Ian Budge and Hans Kernan have studied the formation and functioning of coalition governments in twenty countries with consolidated democracies: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Drawing upon the experience of these countries, Budge and Kernan have come up with three basic hypotheses concerning the formation and the functioning of coalition governments.

(1) If the democratic regime is threatened by attempted coups, conspiracies, terrorism, external pressure and subversion or the like, political parties will come together to deal with that threat, regardless of their differences over social and economic policy or in the group interests they represent.

(2) If the democratic regime does not face such a threat and a Left-Right cleavage is salient, all political parties will carry through policies related to this cleavage and will tend to line up on either the Left or the Right side of the political spectrum.

(3) If neither of the preceding conditions is present, political parties will pursue their own group-related preferences and will be inclined to cooperate with the other parties with which they are most agreed on the salient policy issues.

Budge and Kernan also have suggested two complementary hypotheses:

(1) Democratic parties will not work with anti-system parties because their first concern is to defend the democratic system of government.

(2) In the majority of cases democratic parties will view office as a means of advancing policy. They (a) will not seek office for its own sake, (b) will not perceive policy as a means of achieving office, that is, specifically pursue vote-catching policies, and (c) will not adopt policies that are not attractive to voters at all.

Budge and Kernan have noted that their hypotheses should fit the majority of cases in general and should provide a starting point for discussion of any particular situation, even if it turns out not to be "explained."
As in the countries taken up by the Budge-Kernan study, in Turkey, too, democracy has become the "only game in town." Until recently, however, the formation and functioning of coalition governments in Turkey have taken a course significantly different from that in the said countries. From 1961 until 1995, political parties in Turkey on the whole, were unwilling to form coalition governments to deal with serious threats, did not consistently line up on the Left and the Right, and did not necessarily pursue their group-related preferences. Furthermore, they tended to work with anti-system political parties and often sought office for its own sake rather than as a means to advance policy. Below, we elaborate these points regarding four coalition periods -- 1961-1965, 1973-1977, 1991-1995 and 1999 to the present. We then offer our views on why coalition governments in the period 1961-1995 differed from those in the twenty countries studied by Budge and Kernan and why the situation in Turkey after 1999 resembles the situation in those countries.

**The Politics of Coalition Governments in Turkey, 1961-1999**

The Period 1961-1965

The first general elections following the military intervention of 1960-1961 were held on 15 October 1961, and Table 1 presents the resulting political composition of Parliament.

**Table 1: The Composition of Parliament Following the 1961 General Elections**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties</th>
<th>Political Orientations</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republican People’s Party</td>
<td>Center</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice Party</td>
<td>Center-Right</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Peasant Party</td>
<td>Religiously Oriented</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nation Party</td>
<td>Traditionalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Turkey Party</td>
<td>Center-Right</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** 450

*Note:* In the 1961-1965 period (and only in this period), the CHP was a state-oriented party. In 1962, the Nation Party, a splinter party from the Republican People’s Party, too, took its place in Parliament. Vote percentages were not included because they were not relevant to the authors' purpose.

Right after the interregnum of 1960-1961, the political situation was still tense, and the first two coalition governments of this period could be formed only with prodding from the military. Following the 1961 general elections, the members of the National Unity Committee (*Milli Birlik Komitesi*--MBK), the junta who ruled the country during the interregnum, pointed to the need for a national coalition, because "for a while the country needed peace and quiet." Having a belief in the virtues of
national unity, the MBK wished to see cooperation, not conflict, among the political parties. Because only the pro-State Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi--CHP), sympathized with the idea of a national coalition, the MBK made it known that it would only accept a coalition government that included the CHP and was headed by İsmet İnönü, the veteran leader of the CHP.

When President Gürsel, the former head of the junta, asked İnönü to form a government, İnönü agreed because he believed that only he could keep the conflict in Parliament under control and thus protect the democratic regime against another military intervention. His primary concern was to achieve a smooth transition to democracy. The Republican Peasant Nation Party (Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi--CKMP) and the New Turkey Party (Yeni Türkiye Partisi--YTP), however, refused to join a coalition with the CHP, which they perceived as the party of the State, too close to the military. Under pressure from the military, the right-of-center Justice Party (Adalet Partisi--AP) did agree to join the left-of-center CHP in a coalition, but the leader of the AP, Ragıp Gümüşpala, did not take part in the government. Gümüşpala wanted to preserve some personal freedom of maneuver, and he wanted to avoid the impression that the CHP had dictated the terms of the coalition government. As it has been aptly put, the CHP-AP coalition was “a marriage of convenience, not love.”

During the CHP-AP coalition government (November 1961-June 1962), the AP did not refrain from escalating tension that could have been fatal for the multi-party regime. The AP constantly advocated amnesty for the Demokrat Party’s parliamentarians who had been convicted by a special tribunal following the 1960 military intervention. At the same time, it was unwilling to pay attention to basic issues facing the regime. İnönü, whose first priority was a smoothly functioning constitutional system, pointed out that he agreed such an amnesty was desirable to heal old wounds, although the time was not yet ripe because it was still a sensitive issue for the military. Disappointed, the AP initially refused to sign a draft law pardoning those involved in the abortive coup of 22 February 1962, unless it was extended to the Demokrat Party’s parliamentarians. The AP finally supported the amnesty in its original form after the Chief of the General Staff, Cevdet Sunay, said that it was "an ugly trick to put into the same basket the military amnesty with the other issue." Later, although the CHP and the AP had agreed on an amnesty in stages, the AP again pressed for the immediate release of all prisoners, and losing hope of compromise, the İnönü government resigned.

