 1950 elections. Turkish society experienced its most civilised and democratic period under the 1961 Constitution from 1961 up to the 1971 military coup.

On the other hand, the Turkish parliament has had a mostly elitist<sup>29</sup> character in comparison with Turkish society since the beginning of parliamentary political life to date. However, this peculiarity has begun to change in recent years. A slowly rising pluralism has begun to be seen in the last Turkish assembly. The vast majority of Turkish deputies are aged between 35-64. The smallest age groups are 60-64, and 65 and over, whereas the biggest section of Turkish political elites are in the age group 40-44. The average age of the elites is 44.8. On account of this we can generalise that Turkish parliamentary elites are middle aged

Another important finding is that Turkish society is becoming a more civilised society day by day. The proportion of military officers among the Turkish political elites<sup>30</sup> has decreased from 20% to 2%. Nevertheless, as mentioned before the two occupational groups which are always under-represented are workers and small landowners, in spite of the fact that these are the two largest societal groups in Turkish society.

Trade and industry, and military have very important proportions in the general view of Turkish parliamentary elites. It can be said that

there are three important power centres outside the Turkish cabinet and parliament in Turkish society, which are patrons, media and army<sup>31</sup>. They have always affected social and political decisions, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly; because one of them has well-organised physical power while the others have enormous economic power. The large mass group cannot be effective in political life because they are unorganised and they could not give an organised reaction towards political decisions. However, in spite of not being able to use their political power effectively, they have the biggest potential power in the democratic

system. This power flares up and dies down suddenly through the ballot-box.

Another important characteristic is education in Turkish society. The Turkish parliamentary elites<sup>32</sup> are well educated, with three-quarters of them having received a university degree. This is a very large number as compared with all Turkish Society. Married deputies and males also have a huge domination within the Turkish parliamentary elites, having relatively small families with a 2.56 mean number of children.

## NOTAS

<sup>1</sup> Jary, D; Jary, J., *Dictionary of sociology*. Glasgow, Harper Collins, 1991, 405.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 477.

<sup>3</sup> Huntington, S.P., *Political order in changing societies*. New York, Haven University Press, 1968, 328.

<sup>4</sup> Karpat, H.K., *Social change and politics in Turkey: A structural- historical analysis*. Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1973, 313.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>6</sup> Onulduran, E., *Political development and political parties in Turkey*. Ankara, Ankara University, 1974, 30.

<sup>7</sup> Karpat, H. K., *Social change...*, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Onulduran, E., *Political development...*, op. cit., 31.

<sup>9</sup> Karpat, H. K., *Social change...*, op. cit., 109.

<sup>10</sup> Dunn, J., *Modern revolutions*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972, 192.

<sup>11</sup> Frey, W. F., *The turkish political elite*. Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1965, 40-42.

<sup>12</sup> Karpat, H.K., *Social change..*, op. cit., 10.

<sup>13</sup> Duverger, M., *Siyasal Rejimler (The Political regimes)*. İstanbul, İletişim Yay, 1995, 276.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 277.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 280.

<sup>16</sup> Tezçç, E., *Siyasi Partiler (The Political Parties)*. İstanbul, Gerçek, 1976, 253.

<sup>17</sup> Kircak, C., *Türkiye'de Gericilik 1950-1990 (The Islamic Fanaticism in Turkey)*. Ankara, Ýmge, 1993, 1995.

<sup>18</sup> Ahmad, F., *The making of modern Turkey*. London, Routledge, 1993, 126.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 136.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 147.

<sup>21</sup> Kircak, C., *Türkiye...*, op. cit., 233.

<sup>22</sup> Ahmad, F., *The making..*, op. cit., 163.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 185.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 209.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 209.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 208.

<sup>27</sup> Arslan, A. "Educational backgrounds for contemporary turkish elites". *International Journal of Human Sciences, Political Science* [journal on-line] Available from Internet at:

<<http://www.insanbilimleri.com/en>> [with access 20-10-2004].

<sup>28</sup> Id., "Cumhuriyet Dönemi (1920-1995). Türk Siyasi Elitlerinin Toplumsal Profili". *Sosyal Bilimler*, 2 (2001), 5-16.

<sup>29</sup> Id., "Eğitsizliğin Teorik Temelleri: Elit Teorisi". *Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 6 (2003), 115-135.

<sup>30</sup> Id., "Social Anatomy of Turkish Top Political Elites in Contemporary Turkey". *International Journal of Human Sciences, Political Science* [journal on-line] Available from Internet at: <<http://www.insanbilimleri.com/en>> [with access 21-10-2004]; id., "Türk Siyasi Elitleri". *International Journal of Human Sciences, Political Science* [journal on-line] Available from Internet at: <<http://www.insanbilimleri.com/en>> [with access 20-10-2004].

<sup>31</sup> Id., "Modern Türkiye'nin Sosyo-politik Yapısı ve Türk Yıktidar Seçkinleri". *Değişen Dünyada Türkiye'nin Önemi - I. Ulusal Genç Bilim Adamları Sempozyumu*, 1 (2004), 25-38.

<sup>32</sup> Id., *Researching sensitive topics with elites: perspectives, problems and outcomes*. Guildford, University of Surrey, 1999; id., *Who Rules Turkey: The Turkish Power Elite and the Roles, Functions and Social Backgrounds of Turkish Elites*. Guildford, University of Surrey (Department of Sociology-PhD Thesis), 1999.