

The Co-Production of Challenge: Civil Society, Parties, and Kurdish Politics in Diyarbakır

Gilles Dorronsoro and Nicole F. Watts

How do challengers defy national authorities to build counter-hegemonic political enclaves in a context of repression and conflict? How do such contenders marshal the resources to resist official sanctions and legal persecution, and to gain and hold local office in defiance of national trends? This paper explores these questions through an analysis of pro-Kurdish parties¹ and their social footing in the city of Diyarbakır, one of the largest cities in Turkey's mostly Kurdish southeast and often viewed as the unofficial capital of the country's Kurdish region. Pro-Kurdish parties have performed better in Diyarbakır than almost anywhere else in Turkey since they first began participating in electoral contests in 1991. From 1995 to 2007, at least 45 percent of the province's votes for parliamentary deputies went to Kurdist candidates and parties, and the city has consistently elected Kurdist mayors since pro-Kurdish parties first competed in municipal elections in 1999.² This is in stark distinction to the performance of the parties outside the southeastern region, i.e. in western Turkey or Anatolia, where it is uncommon for them to receive more than 5 percent of the total vote.

Usual explanations for the popularity of the pro-Kurdish parties and the more general dominance of Kurdist norms in the area rest on culturalist assumptions that equate ethnicity with

¹ Pro-Kurdish (or, "Kurdist") parties in Turkey have frequently been closed by the Constitutional Court and, therefore, have frequently changed names as new parties were founded to replace the banned ones. These are not splinter groups but direct replacements. For simplicity's purpose, we for the most part refer to them collectively in this paper as "pro-Kurdish parties." The main parties are as follows: the *Halkın Emek Partisi* (HEP, or the People's Labor Party), 1990-1993; the *Demokrasi Partisi* (DEP, or the Democracy Party), 1993-1994; the *Halkın Demokrasi Partisi* (HADEP, or the People's Democracy party), 1994-2003; the *Demokratik Halk Partisi* (DEHAP, or Democratic People Party), 1997-2005; the *Demokratik Toplum Partisi* (DTP, or Democratic Society Party), 2005-2009; and the *Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi* (BDP, or Peace and Democracy Party), 2008-present.

² Election results for the legislative elections in Turkey can be found online at www.belgenet.net, and for local elections at www.yerelnet.org.tr. In 2009, the mayor of greater Diyarbakır, supported by pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), was elected with 66.5 percent of the votes.

Kurdish nationalist politics (e.g. “Diyarbakır’s voters support pro-Kurdish parties because they are ethnic Kurds”) or on an instrumental perspective that sees pro-Kurdish party behavior and influence stemming from their relationship with the illegal Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which is sometimes depicted as exercising almost total control over political life in the city and over the parties.³ However, pro-Kurdish party success and dynamics in Diyarbakır cannot simply be explained by reference to the ethnic identity of the city’s inhabitants or only by the parties’ relationship to the PKK. Many Kurds, even in the southeast, do not support pro-Kurdish parties, and other important Kurdish-majority cities (for instance, Van, Bingöl) have not expressed anything like the same level of support for them. As elsewhere, ethnic background does not correlate directly with political preferences, and Kurds in Turkey and the southeast regularly vote for mainstream Turkish parties.

Similarly, a high level of PKK activity in particular areas does not necessarily translate into legal party viability. While the PKK was largely based in rural communities, for instance, legal pro-Kurdish parties typically have drawn more support from urban centers.⁴ The PKK certainly exercises considerable influence over pro-Kurdish parties and some (but not all) associations, and many voters support the parties because they see them as a legal surrogate for the illegal PKK. But PKK influence per se does not account for the electoral durability of the parties, their success in Diyarbakır in particular, or how Diyarbakır has become established as a Kurdist “citadel” and launching point for the reconstruction of Kurdish identity after years of suppression.

³ One public prosecutor wrote in a 2007 indictment, for instance, that it was “clear that the Human Rights Association is acting fully under the control of the terrorist organisation PKK.” See Bianet, Nov. 20, 2007, <http://bianet.org/english/minorities/103005-ihd-condemns-prosecutions-attack>.

⁴ For good analyses of the PKK see Marcus 2007; Tezcur 2010; White 2000.