The military once more indicated that it would not accept a coalition government without the participation of the CHP and İnönü. With the difficulties of a CHP-AP coalition fresh in mind, the remaining alternative was a CHP coalition with the CKMP and the YTP, which like the AP, were reluctant to take office because of their animosity to the CHP. At the same time, both wanted to be in government in order to increase their electoral support. In the end, the CHP-CKMP-YTP coalition was formed in June 1962 when the military urged the parties to resolve their last-minute disagreements over the distribution of ministries.

As was the CHP-AP, the new coalition was conflict ridden. The leader of the YTP, Ekrem Alican, now a Deputy Prime Minister, supported private enterprise and
wanted the State Planning Organization set up by the 1961 Constitution to play a lesser role in the economy. Turhan Feyzioglu, the Republican Deputy Prime Minister, disagreed. Both men claimed primary responsibility for the economy; and a personal feud developed between them. 23

The tension between the CHP and the YTP was not only the upshot of policy differences but also was an outgrowth of the animosity of the latter toward the former. The YTP was one of the successors to the Demokrat Party, whose closure the CHP was thought to have instigated. Thus, the Minister of Health and Social Assistance from the YTP criticized the Minister of the Interior from the CHP for not having had adequate intelligence concerning the failed coup attempt of 21 May 1963 (the second since the 1960 intervention). The CHP Minister criticized the YTP Minister for "his anti-revolutionary mentality" and for allegedly having helped a former DP politician escape from prison. 24 The YTP Minister also was troubled by the "fact" that the coalition increasingly looked like a CHP government, which would only bolster the electoral support of the AP.

The coalition lingered on because the YTP and the CKMP each wished to retain power until after local elections. When both had a poor showing in the local elections of November 1963, they blamed their coalition with the CHP and left it. 25

To form a new government, the president once again asked İnönü, who declined because of his two previous experiences. The president next turned to the leader of the AP, Ragip Gümüşpala, but the CKMP and the YTP figured because they were ideologically so close to the AP, they would lose their identity by entering a coalition with the AP. 26 Consequently the president again turned to İnönü.

Seven months earlier, the abortive coup attempt had made the political situation tense. Nevertheless, the CKMP chose to stay in opposition in hope of increasing its electoral support, while the YTP demanded a greater role in economic planning and appointment of the Minister of Interior. İnönü was no longer in a mood to bargain with either of those two parties, 27 but Turkey badly needed a government because of the tense political atmosphere, which had been exacerbated by the Cyprus crisis. 28 İnönü, therefore, formed a minority government with the independents in January 1964, and the YTP supported the coalition from outside after the Republicans warned that the CHP would not join any future coalition if this government failed to receive a vote of confidence. 29

The question of Turkey's place in the Western alliance embittered relations between the new minority government and the opposition. On the Cyprus issue, although the United States had adopted an unfavorable stance toward Turkey, the AP parliamentarians openly supported the American policy. About to leave for discussions with President Johnson, İnönü asked for a vote of confidence. The day before the vote President Gürsel asked the parties "to act responsibly," and it has been suggested that Gürsel's initiative is what saved İnönü from defeat by only four votes in June 1964. 30 For the rest of the year, the acrimonious relations between the government and the opposition continued. The new leader of the AP, Süleyman Demirel, stated that the people were quite incensed because the CHP had been using for its own benefit the 1960 military intervention and the state institutions set up by the 1961 Constitution, meaning the Constitutional Court, the more powerful Council
of State (the Turkish version of France's *Conseil d'Etat*), and the National Security Council. Knowing that the military was unwilling to extend him fresh support, İnönü resigned when the opposition in Parliament rejected the government's budget in February 1965.32

The last government of the period was the coalition among the four center-right parties—the AP, CKMP, YTP and the Nation Party (*Millet Partisi*) of Independent Senator Suat Hayri Ürgüplü. These parties mainly wanted the privileges of being in power until the 1965 general elections as well as to prove it was possible to form a government without İnönü and the CHP. The protocol signed by their leaders contained no new policy of substance but repeated the long-term policies of the previous governments that had been led by the center-left CHP.33

**The Period 1973-1977**

The AP won the general elections of 10 October 1965 and 12 October 1969, and in both instances it was able to form a majority government. On 12 March 1971 the military intervened for the second time. The parliamentary regime was restored by general elections on 14 October 1973. Table 2 indicates the political composition of Parliament following the 1973 general elections.

### Table 2: The Composition of Parliament Following the 1973 General Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties</th>
<th>Political Orientations</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republican People’s Party</td>
<td>Center-Left</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice Party</td>
<td>Center-Right</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Salvation Party</td>
<td>Religiously Oriented</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demokratik Party</td>
<td>Center-Right</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Reliance Party</td>
<td>Center</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist Action Party</td>
<td>Ultra-Nationalist</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker Party of Turkey</td>
<td>Socialist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The formation of the first coalition government after the 1973 elections took three months because the political parties on the Right were preoccupied with preventing the political parties on the Left from exploiting the situation. On 27 October 1973, President Fahri Korutürk asked Bülent Ecevit, the new leader of the CHP, to form a government. The business community that desired political stability, favored a CHP-AP coalition, but Süleyman Demirel was not enthusiastic about taking part in any coalition government. From 1969 to 1973 the vote for the AP had declined from 46.5 to 29.4 percent, and Demirel thought the AP could best recoup its lost votes by remaining in opposition. He consequently pursued an aggressive and uncompromising policy toward the other parties. In addition, personal rivalry between Demirel and Ecevit kept the CHP and the AP apart both at this time and later in the decade.
Because the Demokratik Party was too closely linked with former Democrats to enter into a coalition with the CHP, the only alternative appeared to be a CHP-National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi--MSP) coalition. Ecevit offered a partnership to the leader of the MSP, Necmettin Erbakan, but Erbakan rejected it as too difficult to sell to the party's parliamentarians and voters. In the past, Erbakan had constantly denounced the CHP as godless for its emphasis on secularism. Also, Erbakan's condition that local elections should be renewed was not palatable to Ecevit.

