Chapter 4

Bureaucracy in the Ottoman–Turkish Polity

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In the Ottoman–Turkish political evolution (from 1299 to the present) both government and civil bureaucracy went through significant changes. An early classification among the political institutions of the Ottoman Empire was that by Lybyer (1913), which distinguished the “Ruling Institution” from the “Moslem Institution”: the former was made up of the sultan and his household, the civil bureaucracy, and the military; the latter consisted of the religious bureaucracy. The “executive” and “administrative” functions were carried out, at least during the earlier centuries, by the civil and religious bureaucracies, respectively (İnalçık, 1954). According to another classification (Karpas, 1968, p. 72), the latter together formed the “men of pen,” who were distinguished from the “men of sword,” or the military. In the Republican Turkey (1923 to the present), the “general

civil service” comprised officials and employees of the central government, including judges, foreign service personnel, teachers and professors in public schools and universities, and the administrative and clerical staff of the ministries (Kingsbury and Aktan, 1955, p. 22).

This chapter is an analysis of the place of the higher civil servants in the Ottoman and the Republican Turkish politics. The bureaucratic elite in question were primarily involved in “politics” rather than in “administration.” The higher bureaucrats, in fact, considered themselves as a group quite different from the middle and lower bureaucrats. Midhat Pasha, grand vizier during the late 1860s, referred to the middle and lower echelons of bureaucracy as “ordinary functionaries and secretaries” (Pakalın, 1940, p. 41). And one author referred to the higher civil servants of the Ottoman Empire and Republican Turkey as “high cadre” (Atay, 1969, p. 365). Certainly, higher bureaucrats in both the Ottoman Empire and Republican Turkey were far superior to the rest of civil servants, by virtue of the education they received (Berkes, 1964; Dodd, 1965; Mardin, 1969a).

During the Ottoman period, higher civil servants generally carried the title of “pasha.” Before the *Tanzimat* (Reform) period, starting in 1839, that title was given to the governors of the provinces, the viziers of the capital, and the officials immediately below in rank. After 1839, the officials in the first four (of nine) grades of the civil (and military) hierarchy had the title of pasha (Deny, 1936, pp. 1030–1031). Republican Turkey retained that title for officers only (and that for a while). During the Republican period, the higher civil service comprised undersecretary, general director, chairman of ministerial boards of inspection, and other officials in similar advisory and controlling positions in the highest ranks (Dodd, 1965, p. 269; Roos and Roos, 1968, p. 27).

4.1 The Initial Institutionalization Pattern and Its Degeneration, ca. 1299–1789

The aloof attitude of Ottoman and Turkish higher civil servants toward their subordinates, was a replica of their relations with social groups, and later, with politicians. The Ottoman–Turkish polity and its social structure developed out of a nucleus of *ghazi*¹ traditions and in the process adopted Islam. The group of *ghazis* that eventually formed the state had come into contact with Islam when they were placed on both sides of the Islam-Byzantium frontiers. They had, however, even during those earlier centuries, preserved the autonomous norms of a ruling tradition (Witteck, 1965, pp. 17–18). Later, this tradition was reinforced when the Ruling Institution was served almost exclusively by the converts to Islam having the status of slaves of the sultan (İnalçık, 1973).

Although initially, young “Turks” were recruited, gradually Christian boys, specially levied and educated, constituted the backbone of the civil and military bureaucracies. From the brightest among them, a group was selected to be trained in the Palace School (Enderun), established by Mehmet the Conqueror (1451–1481), shortly after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. There they received an intensive training lasting as long as 12 years. Eventually, a chosen few were given responsible positions in the civil bureaucracy. Others were destined to serve in the military (Toynbee and Kirkwood, 1927; Miller, 1941; Gibb and Bowen, 1950). Such a recruitment pattern and the special education which the recruits went through made them faithful servants of the sultan: “[The civil bureaucrats and the members of the military were] entirely devoted to the will and commendments of the Grand Signor, that is, one who does blindly all that he orders, and if possible, all that he thinks” (Miller, 1941, p. 70).

Thus during this earlier period in the Ottoman–Turkish political evolution, bureaucrats supported an absolute system of government with power concentrated at the apex of the polity, that is, in the sultan. This concentration of powers was considered necessary in order to preserve harmony

through providing justice. An old maxim repeated in Turkish political literature from *Kutadgu Bilik* in the eleventh century to the *Gülhane* Rescript of 1839, indicated the need for upholding justice: “A ruler can have no power without soldiers, no soldiers without money, no money without the well-being of his subjects, and no popular well-being without justice” (İnalçık, 1964, p. 43).

As a prop to the institutionalization pattern delineated here a fief, or timariot, system had been established. The state held the legal ownership of the land where the fiefs worked, leaving only the right of usufruct to the distinguished members of the cavalry. The cavalry obligated the villagers, part of the reaya (subject people who paid taxes but had no part in government), to cultivate land or to go through a military drill and be part of a cavalry unit which joined the sultan’s army in time of war. The merchants and craftsmen were rigidly organized into guilds. Istanbul had not existed as a Muslim city before its fall in 1453, and the conquerors found there no ancient Islamic society with its inner structure already full-grown, and, therefore, no natural leaders in ancient families with an inherited social prestige (Hourani, 1968, p. 47).

This particular social structure ruled out the flourishing of any autonomous local aristocracies. And members of the polity other than the sultan were essentially salaried functionaries of the state with no feudal privileges. They did not usually own any significant amount of land; after their death, their riches would be seized by the state. The sultan monopolized all of the economic resources (Heper, 1980).

The system that emerged was essentially a closed system, save for limited interactions with other systems through war, and as such was primarily an indigenous system with no trace of Westernization or the democratization processes. The concept of the “Ottoman way” was thus developed; it included a belief in the superiority of the system. At the time it *was* superior, particularly in military terms, to the systems around it. The awareness of this fact led to an overconfidence in the system itself and to an undue effort to keep it intact. Thus was developed the concept of *nizam*, roughly meaning “preservation of order.”

