

2.5.2. Turkey

I. General conditions

Political system

The Republic of Turkey, which was established in 1923, can be classified as a parliamentary system. According to the constitution of 1982 the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNA), which is a unicameral parliament, is composed of 550 members elected through universal and direct suffrage (articles 7 and 75).

Political
system

The president of the republic as the formal head of state is elected for a term of office of seven years by the GNA from among its own members who are over 40 years of age and who have completed their higher education or from among Turkish citizens who fulfil these requirements and are eligible to be deputies (constitution articles 101–102). The president, who is non-accountable except for high treason, exercises distinctive functions under the constitution, including the promulgation of laws and the appointment of the members of the Constitutional Court, and of the rectors of public universities. These are considered to be functions which conflict with the principle of presidential impartiality.

The prime minister, as the head of government, is appointed by the president from among the members of the GNA to form the Council of Ministers from among those who are members of the parliament or eligible for election as MPs from outside parliament (constitution article 109). The Council of Ministers has a joint as well as individual responsibility for the implementation of the government's general policy and for the conduct of affairs under their jurisdiction and for the actions and activities of their subordinates. The council is supervised by the GNA (constitution articles 87, 98–100).

Electoral system

According to law no. 2839 of 1983 on the election of deputies, the party list, with a 10 per cent threshold, is used in parliamentary elections. The candidates are elected from

Electoral
system

81 multi-seat provinces. Each province automatically is assigned at least one seat, regardless of its population. A quotient is determined by dividing the population of Turkey, which is determined by a periodic census, by the remaining number of seats. The population of each province is divided by this quotient to establish the number of seats to be elected from each province. Provinces where up to 18 deputies are to be elected are considered as a single constituency; between 19 to 35 deputies, two constituencies; and 36 and more deputies, three constituencies. Seats from each electoral district are allocated to political parties which have passed the threshold and to independent candidates by the d'Hondt formula.

Electoral thresholds In the local elections, which are regulated by the law no. 2972 on election for local administrations and neighbourhood headmen and elder councils, a simple plurality (first-past-the-post) system is used in mayoral elections, but proportional representation with a 10 per cent threshold, as in parliamentary elections, is applied in counting the votes for municipal councils and provincial general assembly elections. No demographic group is entitled to have a quota in either the local or general elections in Turkey.

Group privileges

As mentioned above, since 1983 political parties have to pass a 10 per cent threshold countrywide in order to be eligible to be represented in the parliament. In the general elections 1987 and 1991, a double threshold system was implemented: countrywide (10 per cent) and district wide (varying between 20 and 33 per cent), but this was annulled by the Constitutional Court in 1995.

Democratic standards Article 67 of the constitution states that 'elections and referenda are held under the direction and supervision of the judiciary, in accordance with the principles of free, equal, secret, and direct, universal suffrage, and public counting of the votes (see also law no. 298 on fundamental principles of elections and electoral registration, article 2.)

Although the constitution underlines that the electoral laws are drawn up in such a way as to reconcile the principles of fair representation and stability in government, the 10 per cent threshold in the general elections and in the elections for municipal and provincial general assemblies increases the disproportionate representation of votes in the elected assemblies, including the GNA. In the early general elections of 2002 about 45 per cent of the valid votes were not

represented in the parliament. Moreover, Turkey has not solved the logistical problems of polling Turks who are abroad.

Legal regulation of political parties

The current constitution (article 68) defines political parties as 'indispensable elements of democratic political life'. The constitution states that 'the foundation and activities of political parties, their supervision and dissolution, or their deprivation of state aid wholly or in part as well as the election expenditures and procedures of the political parties and candidates, are regulated by law in accordance with the constitutional principles'. Instead of listing the functions of political parties, the constitution describes the principles to be observed by political parties with special reference to paragraph 4 of article 68, stating that 'the statutes and programmes, as well as the activities of political parties cannot be in conflict with the independence of the state, its indivisible integrity with its territory and nation, human rights, the principles of equality and the rule of law, sovereignty of the nation, the principles of the democratic and secular republic; they shall not aim to protect or establish class or group dictatorship or dictatorship of any kind, nor can they incite citizens to crime'. Political parties cannot engage in commercial activities. All parliamentary political parties have the chance to hold governmental power in proportion to their seat strength in the GNA.