When it became clear that Ecevit was unable to form a government, the president's next choice was Demirel. Despite the business community's pressure for a CHP-AP coalition, Ecevit rejected Demirel's offer of partnership on the grounds that Demirel flirted with the far right. The leadership of the Demokratik Party, meanwhile, thought the party would lose its identity and votes by entering a coalition with the AP. Only the MSP was willing to join a coalition government with the AP, but those two parties together did not command a majority in the Parliament.

In desperation the president turned to Independent Senator Nairn Talu, to no avail. Among other things the parties objected that Naim Talu was one of the fifteen senators appointed by the president so his appointment as prime minister was not democratic and, therefore, unconstitutional.

In a surprise move, Ecevit and Erbakan finally announced that they were ready to work together in January 1974, and the CHP-MSP coalition was formed. It is true that the CHP and the MSP both favored a democracy that guaranteed basic rights and freedoms, a mixed economy, and economic and social development with social justice. But their differences were substantial. The MSP was against the growth of modern capitalism with its links to the then European Economic Community (ECC) and beyond. Ecevit, who wanted to establish in Turkey a social democracy resembling those in Sweden and Germany, did not oppose the EEC and NATO. To cope with the problems arising from a rapidly changing social structure, the MSP preferred returning to traditional Islamic values; for the CHP, social welfare policies were the antidote. While many wondered how an Atatürkist party could work with an Islamist one, secularists, in particular, were quite confused.

Ecevit and Erbakan decided to form a coalition not because of similarities in their policies but because they wished to establish their parties' legitimacy and respectability. With its Islamist views, the MSP was close to the parties on the Right and too distant from the CHP. For Erbakan, however, being in power meant the legitimization of his party, whose religious orientation clashed with the most fundamental premise of Ataturk's Republic--secularism. For Ecevit, forming a government was a great opportunity to prove that he was a responsible politician, despite earlier suspicions of his "Communistic" left-of-center views. In brief, the coalition was based on reciprocally granted concessions.

Soon after the coalition was formed, Erbakan felt that the CHP, acting as the dominant partner, was getting all the publicity. So Erbakan began to bring to the political agenda issues such as pornography in order to place his party in the limelight. Although the CHP did not mind such "innocent" diversions, the Republicans became quite incensed when twenty members of the MSP voted against
amnesty for those convicted of violating Articles 141 and 142 of the Penal Code, prohibiting organizations and propaganda designed to promote class struggle. Eventually the MSP offered a compromise under which all those who had been imprisoned for violating the articles would be released for six months until the government abolished the articles. The compromise bill was passed accordingly.46

Nevertheless the “unlikely and stormy”47 coalition could not last long. Because Ecevit had gained great prestige when Turkey invaded northern Cyprus, in order to attract attention to his own party, Deputy Prime Minister Erbakan began to act independently of Prime Minister Ecevit. The last straw that brought down the government in September 1974 was the vote by MSP ministers in the Cabinet against allowing Ecevit to make an official visit to the Scandinavian countries. Ecevit’s wish to use his new popularity to gain an absolute majority in early elections also played a role in his decision to resign.48

The end of the CHP-MSP coalition was followed by a prolonged period of bargaining among the parties. The AP’s two-fold strategy was to win back the votes it had lost to the Demokratik Party in the 1973 general elections and to escalate the Left-Right ideological polarization in the political party system in order to isolate the CHP.49 Consequently, using extra cabinet posts as bribes,50 Demirel formed his first so-called Nationalist Front government with two anti-system parties--the religiously oriented MSP and the ultra-nationalistic Nationalist Action Party--and one system party--the Republican Reliance Party (Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi--CGP). The CGP had been founded by a right-wing faction in the CHP that had opposed the party's adoption of a left-of-center platform after the 1965 general elections and particularly, the radicalization of that platform when Ecevit became secretary-general of the party in October 1966.51 While Demirel had left the Demokratik Party out in the wilderness, hoping it would wither away, that party itself had decided to avoid entering a coalition with the AP for fear of being eliminated from the political scene by its senior archrival.

The National Front government stayed in power until the general elections of 5 June 1977. As a result of those elections, the CHP’s seats in the Parliament rose to 213 (from 185 in 1973), but remained 13 short of forming a majority government. At the same time the AP’s representation also increased, from 149 to 189, and the Demokratik and Republican Reliance Parties were wiped out.52 Ecevit was asked to form a government, but, not unexpectedly, he did not want to form a coalition with his party's traditional rival, the AP. Just as Ecevit thought that Demirel would encourage the country to drift toward right-wing authoritarianism, for the same reason, he did not think of taking on board the ultra-right Nationalist Action Party (MHP). His recent experience with Erbakan's MSP ruled out that option, too. In the end, Ecevit put together a minority government that failed to obtain a vote of confidence.

Now, as terrorism by both leftist and rightist militants had begun to escalate, it again was Demirel's turn to put together a government. With the CHP having made gains at the polls and the Republican Reliance Party wiped out, Demirel formed a coalition with the MSP and the MHP in July 1977. Despite the business community's continuing pleas for a grand coalition, Demirel once more decided
against approaching the CHP. Demirel thought that Ecevit would take the country to left-wing authoritarianism. So he formed the second so-called Nationalist Front government to promote nationalism as an antidote to "the threat from Left." It did not last long. Some members of the AP resigned from the party because "the party was rapidly moving toward a neo-fascist line," and on 31 December 1977, the second Nationalist Front government failed to receive a vote of confidence.