However, as soon as the Ottoman Empire was consolidated into its quasimedieval structure (*ca.* the second part of the sixteenth century), destructive forces began to work within it. In the first place, fundamental transformations that took place in the pattern and volume of production and trade, and of precious metal stocks, and the resultant price increases in Europe, played a fundamental role in the disintegration of the socioeconomic structure of the empire. In the process, handicrafts declined; industry could not flourish. The ensuing adverse trade relations led to financial difficulties. Second, the wars that the empire engaged in toward the end of the sixteenth century and thereafter, no longer provided war booty and, in the last analysis, led to financial losses (Shaw, 1976, pp. 171–174).

As a consequence, the fief system was eliminated, and the taxing rights were sold to private parties—the so-called tax-farmers. This was followed by the emergence of *ayan*, or local notables. The resultant compartmentalization of power and politics between the center and the periphery loosened the grip of the sultans on the economic resources of the empire, with an accompanying slackening of their control on the bureaucracy.

Consequently, two cardinal principles of the military were abandoned: the prohibition against marriage before retirement on pension, and the prohibition against engaging in any craft or trade (Gibb and Bowen, 1950, p. 182). Concerning the civil component of government, first, the initiation of policy was gradually transferred from the sultan to the grand vizierate. During the seventeenth century, the grand viziers’ official residence, which in time came to be known as the Sublime Porte, became the real center of government. The Imperial Divan still met, but only occasionally and for purely ceremonial matters (Lewis, 1961, p. 372). Second, with the degeneration of training (Toynbee and Kirkwood, 1927, p. 26) and with the introduction of nepotism into the ranks of the civil bureaucracy, that institution developed political orientations not in keeping

with the political philosophy of the earlier period: there was a growth in caprice in government. During this period of change, the Ottoman “government became decidedly less ‘constitutional’ than it had been” (Gibb and Bowen, 1950, p. 199).

During the early Ottoman centuries, the civil bureaucracy was a relatively insignificant component of the government. During the period of disintegration, it benefited from the disintegration of power at the apex. At the time, civil bureaucratic elite became part of the ruling oligarchy comprising the military, religious, and civil bureaucracies; they shared with the other members of the oligarchy norms deriving from neotraditionalism and Islam. A set of bureaucratic norms in the form of Westernization goals was to develop only when the civil bureaucratic elite began to make contacts with the West from the eighteenth century onward. In the latter set of norms could be found the seeds of a bureaucratic ruling tradition.

4.2 The Emergence of a Bureaucratic Ruling Tradition and the Reactions to It, ca. 1789–1909

The period of nearly a century, extending from the accession of Sultan Selim III (1789) to the First Ottoman constitutional period (1876–1879), is a crucial era for the emergence and development of the bureaucratic ruling tradition (Findley, 1980, 1989). During this period, efforts were made to curb the disintegration process that had started two centuries earlier; in the process the civil bureaucratic elite became the leading component of government. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the following century, however, the civil bureaucracy and the worldview it represented came under severe attacks.

From the end of the eighteenth century it was conceived as appropriate to diverge from the old order, which had degenerated anyway, in order to save the empire (Shaw, 1971). The new worldview admitted the superiority of European countries, at least in some respects, and of the need to adopt first some “techniques” and later full “technologies” from those countries.

In accordance with the new strategic decision to abandon a static concept of society, an effort was made to free the polity from any ready-made formula, which would impede its ability to effect the changes deemed necessary. From this point on the public, policies and programs were to be complimentary neither to basic Islamic formulae nor to the “will” of the ruler in its old sense; the only criterion in promulgating such policies and programs was going to be “reason” (Berkes, 1964, pp. 132–133).

It was really the civil bureaucratic elite who, in the process, assumed the policy-making function. The sultan was responsible for promulgation of policy decisions, but more and more they were developed by the advisory councils of the quasiautonomous ministries and departments and by advisory councils outside and above the ministries or departments. All these agencies were gradually staffed by a new generation of civil servants different in their outlook and with a new sense of responsibility (Lewis, 1961, p. 99).

The rise to prominence of the civil bureaucratic elite was a consequence of the efforts of Sultan Mahmut II (1807–1839) to relegate into a secondary position the other powerful groups in the polity. The first move along these lines was against provincial notables who had deprived the central ruling bodies of some of their economic resources. In 1812, immediately after the conclusion of the peace treaty with Russia, Mahmut II began to suppress such notables. He crushed them by military means, often using one against the other, or deprived them of their titles and leases so that they were forced to submit. It was then decided to entrust public services in the provinces exclusively to salaried civil servants appointed by the central government. The tax-farming system was

abolished in 1831, and the central administration appointed revenue collectors (*muhassıls*) directly attached to the central government (Lewis, 1961, p. 61; Shaw and Shaw, 1977, pp. 1–54).

Once the provincial notables were to a large extent suppressed, Mahmut II could make his move against the Janissaries, the cream of the military. After much maneuvering, he was able to get rid of them in 1826. He also entrusted to the civil bureaucracy the administration of *evkaf*—the charitable foundations and endowments which constituted the chief repository of ecclesiastical economic power (Chambers, 1964, p. 317).

The economic resources so retrieved came to a great degree under the control of the civil bureaucracy. The objective was to develop a bureaucracy able to save the empire through political formulae based on “reason.” The newly created military, known as *Nizam-ı Cedid*, or New Order, was expected to support the civil bureaucracy in the latter’s mission in question. The military bureaucracy was rendered subordinate to the military.²

Contacts of the bureaucracy with the West had started long before Sultan Selim III’s reign, when some bureaucrats were sent to Western capitals on fact-finding missions. More organized contacts with the West followed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Early borrowings from the West were in the area of the military. Then, as the earlier assumption of Ottoman supremacy was abandoned, the Sultans began to send regular diplomatic missions instead of ad hoc envoys to the major Western capitals.