Legal basis

Until 1965, when the first political parties law (PPL) was adopted by the GNA, political parties were subject to the law on associations in Turkey. The current law no. 2820 on political parties was adopted by the Consultative Assembly during the military period in 1983. The scope of the law covers the provisions relating to the foundation, organisation, activities, functions, authority and responsibilities, property acquisition and revenues and expenditures, auditing, dissolution and ban of political parties (article 2).

According to the law, political parties, in conformity with the constitution and the laws, are legal entities which are organised countrywide and aim at making the country a contemporary democratic state which ensures the formation of the national will through deputies and local administration elections by using public campaigns in line with their statutes and programmes (article 3). The law also

underlines that political parties are indispensable in democratic political life (article 4).

All political parties are treated equally within the scope of this law. However, the law is not responsive to the needs and requirements of the current political situation. First of all the philosophy of the law is based on the assumption that all political parties are part of the state entity. Second, although the law requires that democratic principles guide the internal party activities it encourages the leadership and the central party organisation to dominate the members and local branches in a hierarchical and anti-democratic manner. Third, the prohibitions listed in part IV of the law in particular need to be reformed and updated in parallel with the constitution. Finally, the rules regulating the banning of political parties and party finance are being revised.

Changes in
the past five
years

Since 1983 the law has been amended 19 times. In recent years four amendments were adopted by the GNA. Briefly, these changes harmonised the law with the constitutional amendments of 1995 and 1999. Yet, considering the primacy of the constitution, these amendments did not bring any substantive changes to the legal regulation of party activities (for example the banning of a political party where it violates the prohibitions in the constitution or the rules governing party revenue and its sources).

Party
formation

According to amended article 68 of the constitution and articles 5 and 8 of the PPL, a minimum number of 30 Turkish citizens who are eligible to vote can establish a political party. A citizen can be a member of only one political party. However, judges and prosecutors, members of higher judicial organs including those of the Court of Accounts, civil servants in public institutions and organisations, other public servants who are not considered to be labourers by virtue of the services they perform, members of the armed forces and students who are not yet in higher education institutions cannot become members of political parties (constitution article 68 and PPL article 11). Moreover, those who are banned from public service, who have been sentenced to a prison term totalling one year or more, excluding involuntary offences, or to a longer prison sentence of five years or more; those who have been convicted of dishonourable offences such as embezzlement, corruption, bribery, theft, fraud, forgery, breach of trust, fraudulent bankruptcy; and persons convicted of smuggling, conspiracy in official bidding or purchasing, of offences

related to the disclosure of state secrets, or incitement and encouragement of such activities stated in the book II of the Turkish penal code (article 11) are all not allowed to become members of a party. The law regulates the membership of political parties by the teaching staff at higher education institutions. It also regulates the principles concerning the membership in political parties of students at higher education institutions (constitution article 68).

The legal framework for political parties and candidates for elections include the relevant articles of the constitution (68, 69, 76–79). All legal regulations are used to the full. The administration of electoral process in particular is under close *ex ante* and *ex post* judicial scrutiny. However, it is widely acknowledged that the practice of PPL is far from satisfactory. This partly originates from the nature of the law itself, because it is long, detailed and impractical.

Candidacy
regulation

Political parties become a legal entity upon the submission of the required information and documents about the founders of the party to the Ministry of Interior Affairs (law no. 2820, article 8). The ministry sends the copies of these information and documents to both the Office of the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Republic (OCPPR) and the Constitutional Court within three days. The Office of the Registry for Political Parties, which belongs to the OCPPR, keeps the records about the members and administrators of the registered parties and their regulations and publications, and renews them at intervals (article 9).

The Supreme Board of Election and local elections boards in provinces and towns have discretion in interpreting and applying the relevant legislation concerning the candidacy and the conduct of elections. However, the decisions of the Supreme Board of Election are final (law no. 298, article 14. see also law no. 2839, articles 12–15 and law no. 2972, articles 10–16).