When the Nationalist Front governments were in power, there was a virtually total disagreement among the coalition partners on some critical matters. Besides disagreeing about the Cyprus issue and Turkey's relations with the EEC, the partners had completely different views concerning the ideals that education should impart. Having no trust in each other, coalition members tried to minimize the authority of the ministries controlled by the other parties, and each ministry tended to act as if it was completely autonomous. Partisanship was at its peak, along with unrestrained political patronage and clientelism. Coalition members, impatient with certain laws, regulations, and even constitutional provisions, at times, overtly violated them. Above all, these two right-wing coalitions, rather than pursuing coherent economics policies, helped escalate polarization and tension in the country.

**The Period 1991-1995**

After the fall of the second Nationalist Front government in January 1978, Ecevit and defectors from the AP formed a government which was succeeded by Demirel's minority government in November 1979. On 12 September 1980, the military intervened for the third time. Civilian government then was restored by general elections on 6 November 1983, and the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi-ANAP) was in power as a majority party from that date until the general elections of 20 October 1991. As Turkey approached the 1991 general elections, three major pro-system parties--the ANAP, the True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi--DYP), and the Social Democratic Populist Party (Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti--SHP)--dominated politics. The ANAP claimed to represent the four major political views propagated in the pre-1980 period by the CHP, the AP, the MSP, and the MHP. The DYP, however, was a successor to the AP, and the SHP to the CHP. The political composition of Parliament following the 1991 general elections is illustrated in Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties</th>
<th>Political Orientations</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>True Path Party</td>
<td>Center-Right</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motherland Party</td>
<td>Center-Right</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Democratic Populist Party</td>
<td>Center-Left</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welfare Party</td>
<td>Religiously Oriented</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Left Party</td>
<td>Center-Left</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>450</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Welfare Party (Refah Partisi-RP) was a successor party to the MSP. The Democratic Left Party is the second successor party to the CHP.

In the aftermath of the elections, Demirel, who had become the chairman of the DYP in 1987, was asked to form the government. The business community, again expressing a wish for political stability, advocated a coalition between the two major center-right parties, the ANAP and DYP, which had similar policies. According to the business community, the country needed consensus to overcome the critical problems it faced.56

The ANAP, however, was reluctant to take part in a coalition government. Its leader Mesut Yılmaz thought that if an ANAP-DYP coalition was unsuccessful, the country would drift "either toward extremist parties or to the Left." On the other hand, he added that if an ANAP-DYP coalition was successful, only the DYP, the senior partner of the coalition, would reap all the benefits.57

Before the elections took place, Demirel had appealed to the electorate not to elect a hung parliament. As he explained, "Only those who had an experience in coalition government know how difficult it is to govern this country with a coalition. When I remember some of the things we had to put up with in the past I cannot go to sleep!"58 Specifically, he was reluctant to take on board the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi--RP).59

The only alternative left was a coalition between the DYP and the SHP. The two parties agreed on some short-term objectives, such as removing Turgut Özal from the presidency,60 bringing members of the ANAP to account "for their corrupt behavior while in office," and amending the 1982 Constitution in a more democratic direction. They, however, differed considerably on such matters as foreign affairs, the Kurdish issue, law and order, and the economy. Consequently, it has been argued that a coalition between these two parties would have negated their identities and would have given short shrift to the social groups they were supposed to represent.61

In their negotiations, the DYP and the SHP came up with a joint democratization package. The press hailed "this meeting of minds on the part of the two largest parties--one on the center-left and the other on the center-right--on a concrete project" as a "very positive development in Turkish politics."62 Demirel likewise predicted that the DYP-SHP coalition was going to be "a government of societal consensus."63 As a result, when negotiations seemed to falter over the distribution of ministries among the parties, the press as a whole, as well as the Speaker of Parliament, reiterated the need for consensus.64

Eventually, the DYP-SHP coalition was formed in November 1991, with Demirel as Prime Minister and SHP Chairman Er达尔 İnönü, Ismet İnönü’s son, as Deputy Prime Minister. Several columnists extolled the virtues of an administration based on consensus. One thought this coalition would always be remembered as a model for a harmoniously functioning government.65 Another noted that if the coalition government functioned in a consensual manner, that would be "one of the most important developments in Turkey's one-hundred-and-fifty-year modernization process."66 Demirel and E. İnönü, too, joined the chorus of praise for harmony in politics. Demirel advised, "Everybody should restrain his/her ambitions; we should
change some of our old habits," while E. İnönü frequently repeated, "coalition means compromise."

The two parties still approached certain matters from diametrically opposite viewpoints. For example, they completely disagreed on whether the period of custody for terrorism-related crimes should be extended, whether compulsory courses on religion in the primary schools should be retained, and whether telephone service should be privatized. The SHP opposed all these initiatives, which the DYP favored.

On such matters as privatization, the DYP obtained the support of the ANAP to get laws enacted in the Parliament despite the opposition of the SHP. If the ministers from the DYP could settle a matter by an executive order, they did so without consulting their coalition partners. When the Social Democrats reacted angrily, Demirel explained at length why the DYP’s actions had been absolutely necessary but on some occasions, promised the situation would soon be rectified. For his part, E. İnönü often reminded the Social Democrats of “the responsibilities of being in government.” Always the optimist, he believed that in case of conflict the two partners “could sit down and see where they were agreed.” Indeed, both sides did contribute to compromise solutions concerning “crimes of thought,” terrorism-related crimes and the jurisdiction of courts over those matters.

Nevertheless, the coalition government did not rest on firm foundations. The DYP, too keen to have its own way, did not refrain from collusion with the ANAP. Although the ensuing conflicts between the DYP and the SHP almost always were ameliorated, a lack of confidence between the two parties, and thus pessimism about the future of the coalition, gradually developed.

In May 1993, President Turgut Özal suddenly died. When Demirel succeeded him as president, Tansu Çiller was elected leader of the DYP and became Prime Minister. Soon E. İnönü left the government and Murat Karayalçın took over from him as chairman of the SHP and Deputy Prime Minister in September 1993.