In the capital, what may be considered as the first institution of education for the new group of higher civil servants was the Translation Chamber, established by Mahmut II in 1833 when, after the Greek revolt in the late 1820s, he gave up his reliance on Greek interpreters and replaced them with Muslims. The Muslims were to master French in the Translation Chamber. The establishment of this chamber was soon followed by founding of several schools to provide training for bureaucratic careers. The basic goal was to train “enlightened statesmen” (Onur, 1964, pp. 45–46).

The civil servants who received education in the said chamber and the schools viewed themselves as a group apart from social groups, as from the sultan. In their opinion, they were the only group fit to administer the empire (Mardin, 1962, pp. 179, 182–183, 187–188). They were known as “the group of high officials belonging to the Reşit Pasha school” (Pakalın, 1940, p. 59).³ The members of this group considered themselves as the servants of the state, not of the sultan (Mardin, 1957a, p. 13). They assumed that the policies developed by them and freed from Islamic traditions would be best for the empire. Grand Vizier Âli Pasha, of this group of bureaucrats known as the Old Ottomans, justified the measures he had taken in order to stay on top by saying that he could not trust other people (Mardin, 1955, p. 10).

In order to ensure the continuity of their pattern of rule, the Old Ottomans developed the idea of “institutions replacing individual rulers.” Reşit Pasha argued that consistency and intelligent administration could only be obtained if “institutions” were established and if these institutions were endowed with a ruling tradition.⁴ Such an approach was diametrically opposed to the council of a certain Sarı Mehmet Pasha, who in the eighteenth century had argued that the Ottoman Empire could be saved only if competent sultans could be had (Wright, 1935).

In their efforts to realize the autonomy of the civil bureaucracy, the Old Ottomans resorted to heavy-handed policies. Such methods found their opponents in the persons of the Young Ottomans. Some members of the civil bureaucracy broke camp in the 1860s with the grand viziers of the decade (Âli and Fuat Pashas), and started agitating for the introduction of some sort of a liberalization process. They put particular emphasis on “representation”: “Âli was... [in the Young Ottomans’ view] the symbol and apex of a tyrannical bureaucracy. Namık Kemal [a leading critic of the Old Ottomans] wrote with effective irony about the peasant who visiting Istanbul and seeing

many fine houses, thinks there must be many Sultans. There are many Sultans, the peasant is told, but they lack the title. They are ministers" (Davison, 1963, p. 223).

It is significant, however, that the Young Ottomans had only a rationalist democracy in mind. According to Namık Kemal, "the government could limit individual rights and liberties only by laws conforming to abstract good" (Berkes, 1964, p. 211). According to the Young Ottomans' version of representative principle, the good of the country was to be decided not by a handful of bureaucrats but by a larger group of intelligentsia.

The bureaucratic ruling tradition espoused by the Old Ottomans experienced even more difficult years during the era of Abdülhamit II (1876–1909). The strategic decision of the Hamidian era was to a great extent abandon Westernization and replace it with "Islamic civilization" (Berkes, 1964, pp. 261–262, 268). The neotraditionalism in question rejected both the secular policies of the Old Ottomans and "liberal" policies of the Young Ottomans. One reflection of this new approach was the emphasis placed on religion under the banner of Pan-Islamism, formulated to hold the empire together through Islamic solidarity.

Abdülhamit II tried hard to render the civil bureaucracy subservient to him. For instance, he allowed no grand vizier to become entrenched in office until he found men he trusted. During the 6 years after he prorogued the Parliament in 1877, there were 16 tenants of the grand vizierate. In the eyes of Abdülhamit II, "meritorious bureaucracy" was "loyal bureaucracy" (Pears, 1917, p. 106).

However, even during this period, bureaucratic orientations acquired during the Old and Young Ottoman times were not entirely abandoned. As Lewis (1961, pp. 194–195) has noted, "The government of Turkey was still the accepted and recognized prerogative of an elite of professionals who retained all the rights and duties of politics, including that of opposition."

In the persistence of such political orientations among the bureaucratic elite, secularly oriented high schools played a crucial role. Among such high schools, the Civil Service School, or *Mülkiye*, continued to be an intellectual center. Even under the pressure of the Hamidian regime it remained a "forcing ground of new ideas" (Lewis, 1961, pp. 180–181). Of the many forces which contributed to the revolution of 1908, as a consequence of which Abdülhamit II was removed from his throne and the Second Constitutional Period inaugurated, a Western type of education and Western liberal ideas among the Ottoman intelligentsia have been considered important (Kazamias, 1966, p. 99). Among others, some of the high officials had become rallying points for discreet opposition against Abdülhamit II (Hourani, 1968, p. 59).

It must be noted that although the earlier political orientations persisted during the Abdülhamit era, the members of the civil bureaucracy who had such orientations were largely precluded from holding influential positions. Nevertheless, as indicated, the ruling tradition of the earlier decades was not altogether abandoned. It is true that during the Young Turk period (1908–1918)⁵ that followed the Abdülhamit era, the military spearheaded Westernization efforts. The civil bureaucracy, however, was not entirely out of the political scene.

4.3 Consolidation of the Bureaucratic Ruling Tradition, ca. 1909–1950

The leaders of the Young Turk era were, according to Berkes (1964, p. 329), the "Turks who had broken with tradition through education." This description of those leaders unequivocally shows the strategic decision of this period: again it was a decision to resort to Westernization. In fact, this was the period during which the ground was prepared for the early Republican secularizing reforms.