This paper, then, offers a two-part argument. First, we suggest that the continuing resilience and influence of pro-Kurdish parties in Diyarbakır can only be understood by taking into account their relationship with associations and non-governmental organizations,⁵ which support and shape them in a number of important ways. Specifically, the associational-party relationship is manifest in the internal dynamics and administration of pro-Kurdish parties, namely, in the selection and education of candidates and administrative personnel, and the geographic distribution of power within the party. The influence of associations can also be seen in the implementation and legitimization of local political programs, or “governmentality” (Foucault 1991); in the production of information politics, and in collective action and mobilization, especially during elections. Parties and associations thus work together in a kind of co-production of local politics.

This associational influence on parties, though, is not readily comprehensible in the context of a place like Diyarbakır. As several important bodies of scholarship note, associational influence on parties usually occurs in one of three types of regime: in liberal democracies, where, for instance, environmental or religious groups may shape party policies and behavior (see e.g. Rosenblum 2003); conversely, in weak-party authoritarian systems in which associations serve essentially as proxy parties (see e.g. Moore and Salloukh 2007, Wiktorowitz 2000, 2002); or, finally, in failed states, where parties become surrogate service providers (see e.g. Dorransoro 2005). Turkey, though, fits none of these models. In regime type it is neither a liberal democracy nor a failed state: it has a strong, (traditionally) illiberal state, and until very recently its policies in the southeast and in Diyarbakır have largely been dictated by the security establishment.

⁵ We here define associations very broadly to include non-governmental organizations, professional associations, media, publishing houses, faith-based groups, business chambers, unions, and others. Following recent literature, we define civil society in a comprehensive way as an arena or sphere of voluntary organizations, associations, and collective action that is formally distinct from the state, the political sphere (e.g. parties), and the economic sphere (the market). This definition does not imply a specific way of interacting with the state or political institutions. See Paffenholz 2010; Edwards 2004; Pouligny 2005; Rosenblum and Post 2002; Yerasimos 2000.

Military influence notwithstanding, neither is Turkey a country of weak parties (see e.g. Penner Angrist 2006): on the contrary, its parties tend to be monopolistic political players that tightly control political resources and decision-making.⁶

If associations exercise important influence over pro-Kurdish parties in Diyarbakır, how can we account for this? The second part of our argument is as follows: we argue that the political influence of Kurdist associations in this unlikely context stems from the fact that associations together form a kind of network, both formal and informal, thus pooling their resources and creating a robust and durable institutional structure that gives them collective influence beyond their individual capacities. The viability of the network is linked to the constituent associations' institutional longevity, access to external resources of various types, and, most importantly, to the fact that they are part of a Kurdist value community that facilitates associational and party cooperation. Voluntary associations, media and intellectuals, pro-Kurdish political parties, and the PKK are all part of this value community, but none control it completely. Far from operating as lone players or as simple surrogates for the PKK, then, parties are embedded in a dense field of institutional and social support that crosses class, social, and legal/illegal lines. Although the PKK does shape party life, pro-Kurdish parties and associations also exercise distinct spheres of influence and authority.

Beyond the specificities of Diyarbakır, this case offers broader insights into understanding how parties and associations can produce a nationally counter-hegemonic political milieu even in restricted contexts. Some civil society organizations in Turkey replicate and reinforce established socio-cultural values and power structures (see.e.g. Seckinelgin 2006; Navaro-Yashin 1998). In Diyarbakır, in contrast, civil society organizations⁶ and parties have challenged national values

⁶ Nor can associational influence be attributed to sheer numbers. In fact, there are fewer registered associations per capita in the southeast, including Diyarbakır, than in other parts of Turkey with comparably sized populations.

based on Turkish nationalism and the unitary state, and instead developed a locally hegemonic but nationally counter-hegemonic sphere. Studying associational-party interactions in Diyarbakır thus highlights how political transformation and localized, counter-hegemonic “historic bloc,” in the phraseology of Gramsci (1992), may be built and maintained through the actions and interactions of multiple players. Moreover, within this locale, it is perhaps almost as difficult to locally challenge the local Kurdist norm as it is to challenge the Turkish nationalist norm prevalent at the national level. In contrast to many models of associations in conflict and post-conflict scenarios that see associations and civil society serving as a potential “bridge” between state and challengers,⁷ then, the case of Diyarbakır suggests how associations can consolidate challengers in their efforts to withstand state power. Associations here take sides, in other words, rather than work as mediators.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. The first part of the paper discusses some of the reasons for the high level of politicization of associations in Diyarbakır. The second part of the paper provides an overview of the associational network and the shared values that help bind the network together. The third part of the paper examines the specific ways in which associations influence pro-Kurdish politics, namely, through municipal governmentality, mobilization, and internal dynamics of the party.