According to the constitution (articles 68 and 69) political parties can be dissolved by the Constitutional Court if their statutes, programmes and activities are in conflict with the independence of the state, its indivisible integrity as a territory and nation, human rights, the principles of equality and the rule of law, the sovereignty of the nation, and the principles of the democratic and secular republic. Political parties that aim to protect or establish class or group dictatorship or dictatorship of any kind, or incite citizens to crime can also be dissolved. The decision to dissolve a

Party banning

political party permanently because its activities violate the provisions of the fourth paragraph of article 68 may be rendered only when the Constitutional Court determines that the party in question has become a centre for the execution of such activities. A political party is thus deemed only when such actions are carried out intensively by the members of that party or the situation is shared implicitly or explicitly by the grand congress, general chairmanship or the central decision-making or administrative organs of that party or by the group's general meeting or group executive board at the GNA or when these activities are carried out directly by the above-mentioned party organs (constitution, article 69, see also law no. 2820, articles 101 and 103).

Instead of dissolving them permanently in accordance with the above-mentioned paragraphs, the Constitutional Court may rule that the concerned party is deprived of state aid, wholly or in part, depending on the intensity of the actions brought before the court (constitution, article 69, see also law no. 2820, articles 101 and 102).

Over the last five years, two political parties have been banned by the Constitutional Court. In 2001, the Virtue Party, a split from the banned pro-Islamist Welfare Party, was banned for the reason that the party violated articles 2 (characteristics of the republic), 24 (ban on the exploitation of religious matters), 68 (membership and withdrawal from membership in a party), 69 (the principles to be observed by political parties) of the constitution and articles 78 (protection of democratic state), 86 (protection of the principle of laicism and ban on recalling the caliphate) and 87 (prohibition on the exploitation of religious matters and things held sacred by religion) of the law no. 2820. In 2003, the Constitutional Court also closed down the Peoples' Democracy Party, determining that the party, in addition to the fact that some of its activities provided aid and support to the terrorist organisation, the PKK, became a centre for the execution of such activities contrary to the indivisible integrity of the state with its territory and nation, in accordance with articles 68 and 69 of the Constitution and articles 101 (opposition to the prohibitions set by the constitution) and 103 (to become a centre for the execution of prohibited activities) of the law no. 2820.

Group privileges Law 2820 (articles 81 and 82) prohibits political parties from asserting the existence of national, religious, sectarian, racial or linguistic minorities in Turkey, nor can they aim at

regionalism or racism. In addition, the constitution also stresses that 'members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly represent not merely their own constituencies or constituents, but the Nation as a whole' (article 80). There is no scholarly study which provides evidence that the parties follow an exclusionary policy in the formation and operation of their internal organisation, at least in their written rules, including the pro-Turkish and pro-Kurdish parties.

Party funding¹

The sources of revenue for political parties are regulated by law no. 2820 on political parties dating from 1983 (article 61). Political parties can officially have the following revenues: membership fees from party members; a 'deputy fee' paid by party MPs; a 'special fee for candidacy' paid to run for MP, mayor, members of town councils and general provincial council, as determined by the authorised central organs of the relevant political party; earnings from selling the party's flag, streamer, badge and similar signs and symbols; earnings from selling the party's publications; the money charged for issuing party's identity cards and notebook, receipts and papers; the earnings from social events such as balls, entertainment and concerts organised by the party; the earnings from the party's properties; donations; and state aid (amended by the law no. 3032 in 1984). Both the constitution of 1982 (article 69) and law no. 2820 of the PPL (article 67) prohibits political parties from engaging in commercial activities. The revenue and expenditure of political parties must be consistent with their objectives.

As in other democratic countries, the share of membership dues in parties' revenues has been decreasing due to unfavourable membership structures and the technical difficulties in collecting dues. The research findings also indicated that almost half of the revenues of the political parties that have been eligible to receive state aid at least once since 1984 consisted of state aid. Donations constitute the second biggest source of party revenue, especially during the campaign period, but are not registered properly. The mainstream political parties spend their money on travel, equipment and personnel expenses. Apart for the WP,

Main income
sources

¹ All monetary values are based on US\$1 = 1.45 New Turkish Liras. Exchange rate is variable and currently is US\$1 = 1.35 New Turkish Liras.

political parties rarely allocate money to their local party organisations and only do so in small amounts.