In 1916, a bill was passed with the aim of doing away with the *Şeriat* (Islamic Canon Law). The bill also provided for taking away from Sheikhulislam (the highest religious official) the administration of those primary schools which operated with the income of the pious foundations. The new Marriage Act introduced civil marriage instead of the religious one. The Koran was translated into Turkish, despite great protest from the religious community (Sugar, 1964, p. 134).

On the whole, the military spearheaded the efforts at secularization. From the late Abdülhamit II era, because of the significance attached to increasing military threats from abroad, emphasis had been placed on higher military schools. The military schools far outnumbered the schools from which the civil functionaries came (Ramsaur, 1957, p. 18). Besides their greater numbers, the military schools were better in quality than the civil schools: “In the Empire the best schools, teachers, and equipment had been provided for the officers: the officer corps had hence become Westernized early” (Sugar, 1964, p. 162). The military thus assumed leadership of the secularization process. In fact, during the early years of the Young Turk era, the officers dismissed “(p)alace-oriented pashas and reactionary and useless functionaries” (Pears, 1919, p. 244; Lewis, 1961, p. 238), whom they despised (Whitman, 1919, pp. 162–163).

However, as a whole, the civil bureaucracy continued to play a significant role. Despite the militaristic trappings of the Young Turk government, internal policies of that government necessitated paying increased attention to the civil bureaucracy. For one thing, the policy of developing a “national economy”⁶ made it imperative that a governmental machinery for “economic planning and control” be developed (Sugar, 1964, p. 160). Still more significantly, the objective of progress involving “cultural” change⁷ made the involvement of the civil bureaucracy in carrying out “progressive” policies indispensable:

It is noteworthy... that as early as the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, the part played by Enver the Soldier appears to have been spectacular rather than genuinely dominant, and that the movement was directed and sustained behind the scenes by Talat Bey, (originally) a Salonican telegraphy clerk and Javid Bey, a financier of Jewish extraction—that is by Turks who had received their training in two non-military branches of Western technical achievement. (Toynbee and Kirkwood, 1927, p. 39)

In fact, the contribution of civil functionaries to the Young Turk movement had begun during the last years of the Abdülhamit II era. Junior bureaucrats—schoolteachers, telegraph clerks, and junior administrators—had joined the camp with the military in the movement against the regime (Rustow, 1964, p. 361; Ahmad, 1969, pp. 1–13). During the Young Turk period, special attention was given to these lower echelons as part of the socialization activities of the Committee of Union and Progress—the political organ of the Young Turk movement (Szyliowicz, 1966, p. 269).

Consequently, as already noted, the civil bureaucracies were not altogether out of the political scene; to a certain extent, they participated in the politics of the Young Turk era (İnal, 1951). As a continuation of the political ideology of the Young Ottoman,⁸ the Young Turks championed, at least in their early years, the liberal political norms. In the face of Islamic resistance, however, the movement soon reverted to heavy-handed policies, to effect an “enlightened despotism” (Yalman, 1956, p. 55).

With this reorientation, the ruling tradition of the military and civil bureaucracies was again revived. In the process, the intellectuals of the Young Turk movement further elaborated on the earlier concepts. One such intellectual was a certain Ahmet Rıza, a bureaucrat. He aimed at awakening Turkish people through education. Rıza introduced a concept which implied invariable

relations between “things.” Since such a law could only be conceived by experts, it was necessary to leave politics to the latter (Mardin, 1969b, pp. 6–7). Another intellectual of the period was Abdullah Cevdet. The core of Cevdet’s thought, too, consisted in the idea of educating the people, who were to be guided by the elite (Mardin, 1969b, pp. 12–16).

In these ideas, one can easily see the seeds of various concepts later encountered in the bureaucratic ruling tradition of the early Republican era (1923 to the present). The new strategic decision of the early Republican period was “wholesale” acceptance of “Western civilization”—a total transformation of the social, economic, and political life of the nation.

However, as a contemporary author has noted, Atatürk believed that only after “cultural” awakening could the Turkish nation attempt economic development (Karaosmanoğlu, 1968, p. 116). The transformation was to be total in a cultural sense (Mardin, 1971). It was still to be selective Westernization, but borrowing from the West was no longer to be hindered by Islamic traditions.

By far the most significant step in the formation of the leading cadre of the Republic was what is often referred to as “Angora Reform”—to solidify the hold of Atatürk and his close associates on the dominant intellectual group in Turkish society. Atatürk believed that reason and scientific method could create an almost unlimited future of material progress (Ward, 1942, pp. 51–52). Thus, if an elite could be trained with a secular and rational bent of mind, such a group could lead Turkey to prosperity and esteem (Frey, 1965, pp. 40–42).

The new political cadre of the early years of the Turkish Republic emerged from a small group composed of Atatürk and his close associates. These intellectual-political leaders, however, comprised a tiny group in terms of the polity proper. Even if the new political-“cultural” goals aimed at transforming some “superstructure” institutions only, the implementation of the ensuing policies would have necessitated the services of a bureaucracy. For this purpose, out of the three institutions, initially, the military was utilized to a great extent. However, once the War of Independence (1919–1922) was over, the military was played down and more attention was paid to the civil bureaucracy. The new approach made it necessary, of course, that the religious bureaucracy be suppressed to a large extent.

On the other hand, what emerged from the war was a civil bureaucracy with a dual loyalty: “Alongside national young bureaucrats... (there were) bureaucrats from the Sublime Porte. The nationalist wing of the bureaucracy always found the Sublime Porte wing in opposition to itself in the reformist movements” (Avcıoğlu, 1969, p. 155). Consequently, first, some purges were made, and second, steps were taken to gain the loyalty of the remaining former bureaucrats, who had to be employed because of a lack of qualified personnel. However, as the civil bureaucratic cadres were less than satisfactory for carrying out the Westernization policies, a new breed of civil servants had to be created (Heper, 1980–1981).