Diyarbakır’s associations as political actors

Associations have played important roles in politics in Diyarbakır for many decades, supporting the leftist and Kurdish national movement both directly and indirectly. In the 1970s associations such as the Kurdish nationalist Rizgari and the Revolutionary Eastern Culture Associations (DDKO) actually fielded candidates directly in some elections (see e.g. Dorronsoro

⁷ For important analyses see e.g. Paffenholz and Spurk 2006; Barnes, C. 2005; Belloni 2001, 2006.

and Watts 2009). Because they shared many similar goals and because the nationalist right was largely absent, their cumulative work helped establish Kurdish nationalism as a legitimate political program at the local level. In addition, the centrality of Diyarbakır in local discourse became prominent at this time, marking a split from the national system in terms of values and narratives.⁸

Ideological and class-based disputes meant that many of these groups (e.g. unions, Kurdish political cultural associations, and journals) competed fiercely with one another for influence and resources throughout the 1970s. This “internal” competition was transformed by the 1980 military coup and the onset of the PKK-state war, when the environment in Diyarbakır became sharply polarized between state and state-supported forces, on the one hand, and the Kurdish movement and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), on the other (see e.g. Gambetti 2005: 56). Many political groups in Diyarbakır went temporarily underground, and no legal pro-Kurdish party operated there until the formation of the *Halkın Emek Partisi* (HEP, or the People’s Labor Party) in 1990 and its successor, the Democracy Party (*Demokrasi Partisi*, or DEP). Many NGOs became heavily politicized due to the context of war and repression. Although the pro-Kurdish parties had high visibility and levels of activity in Diyarbakır, they did not compete in local elections and controlled no local municipalities until 1999. This meant that as a new generation of associations emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s, they could serve locally as surrogate political representatives, much as Moore and Salloukh describe (2007) as the case in some Arab regimes, where syndicates often serve as a kind of party. Among the most prominent of this early generation of groups were the Human Rights Association (İnsan Hakları Derneği, or İHD), founded in 1986 and the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (Türkiye İnsan Hakları Vakfı, or

⁸ This narrative contradicts the national-oriented discourse seen in more traditional local histories, a sign of the autonomization of the local intelligentsia from national norms.

TİHV), founded in 1990. In Diyarbakır, such associations became increasingly Kurdist, and suffered frequent crackdowns. Some organizations also suffered direct attacks: İHD, for instance, lost 23 of its administrators and members to extrajudicial murders in the 1980s and 1990s⁹. Throughout the 1990s this environment served to align associations in Diyarbakır and encourage them to work together.

The nature and impact of associational political involvement changed again after 1999 with the thickening, diversification, and expansion of the political field. This was due to a number of factors: the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and the PKK's unilateral cease-fire, in effect until 2004; the 2003 invasion of Iraq; and Turkey's EU application. State-sponsored death squads that had been operating in the 1980s and 1990s largely disappeared after 1999; torture became much less common, and some restrictions on Kurdish cultural expression were relaxed as part of EU-mandated reforms, especially after 2004. Equally important, the election of Kurdish activists to local office in municipal elections and pro-Kurdish party control over Diyarbakır municipalities (in local elections held in 1999, 2004, and 2009) created new opportunities for associational-party cooperation and the institutionalization of Kurdist norms.

The change in environment is reflected in the dramatic rise in the number of politically active and influential associations after 2005. In 1990 there were 59 active associations registered in Diyarbakır province, according to information supplied by the Diyarbakır Governorate's Provincial Associations Directorate (this figure does not include trade unions or foundations, which are overseen by different state institutions), and by the year 2000 there were 160. By 2005 the number of registered associations there had increased to around 300, and by January of 2010 there were 672 active registered associations in the province. Of these, 539 –

⁹ See the İHD website: http://www.ihd.org.tr/english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=141&Itemid=48.

about 80 percent – were in Diyarbakır city.¹⁰ Among the most politically influential of this new wave of associations were issue-based associations, many of which were founded after legal reforms in the 2000-2010 period.¹¹ For instance, all 15 of the women’s associations registered in Diyarbakır city in 2010 had been officially founded after 2004 (İl Dernekler Mudurluğu). Such organizations proved especially successful in gaining external support

Associations as a (networked) value community

However, neither the sheer number of associations nor their individual characteristics in and of themselves explain their political influence. Rather, associations in Diyarbakır serve as important political players in the production of local politics because they often work together or work on behalf of the same principles even if they do not directly collaborate. This associational nexus, or network effect, multiplies their influence and creates dense webs of human and material relations that undergird pro-Kurdish party activity and socio-political life.