Legal regulation First, all political parties which meet the criteria set by law no. 2820 of the PPL receive annual aid from the state budget, to be used only for the party's needs or party activities. Second, MPs receive a monthly pay, half of which is paid as an allowance determined by the pay of the highest civil servant (law no. 3671 on allowance, travel pay and retirement of the members of the GNA, article 1). Moreover, they also receive a representation allowance (law no. 3055 on representation allowance for the prime minister and ministers and allowance and travel pay for ministers appointed from outside). Other paid office holders, including the speaker and deputy speakers, and the members of the Office of Speaker and the MP who serves as inspector for the final accounts of the GNA, are also paid compensation for representational services (law no. 3054 on representation allowance of the Speaker of the GNA and the members of the Council of Speaker and the Controller Member of the Examination of the Final Accounts of the GNA).

Government subsidies According to the additional article 1 of the law no. 2820, a total of 0.2 per cent of the revenues of the general budget of each year is allocated to political parties that were entitled to enter the last election for the GNA by the Supreme Board of Election and that passed the general threshold defined by article 33 of law no. 2839 on the election of deputies. This allocation is paid to political parties in proportion to valid votes they received in the previous general election. Political parties which failed to pass the countrywide 10 per cent threshold but received more than 7 per cent of the valid votes cast are also eligible to receive state aid. This aid is calculated in proportion to the minimum amount of state aid given to the political party and the votes that party received in the last general election. However, this aid cannot be less than 350 new Turkish liras (currently the equivalent of US\$507.05). This aid is given as frequently as three times in a general election year and as often as twice in local administration elections. The regular annual state aid is paid ten days after the law on annual budget enters into force, and in an election year, it is paid ten days after the board publishes the election calendar.

According to article 69 of the constitution 'the auditing of the income, expenditure and acquisitions of political parties by the Constitutional Court as well as the establishment of

the conformity to law of their revenue and expenses, methods of auditing and sanctions to be applied in the event of unconformity is regulated by law' (articles 74 and 75 of law no. 2820 of PPL). The Constitutional Court is assisted in its auditing task by the Court of Accounts and the judgments rendered by the Constitutional Court as a result of the audit are final.

Political parties are obliged to submit a copy of their previous year's final accounts, including those of provincial and township branches, to both the Constitutional Court and the Office of the Chief Public Prosecutor for information by the end of June. They must also include a list of their properties and movable assets valued at more than 100 new Turkish liras (approximately US\$69) plus securities and all rights bought, their value and date of purchase.

Every year monetary values which were set by articles 66 (donations) and 70 (procedure relating to expenditures) are recalculated in proportion to the government revaluation (additional article 6).

However, the campaign spending of political parties and candidates is not regulated by law. In other words, there is no restriction on campaign spending. Political parties submit their campaign expenditure as a part of their annual accounts to the Constitutional Court. The distribution of any gift or giveaway other than promotional brochures and handouts by political parties and candidates or third persons and organisations is forbidden (law no. 298, article 61).

Dependence
on special
interests

II. Types of political parties and structure of the party system

The major division in Turkish politics from which the party system originated has been a cleavage between the centre and the periphery. This conflict is best described as on the one hand a 'nationalist, centralist, secular, cohesive state elite' and on the other a 'culturally heterogeneous, complex, and even hostile periphery, with religious and anti-statist overtones'. It is argued that 'no single party emerged to stand for the values and interests of the centre or received the kind of electoral support that the Republican Peoples Party (RPP) had received in the past.' Moreover 'Turkey lacks a coherent and compact elite group occupying the centre and defending the collective interests of the centre' (Kalaycioglu 1994). However, the current Turkish party system is also based on a centre-periphery cleavage in which the main opposition

Cleavages

party, namely the RPP, represents the centre and the Justice and Development Party (JDP) in government is the party of the periphery.