Both Çiller and Karayalçın were political novices who lacked the necessary qualifications for the offices they now happened to occupy. With neither Demirel’s experience nor E. İnönü’s philosophical attitude toward politics, under the Çiller-Karayalçın partnership, the coalition often came to the brink of collapse. On such occasions, Karayalçın sometimes did not mince his words; for instance, he accused the DYP of being “duped by the provocation and the tricks of the [Kurdish] separatists.” Çiller insisted on playing a one-woman show. She did not inform, let alone consult, her partner about several important issues. After presenting a number of ultimatums to Çiller, Karayalçın threatened to break up the coalition.

Despite the serious conflict on many matters, including privatization, the unionization of civil servants, and the Kurdish issue, the coalition lingered. Continuing calls for moderation and consensus from the media played some role here. Also, Çiller did not consider the ANAP a viable alternative to the SHP for fear of promoting the fortunes of that party in the next elections. Instead, she turned to the parliamentarians of the ultra-right Nationalist Worker’s Party (Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi) who had been elected in the 1991 general elections on the RP lists and then had resigned from that party. Karayalçın, too, could not afford to end the coalition
because, according to the polls, the popularity of the SHP was declining and he wanted to benefit from being in office to the very end. Thus the coalition survived until the elections of 24 December 1995.

The Period After 1999

In the 1995 general elections, the Welfare Party of Necmettin Erbakan won a plurality of votes, followed by the Motherland Party of Mesut Yılmaz, the True Path Party of Tansu Çiller, the Democratic Left Party of Bülent Ecevit, and the Republican People's Party of Deniz Baykal, in that order. In March 1996, Yılmaz's Motherland Party and Çiller's True Path Party formed a coalition government as a united front against the Islamic bloc, but bitter personal conflict between the party leaders over leadership of the center-right brought the coalition to an end in June. Next came the Welfare Party-True Path Party "marriage of convenience." The Welfare Party wanted to move in from the margins of politics to the center while Tansu Çiller now wanted to avoid being sent before the High Court of Justice on charges of corruption.

In June 1997, Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of the religiously oriented Welfare Party, was obliged to resign under pressure from the military and several civil groups because he was unwilling to take effective measures against the threat of political Islam. The ensuing Democratic Left Party-Motherland Party-Democratic Turkey Party government, which was supported from outside by the Republican People's Party, was a relatively harmonious coalition. Although it initiated successful policies in several areas, charges of corruption against Motherland Party leader Mesut Yılmaz led the Republican People's Party to withdraw its support and the coalition came to an end. The last government before the April 1999 general elections was the minority government formed by Bülent Ecevit of the Democratic Left Party in January 1999.

In their formation and functioning, all but one of the coalition governments that ruled from June 1997 until April 1999 differed little from their predecessors. The only exception was the relatively harmonious Democratic Left Party-Motherland Party-Democratic Turkey Party coalition led by Bülent Ecevit. In a sense, it was a precursor of the coalition government that followed the 1999 general elections.

The 1999 general elections were held on 18 April, and the resulting composition of Parliament is indicated in Table 4.

Table 4: The Composition of Parliament Following the 1999 General Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Parties</th>
<th>Political Orientations</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Left Party</td>
<td>Center-Left</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist Action Party</td>
<td>Moderate Nationalist</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtue Party</td>
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Because no party obtained the majority of seats in Parliament, there was once again need for a coalition government. As expected, the president asked Ecevit to form a government. The business world and most of those in the media called for a Democratic Left Party (DSP)-Nationalist Action Party (MHP)-Motherland Party (ANAP) coalition to bring political stability as well as prosperity to Turkey. Among those voices from the business world were the Association of Young Managers and Businessmen and the prestigious Businessmen and Industrialists Association of Turkey.

For a change, the DSP and MHP did not approach the issue of coalition formation with a view to their own electoral fortunes. Devlet Bahçeli, chairman of the MHP, for example, stated that it was "at an equal distance to every party." Bahçeli's political slogan has been, "My country's interests would come first, then those of my political party second, my own political interests last." Bahçeli and Ecevit, in particular, and Mesut Yılmaz, the leader of the ANAP, to some degree, acted accordingly. For instance, Bahçeli was persuaded to join the coalition even though the deputy leader of the DSP had expressed doubts about "the inclination of the MHP toward political violence." Similarly, Ecevit had avoided exploiting for his own or his party's benefit the capture of Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the separatist Workers Party of Kurdistan (PKK). Both Bahçeli and Ecevit supported extending President Süleyman Demirel's term of office in the interest of political stability. On this issue Yılmaz was lukewarm, and he also refused to take part in the cabinet until his name was cleared of corruption charges.

All three parties were careful not to enter into a coalition with the Virtue Party. Bahçeli later remarked that such a coalition "would not have been in the best interests of the country." The three parties also had reservations about the True Path Party, in general, and its leader Tansu Çiller. After stating that she and her party were the best guarantees for secularism, Çiller had turned around and agreed to form a coalition government with the Welfare Party.

The DSP, MHP, and ANAP formed a coalition on 25 May 1999. Many expressed doubt about its viability because, in their view, the "ultranationalist" MHP could not get along with the "leftist" DSP. Although in the 1970s, the militant groups close to these political parties had engaged in bloody clashes, by the late 1990s, the situation had changed. Now there were policy affinities among all three parties: the center-left stance of the DSP was tinged with nationalism; the MHP was moderately nationalist; and the center-right stance of the ANAP combined economic liberalism with cultural nationalism. In addition, since the 1970s, the DSP had trimmed the rough edges of its leftist views, and Ecevit himself had developed into a moderate and seasoned politician. As to the MHP, contrary to orthodox wisdom, in the 1970s that party was anti-Communist, not anti-ethnic. Since the early 1980s its veteran leader, Alparslan Türkeş, had gone through a transformation not
unlike that of Ecevit, and Bahçeli had emerged as its new leader with statesman-like qualities. Ecevit and Bahçeli, especially, and Yılmaz, as well, all have taken great care to maintain cordial relations among themselves.