This informal network is most visibly and concretely manifested at various moments through formal declarations of partnership between different associations and other political players. One of the oldest instances of this is the Diyarbakır Democracy Platform (*Diyarbakır Demokrasi Platformu*), an active umbrella organization of 33 civic groups, trade unions, and professional organizations that was established in 1992 (e.g. Öncü in Diken 2001: 167-173). Spearheaded by the Human Rights Association, the Platform’s stated objective was to create a dialogue between social and political groups -- including the PKK -- to achieve peace and human

¹⁰ By April 2010 this had jumped to 713, according to statistics provided by the Provincial Associations Directorate in Diyarbakır.

¹¹ However, the southeast still ranks substantially lower per capita than the rest of the country in terms of NGOs per capita. See the Dernekler Daire Başkanlığı, a department of the Internal Ministry, (<http://dernekler.icisleri.gov.tr/Dernekler/Kurum/IlIlgiliDernekSayisi.aspx>). Also see the TÜSEV/Civics report (2006) and, on civil society in Turkey more generally, Alemdar 2008. The TÜSEV Report on civil society organizations in Turkey notes a rise in civil society organization networks and platforms, particularly among environmental, women’s and human rights groups.

rights in the southeast. Since 1999 many other platforms and ad hoc working groups have formed among associations and professional organizations. Some, such as the Democratic Free Women's Movement (*Demokratik Özgür Kadın Hareketi*), are based on common, issue-based goals. Others have formed in response to particular events. For instance, the Justice and Solution Group (*Adalet ve Çözüm Girişimi*), composed of about 90 different business organizations and NGOs, was formed in late 2009 to campaign against the detentions of hundreds of mayors and civic leaders¹² (see CNNTurk, February 2, 2010; Milliyet 9 February 2010).

The efficacy of these networks is due to several interlinked factors. Unlike parties, NGOs and professional syndicates are relatively stable institutional entities, allowing them to develop durable relations with one another that can withstand the prosecution of individual members. Although some associations have experienced the occasional closure of branch offices, in general these organizations have been durable and long-lived, especially compared to pro-Kurdish political parties, which have routinely been banned. Semi-official professional organizations such as the Diyarbakır Chamber of Commerce, the Diyarbakır Bar Association, and the Turkish Chamber of Engineers and Architects (TMOBB), have long had an important presence in Diyarbakır and have sometimes supported the Kurdish movement (see e.g. Yerasimos 2000). Other important activist groups have proven perhaps surprisingly resilient: as noted above, İHD, for instance, was founded in 1986, and the Turkey Human Rights Foundation in 1990.

In addition, many of these associations receive important resources from external actors, which explains at least partially why they were able to survive. Some of these resources come in the form of direct material aid, either from the state, as in the case of some semi-official organizations (for example, TMOBB), or from European Union grants, legal awards from the

¹² Its spokesman was Şahismail Bedirhanoglu, chair of the Southeastern Anatolian Industrialists' And Businessmen's Association (Güneydoğu Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği, or GÜNSİAD). The group included GÜNSİAD, the Diyarbakır Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Diyarbakır Ticaret Sanayi Odası, or DTSO), and the Diyarbakır Bar Association.

European Court of Human Rights, and other inter-governmental and charitable sources. For instance, in 2002-2003 around 80 to 90 percent of the Diyarbakır İHD budget came in the form of ECHR verdicts, although this percentage had dropped substantially by 2007 and 2008 as more lawyers became involved in ECHR cases and the political context changed in the southeast (interview, Demirbaş 2008). External funding gives associations the means to hold conferences and meetings, produce reports that become the basis for pro-Kurdish information politics, attend training seminars and workshops, publish materials, and other activities. Other types of resources are in the form of “legitimacy resources” (Watts 2010a) that grant political actors credibility and access to influential decisionmakers. State and international officials, for instance, sometimes prefer to meet with associational representatives such as those from the Diyarbakır Bar or Diyarbakır Democracy Platform, rather than with pro-Kurdish party officials. This was the case, for example, when Prime Minister Erdoğan and President Abdullah Gül met with Democracy Platform representatives during their visit to Diyarbakır in 2008.¹³