As a result, a long-range program of educating a new generation of civil servants loyal to the Republican ethics was adopted (Atay, 1969, p. 448). Consequently, the new schools of higher learning, according to Atatürk, were intended to be not merely the training ground for high officials and legal specialists but, more important, the basis of a new jurisdiction consistent with revolutionary ideals and in harmony with the social needs of Turkey (Wortham, 1931, p. 207).

The formal education offered in these schools was conducive to an extremely elitist political attitude. It aimed at creating graduates who were intellectually superior, well-versed in normative-theoretical formulations (Kazamias, 1966, pp. 135, 147, 151, 220ff). As a result of this pattern of education and the specific mode of modernization—Westernization with an emphasis on only selective institutions—reformism soon acquired a static meaning (Selek, 1968, p. 713). For instance, when in 1945 a land reform bill was proposed:

(T)he deputies in the Assembly binded into two groups as soon as the debate on the law started—one in favor of the law, the other opposed to certain parts, namely to the drastic expropriation aspects of the law... The first group was composed mostly of intellectuals and government officials who adopted a social-intellectual approach to land reform. The second group, composed mostly of deputies with some personal interests involved, adopted a technical viewpoint. (Karpas, 1959, p. 119)

Gradually the civil bureaucracy's place in the polity was solidified. The civil bureaucracy was organized as a career civil service. Special laws and regulations protected the bureaucracy from arbitrary interference by the political executive. A civil servant who was denied promotion or removed from an attractive post remained in the service and could seek promotion and reinstatement by appeal to the Council of State (the Turkish version of France's Conseil d'Etat). The later council was composed of civil servants and as such provided a secure bulwark against unfair treatment. The civil bureaucracy was also made a close system through the seniority rule and an educational caste system. Initial entry was governed by educational qualifications; thereafter, seniority played a significant role. Lateral entry was insignificant (Eren, 1963, p. 36; Chambers, 1964, pp. 308–309). The civil bureaucrats, secure in their jobs, enjoyed relatively high salaries. During the war years, their salaries were reinforced with assistance in kind—coal, clothing, sugar, fat, rice and the like (Karpas, 1959, pp. 129–130).

The bureaucratic ruling tradition reached its zenith in the late 1930s, when the civil bureaucracy adopted the principles Atatürk and his associates had developed and when its place was reinforced in the polity and society. At the same time, however, forces were preparing the doomsday of the happy marriage between the bureaucratic and political elites of the 1930s. While the ruling elite had assumed “an integrated and classless society” to be raised “to the level of contemporary civilization” through populist and nationalist and to a lesser extent *étatist* policies, their non-doctrinaire and ambivalent economic approach allowed the strengthening of certain social and economic interests in society.

The new economic groups had no ambition to capture the political office so long as the political–bureaucratic elite satisfied themselves with reforms that did not unfavorably affect the economic interests of the new groups. When this came to an end, the new groups decided to capture the government. They were aided by an emerging liberal intelligentsia opposed to the repressive policies of the 1940s (Frey, 1965, p. 282). With the coming to power of the Democratic Party (DP) in 1950, a new era started.

4.4 The Bureaucratic Ruling Tradition on Trial in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

The Democrats wished to break the shackles that had been imposed upon the polity by the bureaucratic elite; they were opposed to the latter's prescriptive static Westernization and rather cautious economic policies (Heper, 1991, p. 679). The Democrats made a distinction between Westernizing reforms “accepted by the people” and those not accepted (Tunaya, 1962, p. 223). They made concessions on religious matters (Reed, 1954, p. 281). Concerning the economy, they wanted to speed up the processes toward more liberal economic policies. The intellectual–bureaucratic reaction against the Democrats was primarily a reaction to the new concept of state, which was perceived as contrary to the earlier bureaucratic ruling tradition: the intellectual–bureaucratic elites thought that politics was no longer used “to promote the interests of the nation as a whole,” but

to promote the ends of “a privileged few.” Second, because of concessions on the Westernization reforms, “irrational” was preferred to “rational.” Intellectualism was abandoned; politics was no longer based on “reason.”

Under the shield of autonomy granted to them in 1946, university professors had largely initiated the intellectual–bureaucratic reaction. Four basic ideas had been given special emphasis: (1) action should be guided by ideas, (2) ideas should be intellectually respectable, (3) politics should not be a process of providing benefits to certain social groups, and (4) the civil bureaucracy should be given a more prominent place in Turkish polity.⁹ The professors’ most willing audience were the civil bureaucrats (Berkes, 1964, pp. 89ff.).

As would be expected, the democrats reacted negatively to the ideas. When a law was passed to restrict academic freedom, a faculty member from the School of Political Science (*Mülkiye*) of Ankara University asked a deputy (an old family friend) why he had sponsored that bill; the deputy’s answer was “I can’t stand the ideas you spread in the faculty. I wanted to put a stop to them” (Ross, 1960, p. 17). A similar statement was made by the then Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, too (Aksoy, 1957, p. 11). At the time, the government passed separate laws to restrict academic freedom.

Even if the civil bureaucrats did not play as active a role as the university staff members, they, too, in their own way tried to keep alive the bureaucratic ruling tradition. Despite the fact that the DP governments dismissed some key bureaucrats, reduced the economic status of the civil bureaucracy, and avoided the usual bureaucratic channels as much as possible,¹⁰ the bureaucratic elite asserted their right to rule, that is, to contribute substantially to the making of critical decisions. “Unshakably confident of ... [their] higher responsibilities to the nation” they did not look with favor at the efforts to make them more responsive to closer public scrutiny (Bent, 1969). Imbued with a paternalistic philosophy (Eren, 1963, p. 170), they complained that the new political elite dragged politics down into the streets (Yalman, 1956, p. 227). In response to a survey question the author put to them, 34 of the 36 civil servants, who held the highest bureaucratic posts in the 1945–1960 period, agreed (in 1969) that “what Turkey needs more than anything else is experienced and informed people significantly contributing to publish policy-making,” and, needless to say, they considered themselves as best fitting that definition (Heper, 1976, p. 516).