The DSP, MHP, and ANAP, with their shared policy preferences and moderate leaders, have so far gotten along very well. As noted, the most serious test came on the eve of forming the coalition, when Rahşan Ecevit, deputy chairwoman of the DSP and wife of Bülent Ecevit, remarked out of the blue that in the past the MHP had been involved in political violence and, therefore, she had serious doubts about a coalition with that party. Bülent Ecevit quickly pointed out that the statement had been made only because his colleagues in the party did not want to see past mistakes repeated and that it did not pertain to the present-day MHP. In fact, he said, his first preference for a coalition partner was the MHP. Bahçeli responded that although he did not find Ecevit’s explanation entirely satisfactory, he realized that “the higher interests of the country” were at stake. During the same tension-ridden period Yılmaz also stated that the leaders should avoid rekindling past conflicts.

Bahçeli, Ecevit and Yılmaz agreed the goals of the new government were “consensus and progress” (uzlaşma ve atılım), and they proceeded to act in accord with these goals. First, they unequivocally stated that their government would safeguard the secular as well as the democratic nature of the Turkish State. Within this framework, on such thorny issues as general amnesty, eight-year compulsory secular education, the headscarf issue, and the Repentance Act, they succeeded in arriving at compromise solutions. When they could not concur, rather than break up the coalition, they put the issue on the backburner, took it up later, and then were able to come up with a joint decision. One such issue was how Parliament should act when the court came up with a death sentence for Öcalan.

All along, the three parties made efforts to distance themselves from cheap populism. As Bahçeli stated, the government was going to solve the lingering problems of the country with “determination and courage.” To bring down inflation, for example, the three parties did not hesitate to keep the minimum wage low and passed an act against early retirement. Similarly, despite protests from various quarters, they adopted international arbitration for conflicts among national and international firms.

It must be noted that the present coalition adopted political responsiveness not as a tactic to garner votes but out of respect for people’s preferences and wishes. While taking determined steps to grapple with the long-standing problems of the country, it also displayed a humane face, especially regarding the less privileged. It softened some measures suggested by such international bodies as the International Monetary Fund yet refrained from reducing them to ineffective instruments. The economic bureaucracy in Turkey pointed out that it had never had such a coherent government with clear goals. Foreign banks must have agreed, for in international economic circles Turkey began to have considerable popularity.
Discussion

Why, until recently, were the formation and functioning of coalition governments in Turkey significantly different from those in the countries studied by Budge and Kernan in 1990? And is Turkey’s recent experience a harbinger of a paradigmatic change? Concerning the first query, Turkish democracy traditionally possessed three distinctive characteristics that had a critical impact on government coalitions. First, there was a lack of consensus on some critical issues, such as secularism, even among the system parties. Second, the elite in Turkey was divided into the state elite and the political elite. Considering itself the guardian of the Republican State, in general, and secularism, in particular, the state elite favored rational democracy, based on intelligent debate, and looked down upon the political elite for placing too much emphasis on political responsiveness and too little on political prudence. Third, politics in Turkey consequently developed as a conflict between elites about the contours of the Republican regime and democracy. Democratization was viewed as the increased autonomy of the political elite at the expense of the state elite and not, among other things, as increased representation. As a result, continuing tension between the state elite and the political elite and a lack of attention to the issue of representation led to an almost exclusive emphasis on “politics” and a virtual neglect of policy. Capturing and maintaining political power on the basis of one’s “courage” to challenge the state elite and one’s skill to make other members of the political elite seem to be giving too many concessions to the state elite became overly important. Trying to obtain and maintain political support on the merit of one’s policies remained alien to politicians in Turkey.

Democracy in Turkey developed as it did because that country has had a strong state tradition. From Ottoman times to the present, in the absence of any politically efficacious aristocracy or middle classes, the center dominated the periphery. It is true that in the Ottoman Empire, local notables sometimes managed to wrest autonomy from the center, but they won only de facto power; the center never attributed legitimacy to the local notables. The Republic founded in 1923 inherited the strong state tradition. From the inception of the Republic until his death in 1973, İsmet İnönü, championed the State as Prime Minister (1924-1937 and 1961-1965), President (1938-1950) and the leader of the opposition (1950-1961 and 1965-1972). While trying to consolidate the procedural norms of democracy, İnönü always emphasized the need to pay close attention to the long-term interests of community.

İnönü himself had faith in the common sense of the people and, so, in their ability, eventually, to govern themselves without a father-state looking over their shoulders. At least until recently, however, many other leaders in his party (CHP), the bulk of the intellectual-bureaucratic elite found in the civil bureaucracy and universities, and the officers who made up the state elite had little confidence in the common sense of the people. These elites developed a conception of the State more tutelary than İnönü had in mind, especially after İnönü introduced multi-party politics in 1945.
The tutelary notion of the State implied supremacy of the state elite vis-à-vis the political elite. Because the state elite in Turkey was first and foremost the champion of secularism, from the 1950s onward, the newly emerging political elite, who belonged to such political parties as the Demokrat Party, Justice Party, and True Path Party (İ善ru Yol Partisi), began to use religion in order to garner votes. Consequently the basic cleavage in Turkish politics turned out to be the secularist-nonsecularist divide. Although, beginning in the latter part of the 1960s, extensive debate centered around the CHP’s so-called left-center policy, the saliency of this debate was short-lived. In any case, the secularist-nonsecularist divide continued to override the preoccupation with that policy.