Table 1
Parties by programme and structure of constituency

	Present Situation*			
	GA	GS/GJ	O	NR
Religious				FP (SP)
Rural/ Landowner				TPP (DYP)
Liberal				MP (ANAP)
Conservative	JDP (AKP)			
Nationalist				NAP (MHP)
Labour			RPP (CHP)	DLP (DSP)
Ethnic/ Regional				DSP (DTP)

* since the last parliamentary election in 2002. TPP and MP transferred some deputies after the last election and currently have seats in the GNA.

JDP = Justice and Development Party (original Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi – AKP), RPP = Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi – CHP), TPP = True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi – DYP), FP = Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi – SP), MP = Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi – ANAP), NAP = National Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi – MHP), DLP = Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Partisi – DSP), DSP = Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi, kurd. – DTP).

Key: GA = alone in government, GS = senior partner in government, GJ = junior partner in government, O = opposition, NR = no representation in parliament.

Source: <http://www.parties-and-elections.de/turkey.html>.

Relevant parties Ideologically to the right of centre, the Dogru Yol Partisi/True Path Party (DYP/TPP) represents a more conservative, populist and egalitarian ideology while the

Motherland Party (MP) supports free-market and liberal tendencies (see Table 1). While the MP has been passing through a rapid transformation in terms of its ideology and vote basket since the 1990s and has recently begun to appeal to modern and urban voters with primary education over the age of 50, the TPP has continued to be the party of rural areas, supporting economic justice, egalitarianism, distributive policies, and a paternalistic and protective state. The TPP has mainly been supported by the male and female rural population over the age of 40 with primary school education and a Sunni Turkish identity. The National Action Party (NAP), as the representative of the nationalist centre of the rightward tendencies, receives the support of a young, blue collar and Sunni rural electorate with secondary school education. The centre-left parties, namely the RPP and the Democratic Left Party (DLP), do not have a substantial dimension but the RPP represents rather elitist, statist tendencies. Traditionally, the RPP has been the party of white collar and upper and upper middle class voters. The major supporters of the RPP were urban male and female workers over 40 with higher education, university students and the Alevite population. However the DLP did have a great variety of electoral support from different sectors with an emphasis on urban votes.

The JDP originated from Islamist roots but the party leadership soon introduced the concept of 'conservative democracy' to the party's ideology. The party explains that 'conservative democracy' is open to change and the meaning of development and progress by eliminating radical politics and advocating liberal values such as a free-market economy, strong civil society, human rights, dialogue and tolerance. In terms of the electorate, the JDP not only received the support of the Sunni Islamist votes but also of half the ethnic Kurdish votes and the votes of centre-right and centre tendencies mainly from the lower and middle classes. Economically active groups (excluding female workers), rural and urban men with above primary school education, tradesmen and artisans were the major supporters of the JDP. Finally, the banned PDP was supported by young, rural, blue collar, mainly Kurdish male and female voters with primary education.

Factionalism and urban-rural difference is also an important determinant of electoral turnout. It is obvious that the centre-left parties have been more urban oriented while the centre-right tradition has tended to receive the support of

rural areas. In this respect, the Motherland Party (MP), a centre party, appealed to urban voters while the JDP attracts both rural and urban votes. During the process of development, the centre–periphery cleavages were replaced by functional cleavages, such as class, in the urban areas, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s.