Not unlike the civil bureaucratic elite at the time, the military, too, took democracy as a discourse at a higher level of rationality. As a consequence, the 1961 Constitution, drawn up in the wake of the 1960 military intervention, legitimized the de facto political influence of the bureaucratic intelligentsia. Article 4 stipulated, “The nation shall exercise its sovereignty through the authorized agencies as prescribed by the principles laid down in the Constitution.” The 1924 Constitution had simply stated that the nation would exercise its sovereignty through the Grand National Assembly. The authorized agencies included the newly created Constitutional Court and National Security Council; the Council of State, which had new powers; the Turkish Radio and Television agency, which had autonomy and independence from the government; the universities, which were now granted full academic freedom. The Constitution allowed incomplete political participation, and it designated certain bureaucratically staffed agencies as the watchdogs of the political regime (Heper, 1985, pp. 88–89).

The political elite, however, had no sympathies with the regime, that the 1961 Constitution aimed at institutionalizing in Turkey. Celal Bayar, president of the republic from 1950 to 1960, declared the Constitution was no more than a constitutional legitimating of the bureaucracy and the intellectuals (Mardin, 1973, p. 186). Süleyman Demirel, several times prime minister after 1965, repeatedly complained that the country could not be governed with the 1961 Constitution (Heper, 1985, p. 89), and the Justice party governments of the late 1960s and the Nationalist

Front governments of the 1970s continually challenged the jurisdictions of the Council of State and the Constitutional Court.

The bureaucratic elite's response was that of engaging in "negative politics"; the bureaucracy on one side and the government and parliament on the other became hostile powers (Heper, 1977, pp. 80–82). The bureaucratic elite also attempted to promote the idea of state capitalism, feeling that they needed a new kind of legitimation (Karpas, 1973, p. 91).

Significant social and structural changes caused by economic development, rural immigration, and urbanization in a milieu now infused with "liberalism"¹¹ led to ideological polarization and political fragmentation. In such an environment, the bureaucratic elite could not keep their ground. Particularly from 1973 onward, what Kalaycıoğlu (1988, p. 166) calls "amoral partyism" increased by leaps and bounds. From 1973 to 1980, Turkey was governed by coalition governments, their members heavily engaged in unrestrained patronage and nepotism. Never before in Turkish political development had civil servants been reshuffled to the extent they were during this period (Heper, 1979–1980, pp. 105–106). While in the 1962–1974 period, the average number of years that a director general of a state economic enterprise kept his office was 3.5 years, and for the 1974–1980 period, the corresponding figure was 1.7 years (Tutum, 1980, p. 290). In addition, the more critical posts were usually filled by ideologically committed militants or even by outright partisan roughnecks. Even the most sensitive agencies, such as the police and security services, were not immune from such penetration of the civil bureaucracy by political parties (Tutum, 1976, p. 29; Çulpan, 1980, p. 3; Karpas, 1981, pp. 38–40).

Thus, when the military intervened in September 1980 they no longer viewed the bureaucratic elite as the upholders of the norms that held the community together and, thus tried to inject some degree of rationality¹² into politics. In fact, in the eyes of the military the bureaucratic intelligentsia had rather low status. General Kenan Evren, head of the junta, accused those in the civil bureaucratic ranks of having subscribed to "reactionary ideas" and "perverted ideologies."

Initially, the military took action against those civil servants who had committed administrative acts falling under the category of "punishable offense." Extremist governors and mayors were replaced with more moderate officials or by retired officers. Later, measures were taken against many other officials, too. Several civil servants either retired or were simply relieved of their duty. The military also took action against the Council of State and universities. Constraints were placed on the jurisdiction of the Council of State. Through the newly established High Board of Education the military wished to rationalize the promotions and appointments in universities, and see to it that the curricula at the universities would not challenge the normative bases of the Republic. There were also some efforts to streamline the bureaucracy structurally so as to make it more efficient and effective, that is, turn it into a legal–rational bureaucracy. The latter approach to bureaucracy was an upshot of the fact that, unlike the earlier one, the military intervenors of the 1980–1983 period had, particularly in economic matters, a less étatist orientation.

In this last respect, the post-1983 Motherland Part governments went even further and adopted a liberal economic policy.¹³ The earlier policy of import substitution was replaced by an export-oriented one. From now on, an emphasis on market forces rather than regulation from above was to carry the day. The relevant objectives concerning the bureaucracy were twofold: reducing the scope of the bureaucracy in politics and rendering the bureaucracy more efficient and effective. For this purpose, four policies were adopted: privatization of state economic enterprises, simplification of bureaucratic procedures and other organizational reforms, decentralization at the localities, and reduced bureaucracy at the center.

Concerning the first three objectives, the Motherland Party governments scored only limited success. Although privatization of the state economic enterprises was a cornerstone of those governments'

programs, little progress could be made in that direction. Even with regard to those enterprises that were profitable, the buyers expected the state to provide watertight guarantees. In order to make those in the red more competitive, subsidies made to them from the general budget were reduced to a minimum. In response, the enterprises constantly raised the prices of their goods and services. They could do this with impunity as they continued to have a near-monopoly in their respective markets.