All non-Islamist and non-ultranationalist political parties in Turkey were system parties in the sense that none of them challenged the secular-democratic State in Turkey. Yet they adopted different interpretations of the premises that the Republic was founded upon, including secularism. The anti-system parties were the Islamist parties such as the National Salvation Party and, until approximately the early 1980s the ultra-nationalist parties such as the Nationalist Action Party. These anti-system parties were allowed to compete in the elections and were given governmental portfolios but remained suspect in the eyes of the Republican intelligentsia, who perceived the Islamists as a threat to the secular premises of the Republic and the ultra-nationalists as a threat to its cultural (as opposed to ethnic) nationalism. Because of the intense conflict between the state elite and the political elite the system parties did not hesitate to enter coalitions with the suspect parties in order to prevent their political rivals from coming to power.98

In Turkey, while a party-oriented polity gradually replaced the state-oriented polity, a polity oriented toward the civil society did not replace the party-oriented polity.99 The political class enjoyed virtual autonomy from entities in the civil society. During the 1950s, for example, the Demokrat Party governments were able to reward members of those chambers of commerce and industry that supported the party and harass the members of those chambers that opposed the party. In the next two decades the Justice Party could do the same.100 In 1981, the Chairman of the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association was asked why employers did not articulate their demands in an unequivocal and straightforward fashion. He responded that their philosophy always was to take the “paternal state” (“devlet baba”) as paramount, refrain from challenging it, and pursue an economic policy along with the paternal state.101

Under the circumstances, the political elite in Turkey developed a collectivist view of the national will. For the political elite, the “national will” reflected the counter arguments against the views and ideas of the state elite and its defenders. Because the national will thus did not mirror the aspirations and demands of the societal groups,102 the conduct of politics in Turkey was not shaped by a concern to persuade the people about the merit of policies and programs.

Furthermore, from the early 1970s onward, as the politicians who aspired to statesmanship faded from the scene, patronage politics became more widespread.103 This development also prevented Turkish politics from focusing on policy questions and political responsiveness. So, too, did the way political parties functioned in
Turkey. Because leaders dominated the parties, rather than trying to play a role in policy making, parliamentarians tended to be preoccupied with providing particularistic benefits to their constituencies and displaying complete loyalty to the leaders.  

Even when the democratic regime was threatened by attempted coups and terrorism, the political parties ignored the pleas from social groups that they come together to deal with that threat. As noted, the CHP and the AP could be persuaded to work together only at gunpoint. On the other hand, system parties did not refrain from forming coalitions with anti-system parties; the CHP entered into a coalition with the Islamist MSP, and the AP formed a coalition with both the religiously oriented MSP and the ultra-nationalist MHP. 

In addition, the political parties in Turkey did not line up consistently on the Left and the Right of the political spectrum. During the Nationalist Front governments of the 1975-1977 period, the coalition partners did seem to line up on the Left and the Right but only because Demirel had polarized politics. In fact, "the parties on the Right"—the AP, the MSP, and the MHP—had greater differences among them than the CHP and the AP had differed on such difficult-to-resolve issues as secularism and ethnicity. Moreover, the Nationalist Front governments were preceded by a CHP-MSP coalition and were succeeded, one-and-a-half decades later, by a CHP-DYP coalition, both of which were cross-ideology coalitions. The political parties in Turkey did not always cooperate according to their positions on salient issues because increasingly politics revolved around patronage. Political parties were agreed only on short-term, tactical matters such as preventing other parties from making electoral gains.

In sum, the political parties in Turkey pursued public office for its own sake and not for advancing policy. Eight out of the twelve coalitions formed between 1961 and 1996 were minimum-sized governments, or "minimal winning" coalitions set up not to minimize policy compromises but to win offices. None of them could make substantial policy shifts. Of the four "surplus coalitions," the AP-CHP and the CHP-YTP-CKMP coalitions were set up at gunpoint and the remaining two such coalitions (two DYP-SHP coalitions) were cross-ideology governments. At times refusing to enter coalitions with other parties that were ideologically close to them, the political parties in Turkey considered maintaining their own identity in order to come to office at a later date far more important than advancing their policy as soon as possible.

Let us now turn to the second query raised above—is the recent change in the formation and functioning of coalition government in Turkey a harbinger of a paradigmatic change? Here, we must look at the causes of the change. During recent years Ecevit became a politician who doubled as a member of the state elite, and Bahçeli emerged in that same mold. Politicians of this new type share a sensitivity about such critical issues as secularism that enables the system parties they lead to act in a unified manner toward the anti-system parties if they have to. Consequently, the DSP, MHP, and ANAP could line up against the anti-system Virtue Party and against the DYP for collaborating with the anti-system parties.
As their leaders changed, the major system parties began to differ among themselves on matters of policy rather than on issues of regime. Because there was no meaningful Left-Right divide in post-1980 Turkey, the political parties naturally sought coalitions with other parties that pursued similar policies. By the late 1990s, similarity in policy contributed to the smooth functioning of the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition.

The new pattern of coalition formation and functioning can be considered the beginning of a paradigmatic change in Turkish politics if the new approach to politics is shared by most members of the leading system parties (the DSP, MHP, and ANAP) not just by their leaders. Even if the new approach is alien to most members of these parties, however, it can be considered a paradigmatic change in the making if it is likely to be widely shared by the time current party leaders exit politics. Ecevit was born in 1923, and speculations abound about his health, even if his mind seems to be as sharp as ever. Moreover, Bülent and Rahşan Ecevit have dominated the DSP for years without preparing others as future leaders although since formation of the coalition government in May 1999, Minister of Foreign Affairs İsmail Cem and Minister of Justice Hikmet Sami Türk have been developing into mature politicians. The problem with the MHP is that there may still be quite a number of violence-prone members in its ranks. On the other hand, Bahçeli is a relatively young and strong political leader who has been carrying out a successful purge of such “misfits.”