Changes in
the past five
years

During the post-1980 period, as a consequence of the erosion of the centre-right and centre-left, political parties increasingly changed their profiles by incorporating market-economy and civil society principles into their ideology and organisation. In parallel with the changing voter profiles in the 1980s – pro-Islamists, represented by suburban, less educated, lower-income citizens, versus anti-Islamists, represented by urban, better educated, higher-income citizens – religiosity has been the strongest determinant of left–right preferences. Recently, the Turkish party system has been dominated by a secular and pro-Islamist cleavage, a version of the centre–periphery cleavage. There has also been an ethnically based, nationalist cleavage, placing the Turkish and Kurdish identities in opposition to one another. Particularly in the early general elections of 2002, the Copenhagen criteria – which were part of Turkey’s European Union bid – and the legislative arrangements that are required to meet them concerning the abolition of the death penalty and minority rights, provided a convenient anchor for the nationalist circles to hang on to and exploit nationalist Eurosceptic rhetoric to their advantage. On the other hand, two ethnic/sectarian groups, namely the Alevi and the Kurdish communities, seem isolated on the Turkish ideological spectrum. While the Peoples Democracy Party and the Democratic People’s Party (PDP/DPP) represented the Kurdish constituency, the RPP remained the only party for the Alevis. The Sunni pro-Islamist JDP and the Felicity Party (FP) did not receive any support from these groups. Those ethnic and religious parties also mobilised the urban poor in metropolitan areas. In short, these cleavages reconstituted the former centre–periphery, social class and traditional–modern divisions in more complicated forms.

III. Parties and parliamentary representation

The current electoral system, which maintains proportional representation in principle but with a high 10 per cent countrywide threshold, aims at eliminating centrifugal tendencies, fragmentation and ideological polarisation, and assuring a more stable two or three-party system.

Table 2
Parliamentary elections

Year	Party	Vote share	Seats	Position
1995	MP ^a	19.7	132	GJ, O, GS
	TPP	19.2	135	GS, GJ, O
	WP	21.4	158	GS, O
	DLP ^b	14.6	76	O, GJ, GS
	RPP	10.7	49	O
	Others (8)	14		
1999	MP	13.2	86	GJ
	DLP	22.2	136	GS
	TPP	12.0	85	O
	NAP	18.0	129	GJ
	Virtue Party	15.4	111	O
	Others (16)	19.2		
2002	JDP	34.3	363	GA
	RPP	19.4	178	O
	MP ^c	5.1		O
	TPP ^d	9.5		O
	Others (12)	23.9		

^a MP formed a coalition government with which was supported by the DLP from outside in 1995 and later another coalition government with DLP and Democrat Turkey Party, a split of TPP, in 1997 which was supported by RPP from outside.

^b DLP formed a minority government before the 1999 general elections.

^c MP, transferring deputies from other parties, controls 20 seats in the GNA as of 20 April 2007.

^d TPP, transferring deputies from other parties, controls four seats in the GNA as of 20 April 2007.

Key: GA = alone in government, GS = senior partner in government, GJ = junior partner in government, O = in opposition.

Dominant party However, the post-1980 Turkish party system has the following characteristics. First, electoral volatility has been very high. On average 20 per cent of the electorate changes its preferences from one party to another in two consecutive elections. Despite the high national threshold, the fragmentation of party votes has been much higher than that of seats. In other words, the party system in general and the parliamentary party system can be classified differently. Although the present Turkish party system can be described as a multi-party system the JDP has a predominant position in the parliament (with 34 per cent of the votes and 65 per cent of the seats).

In the international context, the RPP is a member of the Socialist International and the Motherland Party is a member of the Union of European People's Parties, formerly the Christian Democrats. The JDP is an observer in the Union of European Peoples' Party.

Free mandate A marked characteristic of Turkish political parties is that the personal attributes of party leaders are more important than the parties' positions on issues. Turkish parties have also been characterised by a high degree of party discipline, especially in parliamentary voting. The party line is an important mechanism in the legislative process. An MP who opposes the party line has two options: to leave the party or to remain in his corner. The high degree of centralisation of authority within parties, the strong domination by the leadership, and the parliamentary system of government are the major factors leading to high party discipline and cohesion. These are especially true for the government parties, whether they are the sole party or a coalition partner.

Group discipline

IV. Internal organisation and decision-making

Party membership As mentioned earlier, Turkish political parties have a formal membership structure. Each party regulates the conditions required for being a member through its rules. However, the rules regulating the membership cannot include provisions which discriminate against language, race, gender, family, group, class or profession. Political parties may reject a membership application without reason and the applicant then has the right to appeal to a superior party body (in order of town, province and general centre) against this decision (law no. 2820, article 12). The decision of the superior organ is final.