With respect to reform of bureaucratic procedures and organizations, the overriding goal was to encourage the exercise of initiative. This could take place, it was reasoned, if everybody knew what they were supposed to do. Thus, efforts were made to define function, authority, and responsibility, better. The purpose was to achieve an improved division of labor and coordination among the various bureaus and to encourage the delegation of authority. However, officials were reluctant to change their administrative styles. For instance, they resisted the delegation of authority. The governments also tried to make civil servants more enthusiastic about their work, and for this purpose the following measures were adopted: application of a merit principle for more successful functionaries (e.g., promotions by jumping echelons and paying of bonuses), more frequent pay increases, and greater flexibility in moving people through set civil service positions. The Motherland Party governments were also keen to facilitate the citizens' dealing with the bureaucracy; thus they sought to simplify the procedures where the citizens had face-to-face interaction with government officials. These efforts to make easier citizens' relations with the bureaucracy met with some success. Where the elaborate rules and regulations had to be left intact, the governments urged the officials emphatically to be as helpful to the people as possible. The governments' success in making the officials more enthusiastic about their work and be more helpful to citizens was less than satisfactory. Here, too, the officials could not easily shed their traditional behavior patterns. And, on the whole, they could not adapt themselves to the policy shifts in many areas introduced by the Motherland Party governments. The governments' response to this state of affairs was twofold—decentralization at the localities and debureaucratization at the center.

Decentralization at the localities primarily concerned municipalities. At the major urban centers, a two-tiered municipal system consisting of a metropolitan municipality and a number of district municipalities was established. The tutelage powers of the Ministers of Interior and Public Works and Resettlement over the metropolitan municipalities were greatly curtailed. The resources at the disposal of the municipalities were greatly bolstered.

Decentralization vis-à-vis the municipalities in the major urban centers, however, stopped at the level of metropolitan municipality; it did not extend to the district municipalities. The district mayors felt that they would have been more effective if they had greater autonomy. In their turn, the officials at the metropolitan level regarded the district mayors as novices who should first go through a period of training.

The attitude of the metropolitan municipality toward the district municipalities reflected the traditional attitude of the center toward the periphery. Later, even the limited decentralization in question was not maintained intact. Primarily, as a reaction to the high level of inflation that Turkey experienced from the mid-1980s onward, the central government cut back on its lending to the municipalities. In addition, as a consequence of some alleged irregularities at municipalities the central government expanded its oversight of them.

It follows that in the late 1980s, the Motherland Party governments became unwilling to delegate authority to localities. This did not mean that they were ready to reinstate the traditional bureaucrats at the center, in power and status. In fact, Prime Minister Turgut Özal and his close entourage gave short shrift to counsel from the traditional civil servants. Despite their so-called liberal revolution, Özal's government felt no compulsion to convert the public bureaucracy into a legal-rational one. Instead, during this decade, too, political elites tried to turn the bureaucracy into a virtually subordinate arm of the government. And now they were even more successful.

Their first tactic was a further politicization of the public bureaucracy. They placed their followers in a number of important agencies. Civil service posts were made less secure; many functionaries were obliged to work on a contract basis. Certain higher civil servants in critical agencies were purged. Within the existing agencies, some autonomous units were created: they were headed by persons brought from outside. Some functions were transferred from an existing agency to a newly created one. The latter, too, were led by officials appointed from outside the bureaucracy. What used to be the autonomous agencies were brought under the closer control of the government.

Those portions of the bureaucracy not considered fit for the implementation of new policies and consequently left to their own devices continued to function in a cumbersome manner than before. Citizens, including members of weighty social groups, faced a bureaucracy labyrinth that showed strong signs of pathology. A bureaucracy that, at times, had been the most significant element of the center now became either extremely politicized or deadwood. This was basically a consequence of the historical rift between the center and the periphery and the inability of the bureaucratic and political elites to develop a harmonious relationship among them and of their inability to effect a transition from virtually complete bureaucratic domination to virtually complete political domination.

4.5 The Early 2000s

In 1999, a coalition government comprising the Democratic Left Party, the Nationalist Action Party, and the Motherland Party and led by Bülent Ecevit came to office. In November 2000 and February 2001, it faced two severe economic crises. The result was a radical devaluation of the Turkish Lira and widespread unemployment. There was a need for drastic measures in the economy, including an International Monetary Fund (IMF) sponsored economic reform program. Kemal Derviş, an expert Turkish economist and in recent years World Bank vice-president, was called in by the government to serve as a minister in the cabinet responsible for the economy. Mr. Derviş, acting in tandem with the World Bank and IMF policies, tried to revitalize market forces and lessen government intervention in the economy, which meant giving priority to economic considerations over the political ones. Privatization was seen to be the most critical path for the market mechanism to function, which would at the same time reduce, if not totally eliminate, the abuse of public resources and using public offices for purely political and partisan goals.

Parallel with the attempts to reduce the effect of the “political” over the economy, such regulatory agencies as the Fair Competition Board, the Capital Market Board, the Banking Board, the Energy Board, and the Telecommunications Board were established. These Boards tended to constitute the new bureaucratic power centers. Indeed, these developments adversely affected the status of the traditional civil bureaucratic elite, as only those at the heads of the new regulatory agencies began to make the crucial decisions with respect to the economy. This occurred to such an extent that even the Ecevit government itself became critical of these new agencies and accused them of acting too autonomously.¹⁴ Meanwhile relations with the European Union (EU) were on the right track mostly due to Kemal Derviş’s and Foreign Minister İsmail Cem’s international experience and popularity. The traditional bureaucracy regarded this development as yet another threat to its role and power, as the EU, alongside the IMF, seemed to be the additional political superordinates. However, on the whole, the Ecevit-led coalition government established a working relationship with the civil bureaucracy, which was based on mutual respect rather than total agreement on all issues (Kınıkoğlu, 2002, p. 21).

Yet, the coalition had its problems; an especially serious one was with respect to the Turkey–EU relations. A burning issue in this regard was the degree to which Turkey should make compromises

on those issues considered critical with respect to the national unity in and territorial integrity of that country. While the Nationalist Action Party defended the position that Turkey should not make undue sacrifices, the Motherland Party gave the impression that it was for the accession of Turkey to the EU, virtually at all costs. For this and also other problems that cropped up because of Ecevit's worsening health problems, the government decided to go to elections 18 months ahead of the schedule. In the elections held on November 3, 2002, the Justice and Development Party (JDP) swept the votes, and formed a majority government.