The ANAP is a more problematic party because, unlike Ecevit, Yılmaz does not seem to have gone through a transformation and periodically he makes impromptu statements that strain politics. The ANAP also is less homogenous than the DSP and MHP, being divided into conservative and liberal wings, if not factions. For the foreseeable future, however, the ANAP may not be able to remove the DSP and MHP from their top positions in Turkish politics.

In conclusion, assuming that Bahçeli will continue to exercise strong leadership in the MHP and that the ANAP will not be able to elevate itself into flagship status, the most critical question concerns the post-Ecevit DSP. If it develops a leader with the perception of politics Ecevit has had, the recent changes in coalition formation and functioning most likely will turn out to be the early signs of a paradigmatic change in the politics of Turkey.

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Notes

* Metin Heper is a Professor of Political Science, Director of the Center of Turkish Politics and History at Bilkent University. Filiz Başkan is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Başkent University.
2. Ibid., pp. 34-38, 44.
3. Ibid., p. 44.
5. Ibid., p. 194.
6. Turkey made a transition to multi-party politics in 1945. The three military interventions of 1960-1961, 1971-1973 and 1980-1983 were not carried out to put an end to democracy but to fine-tune the Turkish democracy so that it could function better. Since 1945, government has changed hands several times through vote. See Metin Heper, “The Strong State as a Problem for the Consolidation of Democracy: Turkey Compared with Germany,” *Comparative Political Studies*, 25 (July 1992), pp. 169-194.
13. Ibid., p. 28. The AP was a successor to the *Demokrat* Party (DP) of the 1950s. The 1950s had witnessed a fierce conflict between the governing DP and the main opposition party, CHP. Furthermore, the Democrats had believed that the CHP had encouraged the military to intervene in 1960.
18. This coup attempt was led by Colonel Talat Aydemir; he and the other leaders of the coup disliked the results of the 1961 general elections and thought that the military should return to power. See Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, 1950-1975* (London: C. Hurst, 1977), p. 181.
20. Dodd, Politics and Government in Turkey, 65-66. During this first coalition government, the CHP and the AP also disagreed over the economic policy. Some in the CHP opted for a planned economy; the AP wanted the government to emphasize market forces. However, the amnesty issue overshadowed this conflict.


22. Ibid., p. 183.


24. Ibid., p. 83.

25. Ibid., p. 82.


27. Dodd, Politics and Government in Turkey, p. 87.

28. This was the period during which the armed clashes between the Greek and Turkish communities on the island had begun to escalate.

29. Ahmad, The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, p. 221.

30. Ibid., p. 222.

31. The 1961 Constitution allowed for an incomplete political participation; it designated these and other bureaucratically staffed agencies as the supervisors of the political regime. For an elaboration, see Metin Heper, The State Tradition in Turkey (Walkington, UK: The Eothen Press, 1985), pp. 88-89.

32. Ahmad, The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, p. 223.


35. Ahmad, The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, p. 332.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., pp. 334-335.


39. Ahmad, The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, p. 335.


43. Ahmad, The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, p. 334.

44. Sanbay, Türkiye'de Modernleşme, Din ve Parti Politikası, p. 189.

45. Ahmad, The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, p. 340.

46. Ibid., p. 341.

47. Davison, Turkey: A Short History, p. 196.


51. Sayarı, Parlamenter Demokrasilerde Koalisyon Hükümetleri, p. 188.

52. The Demokratik Party was reduced to one seat from 45 seats and the Republican Reliance Party to three seats from 13 seats.

60. Both Demirel and Erdal İnönü, the leader of the SHP, thought that since the members of the ANAP had elected Özal as President and since the ANAP's popularity had dipped "as was evident by the recent local elections," Özal no longer had legitimacy as president.
69. For one such case, see *Milliyet*, 5 July 1992.
77. *Sabah*, 20 April 1999.
78. This incident is elaborated below.
82. *Hürriyet*, 6 May 1999. R. Ecevit was referring to the 1970s when both the militant left and the militant right were involved in bloody clashes.
87. Eight-year compulsory secular education makes it illegal to open religiously oriented schools that would admit students before they have completed their studies in secularly oriented schools. The headscarf issue involves a ban on attending classes at the universities while wearing a headscarf. The Repentance Act would provide lighter sentences to those terrorists who inform on other terrorists.
88. In Turkey, death sentences are carried out when Parliament ratifies them. In Öcalan’s case, the leaders decided not to place the death sentence on the agenda of Parliament until after the European Court of Human Rights ruled on the appeal made to that court.

89. Sabah, 21 July 1999.

90. Sabah, 17 April 1999.

91. Ibid.

92. The “state,” as used here, reflects a notion of public interest with little affinity to sectional interests first formulated in J. P. Nettl, “The State as a Conceptual Variable,” World Politics, 20 (July 1968), pp. 559-592. One comes across the phenomenon of the state in which the agents who “act” in the name of the State (the state elite) do not reconcile sectional interests in terms of procedural norms. Rather, they filter the beliefs and demands coming from society through the substantive (state) norms that they themselves formulate. See Metin Heper, introduction to The State and Public Bureaucracies: A Comparative Perspective, ed. Metin Heper (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), p. 4


94. Heper, Ismet İnönü: The Making of a Turkish Statesman, Chapters 4 and 5.

95. Ibid.

96. From the early 1980s onward, officers and some presidents acted as the state elite in Turkey.


98. On the low tolerance of the political elite in Turkey, see Ergun Özbudun, “State Elites and Democratic Political Culture in Turkey,” in Political Culture in Developing Countries, ed. Larry Diamond (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1994), p. 252.


102. The surveys that were carried out before the 1977 national elections showed that 75 percent of the people identified themselves with centrist and moderate political views even in the heyday of ideological polarization at the political-elite level. See Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, “Elections and Party Preferences in Turkey: Changes and Continuities in the 1990s,” Comparative Political Studies, 27 (October 1994), p. 427.