Party membership records are kept by the local (sub-provincial) organisations, which submit the membership list to the OCPPR and inform it of changes every six months. As of the beginning of October 2006, the total number of members of the parliamentary political parties registered at the political parties' registrar bureau at the OCPPR were as follows (figures in parentheses indicate the ratio of members to registered voters): JDP: 1,018,342 (2.44), RPP: 371,558 (0.009), MP: 266,038 (0.0064), TPP: 908,406 (2.18), Young Party: 88,161 (0.0021), Social Democrat Populist Party: 8,336 (0.0002), and Rise of People Party: 3,060 (0.00007). Despite the OCPPR's close inspection, the membership figures of some parties seem to be unreliable. For instance, the MP received fewer votes than its registered members in the last general elections of 2002. However, several other factors such as clientelistic tendencies, the delegate base in the local party organisation and loose membership status inflated the membership register for almost all political parties.

In the present Turkish party system almost all political activities are concentrated on daily politics and electoral campaign activities rather than on focusing on internal party activities, including developing solidarity among party activists and developing a programme and macro policies. The organisational characteristics of political parties in Turkey combine some characteristics of cadre and catch-all party models with some tendencies towards cartel parties. The loose and ineffective membership structure, in contrast to the 'qualified membership' concept found in some European political parties, and the strong domination of parties' headquarters in nominations as well as in policy-making contributes to the re-emergence of a 'cadre' to run the party in a very anti-democratic manner. Recent changes in the statute of the JDP, which originally included very democratic provisions compared to other political parties, in relation to the re-election of the party leader at the party general congress, constitute a prominent example of centralisation and anti-democratic tendencies and the increasing distance between the party centres and local party structures.

Law no. 2820 of the PPL introduced a uniform hierarchical organisational model in which the general party congress is the highest party organ. It consists of *ex officio* and elected members, who elect the party's central organs including the leader and administrative organs of the party (the central decision and executive committee and the central discipline

Internal
organisation

committee). The central organs amend the party's statutes and programme and carry out other functions stated in the law no. 2820 (article 14). Turkish parties can establish themselves in provinces, towns (sub-province) and municipalities with a minimum of 2,000 inhabitants. To enter elections a political party must have established local organisations in minimum of one-third of the provinces and must either have convened its general congress six months prior to the election day or have a parliamentary party group (article 36).

A party leader is elected for a maximum of three years by the general congress, through a secret vote and by absolute majority of the total number of delegates. The party leader is the legal representative of the party organisation (article 15). There are two functional sub-units to legitimise the activities and decisions of the party leader. The central decision and executive organs are also elected by the general congress and the rules governing their operation, duties and authorities are regulated by the party's statute (article 16). The Discipline Committee is also elected by the general congress and fulfils the duties assigned by law and the party's statute (article 17, but see also articles 53-9).

Both the constitution (article 68) and law no. 2820 (article 91) prohibited the establishment of sub-organisations such as for youth, women, and labour. However, paragraph six of article 68 of the constitution was repealed by the GNA in 1995, and article 91 of law no. 2820 was repealed in 1999. Since 1999, political parties have enjoyed the freedom of establishing auxiliary bodies in their organisations countrywide.

Programmatic
work and
communication

Political parties generally have a deputy party leader in charge of programmatic works such as political or election affairs. However such bodies consist of quite a small number of people, reflecting the cadre model. Generally, local or sub-organisations or individual members of the mainstream parties have no voice in this process due to the strong centralisation and the domination of the central decision and executive organs.

There is no systematic study on the means and quality of communication between political parties and electorate, including party members. Most political parties have internet access and web pages for electronic communication. The major parties in particular have established an information and communication unit through which they

collect inquiries from the public as well as party members and disseminate information. However both MPs and the party leadership also visit local party organisations in various constituencies regularly to keep in face-to-face contact with the people. Local party delegations also visit the parties' headquarters in Ankara to get informed about the political process. In the election period, parties are given the opportunity to use radio and television advertising in line with the provisions of law no. 298 and 3984. Some of the leading parties, for example the JDP and the TPP, have established party schools to offer education and seminars for members of the public as well as party activists.