Though it had its roots in religiously-oriented political parties that preceded it, the JDP defined itself as a democratic-conservative party would subscribe to reformist and modernistic policies, and at least until recently (2006) it acted as such (Özel, 2003, p. 81; Heper, 2006). For instance, the JDP government opted for an economic policy based on "free but intelligently regulated market economy" (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi Programı, *passim*).

The new government has indicated that its style of governance would alter the existing étatist economic policy that they had inherited, which they viewed as unresponsive to the needs and demands of the people. Not unlike the Özal governments of the 1980s, the JDP government, too, regarded the civil bureaucracy as closed, elitist, ineffective, and inefficient, and therefore, in need of reform (Öniş and Keyman, 2003, p. 97). In its attempts to reform the bureaucracy, the government also received support indirectly and sometimes directly from the EU and the IMF. The JDP government also enacted an important new legislation for further democratizing the polity, which included the establishment of the Ethics Board concerning the civil servants as well as measures for the protection of individual rights and liberties (Berkman, 2007). As part of those measures, it introduced the Free Information Act.

As would have been expected, the JDP government also tried to appoint to critical posts bureaucrats who would not oppose and sabotage their policies. This would have been, of course, what every other government would have done. In the case of the JDP government, however, there was another reason for their acting in this manner: the bureaucratic cadres that the new government took over, not unlike many members of the secularist intelligentsia in general, were of the opinion that, given their Islamic roots, the JDP government would be engaged in Islamic dissimulation, or *takiyye*, that is hiding one's real intentions until the time is ripe for disclosing them. They, thus, came to think that the new government would be prone to adopting the tactic of "one man, one vote, only once." Since as a consequence, the bureaucratic cadres in question would not have been sympathetic to the JDP politicians, the latter tended to bring to the higher echelons of the civil service people who had served in the municipalities that the political party controlled from the 1990s onward.

This particular situation in the country also gave rise to a conflict between the government and the secularist president and other such self-appointed guardians of secularism in Turkey, as the judiciary, the bulk of the faculty members as well as the military. The president often blocked the appointment of the bureaucrats favored by the JDP governments, to civil service. In order to get around the opposition the JDP governments appointed their men to the higher echelons of the civil service as "acting" heads of the bureaus for which they were going to be responsible. This in turn has led to legal battles over the bureaucracy between the president and the government, the former attempting to use the Constitutional Court for his own particular purpose and the latter trying to circumvent legal obstructions so created by taking advantage of some legal technicalities like the norm that the decisions of the Constitutional Court cannot be applicable concerning those decisions already taken. This ongoing tension in the Turkish polity has interfered with the efficient and effective functioning of the civil bureaucracy.

Under these circumstances, the government has attempted to decentralize the administration. On this issue, too, the government had to overcome stiff resistance from the secularist camp. However, the government's success on economic plane—its achieving a relatively quick recovery

in the economy in the aftermath of the two severe economic crises of 2000 and 2001, pulling down the hyperinflation to one digit figures by 2005, and making possible high growth rates—as well as starting Turkey’s accession talks with the EU, (October 2005) seem to have been gradually strengthening the hand of the government vis-à-vis its detractors.¹⁵ To such developments in favor of the government, one should also add the growing tide of neoliberalism in the international arena, with its prescription for “limited state” and “delimited democracy” (Keyder, 2004, p. 81). One may thus expect the government to have more control over the civil bureaucracy as the first 10 years of the twenty-first century pass by. Given the democratic–conservative discourse and praxis of the JDP government, the increased control in question would render civil bureaucracy more efficient, effective, and professional, and not more religiously oriented.

Notes

1. Ghazis had been a community of marching warriors that formed the seed of the Ottoman state.
2. Mahmut II created the Office of Serasker (commander of the army), which became the nucleus of the future civilian War Ministry. Through it the civil bureaucracy was able to contain the power of the military until the Young Turk revolution in 1909 (Chambers, 1964, p. 316).
3. As grand vizier, Reşit Pasha, played an important role in the initiation of the Tanzimat (Reform) period in 1839, which continued until 1876.
4. Although Reşit Pasha was a protégé of Sultan Mahmut II, he at times complained of the narrow-mindedness of the latter (Mardin, 1957b, p. 10).
5. The reforms in questions were carried out after 1913, when the Committee of Union and Progress came into power.
6. It was during this period that the first conscious efforts were made to formulate a national economic policy. However, economic policy was largely derived from the political goal of “Turkification.” Against the interests of a minority economic elite consisting entirely of Christians and Jews—the so-called Levantines—the economic policies of this period were directed toward creating Turkish Muslim entrepreneurs (Avcıoğlu, 1969, pp. 127–133).
7. Largely limited to certain lifestyles borrowed from the West.
8. For the links between the Young Ottomans and the Young Turks, see Mardin (1969b).
9. These views were expressed, inter alia, by Savcı (1955a,b) and Soysal (1962). On the close relationship between the school and political socialization of civil servants in Turkey, see Heper and Kalaycıoğlu (1983).
10. A stronger emphasis was placed on state economic enterprises; the upper echelons of these enterprises were staffed by personnel relatively sympathetic to the DP politicians, and every effort was made to provide these personnel with comfortable incomes.
11. While stacking the bureaucratic agencies against the political ones, the 1961 Constitution also enlarged the scope of individual rights and liberties; the bureaucratic elite had wished to have such safeguards against “the absolutism of majority.”
12. On the bureaucracy during the interregnum of 1980–1983, we draw upon Heper (1984).
13. For the period from 1983 to the present, we essentially draw upon Heper (1989) and Heper (1990a,b).
14. Cumhuriyet, Istanbul daily, November 29, 2001.
15. On the last point, see Heper (2005).

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