According to the constitution (articles 67 and 76) and the law no. 2839 of the PPL (articles 10, 11, and 12) any citizen of the Republic of Turkey who is over the age of 30 is eligible to stand as a candidate for election. Law no. 2820, article 37, stipulates that parties may include on their candidate lists those individuals who were found eligible under one of the procedures set forth in the parties' statutes in accordance with the principles of a free, equal and secret vote and open counting. Pre-elections for nomination are conducted under the administration and supervision of the board of elections in accordance with the procedure and principles set forth in law no. 2820, articles 41–52. In the 2002 general elections the RPP (in 11 provinces) and the TPP (in 28 provinces) conducted pre-elections. However, almost all political parties select their candidates through the central executive committees where the party leader has the final authority.

Power
structures

Any eligible citizen can individually apply to be an independent candidate for an electoral contest. Application is made to the provincial board of election, with a deadline on the tenth day following the pre-election day (law no. 2839, articles 16 and 21 and law no. 2972, article 13).

Generally, local party organisations do not exercise any influence in the nomination and on the adoption of party programmes. The nomination process is run under the monopoly of the party central executive committee with oligarchical tendencies. However, in local elections or general elections the local party organisation may sometimes determine the party list for elections in small electoral districts where socio-economic factors such as influential families may offset the party centre's weight.

In practical terms, the party leadership, including the party

leader and the central executive committee, is the sole authority in the decision-making process in most of the leading political parties in Turkey. This is imposed by the PPL and the political culture, which encourages strong centralism and the dominance of personalities, although it varies from party to party according to their informal organisational culture. In contrast, some of the minor or marginal political parties are observed to have a rather democratic and participatory decision-making system.

Relationship
with civil
society

Following the constitutional amendments of 1995 and 1999, parties politically engage and cooperation with organisations such as associations, trade unions, foundations, cooperatives and professional organisations. Traditionally, the Union of the Chambers and Bourses (TOBB) is linked to the centre-right parties, namely the Justice Party in the 1960s and 1970s, the MP in the 1980s, the TPP in the 1990s and the JDP currently. The Association of Industrialists and Businessmen of Turkey (TUSIAD) has preferred to influence the government and opposition parties autonomously. The Association of Independent Industrialist and Businessmen (MUSIAD) has clearly supported the JDP from the very beginning. Recently trade unions representing various interests from right to left established a common platform to promote democracy and the economic rights of labour groups, so that they act independently. In other words, the traditional relationship between trade unions and the left-of-centre parties has been diminishing. However, the decline in the strength of associational life in Turkey on the one hand, and the catch-all and cartel tendencies among the political parties made such link between parties and societal organisations less important. The centripetal tendencies in particular contribute to the emergence of political parties which do not identify themselves with specific groups within society for electoral competition.

Voter-
clientele and
milieu

Stability of
party ideology

Since the beginning of multiparty politics in the mid-1940s, except for the example of the pro-Islamic Welfare Party which was banned by the Constitutional Court in 1998, Turkish political parties have exhibited the characteristics of cadre, catch-all and cartel party models with clientelistic tendencies. In addition to the problems of membership rights, local party organisations remain inactive between elections; they do almost nothing in training party activists and are dominated by the parties' centres. Membership participation in a party's regular activities is moderate in the mainstream parties.

V. General assessment

Despite political parties being among the least trustworthy institutions they still perform an important function in the political system in terms of linking the people to the centre (input) as well as influencing the policy-making process (output) either as government or opposition parties. Both the legal framework but especially the apolitical culture which flourished after the 1980s are major obstacles to effective political participation in Turkey. In recent decades some legal improvements have been achieved. However, due to Turkey's present socio-political culture, women's participation in political parties and elected bodies remains a major issue. Hierarchical and oligarchical structures and tendencies within political or other organisations discourage people from actively taking part in these organisations. Until recently political parties did not have any sub-organisations for youth and gender due to legal prohibitions. Moreover both central and local governments do not encourage participatory models for the decision-making process. Furthermore, the psychological impact of 'irresponsible citizenship,' indifference and apathy can be seen as individual factors hindering participation.

Major
obstacles

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