Finally, inter-associational cooperation and partnership with the pro-Kurdish parties is made possible by the fact that these actors share a core set of Kurdist values. These are sufficiently widespread in Diyarbakır so as to constitute a local political norm or Kurdist milieu, and tend to differentiate the Diyarbakır branches of national associations from their headquarters elsewhere in the country.¹⁴ Kurdist values as shared by constituent members can be roughly summarized as consisting of four basic principles or pillars.

13 The Demokratik Platform asked Cumhurbaşkanı Abdullah Gül for a democratic and peaceful solution to the Kurdish question. <http://www.tumgazeteler.com/?a=2722529> <http://www.aktuelbakis.com/Kurdistan/7909.html>. When Başbakan Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called Diyarbakır Baro Başkanı Sezgin Tanrıkulu a liar, the Demokratik Platform asked for excuses.

14 As one prominent lawyer said, “The Diyarbakır Bar is, of course, not like the Ankara bar. It has a very particular place in Turkey. When talking about the Diyarbakır Bar everyone knows we have a particular political perspective, that we defend human rights and Kurdish rights in Turkey. So in this way it is very politicized” (interview, Tahir Elci, Diyarbakır, July 27, 2009).

Kurdish ethnicity

First, those involved in these networks insist on the relevance of Kurdish ethnicity in political and cultural life, an approach at sharp odds with a national idiom that has traditionally cast all Muslim citizens of the country as Turks and not recognized Muslim ethnic minorities as such. Diyarbakır is the only large Kurdish city in Turkey with a strong intellectual tradition, and the value of Kurdish culture – and its promotion and preservation -- is a central feature of intellectual discourse and cultural activities (see e.g. Scalbert 2005, 2010). Implicit and, sometimes, explicit in such discourse is the idea that “Kurdishness” should feature into political administration (i.e. through some form of collective political recognition) and national discourses (i.e. in national education). In this sense, the local cultural and political intelligentsia has been able to assert a local intellectual hegemony that cuts across class lines and social differences through a narrative of the Kurds and the special place of Diyarbakır.

The prevalence of Kurdist values also reflects the fact that, unlike in other parts of Turkey, there has been almost no local, right-wing political presence there since the 1960s and that Kurdist values intersect with two others: Islam-based values, which have shared (at least until recently), a common opposition to the state and, in some cases, a sense of ethnicity (Med Zehra¹⁵ Hizbollah, and Kurd Der are examples); and leftist values, since the dominant organizations within the Kurdish national movement in Turkey also espouse class-based reforms. This common ground is one of the reasons Kurdist organizations are able to work with non-Kurdist unions and with Islam-based human rights organizations (i.e. Mazlum-Der) at a local level. For example, in the spring of 2010 İHD and Mazlum-Der went together to investigate and provide legal counsel for the family of two children injured in land mine explosions.

¹⁵ A Kurdist Islamist movement active in the 1990s.

Democratization and human rights

A second pillar of the Kurdist value community is a shared opposition to state policies concerning identity and governance in the southeast¹⁶ and, more specifically, common calls for democratization and improved human rights in the southeast. This democratization narrative is in contrast to the development narrative preferred by most Turkish political elites. Opposition to the state among so many diverse groups is based on the perception of a history of repression of the Kurds since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, and, in particular, since the 1980 military coup. Specifically, pro-Kurdish parties, NGOs, and other associations have repeatedly called for a new, civil constitution that redefines the nature of Turkish citizenship, permits education in mother-tongue languages other than Turkish; and lowers the electoral threshold of 10 percent. They call for a halt to military operations in the southeast; an end to detentions without trial; and for dialogue between the state, the PKK, pro-Kurdish parties, NGOs, and other parties (see e.g. Bianet, 19 August 2010, <http://bianet.org>). Many have called for full amnesty and reintegration of PKK members; they have also repeatedly called for the PKK to give up armed struggle.

PKK legitimacy

A third pillar of the Kurdist value community is the idea that the PKK is a legitimate political player with legitimate goals, even if its methods are questionable or objectionable and its leadership flawed. This positions the Kurdist value community in Diyarbakır in clear opposition to national socio-political values that consider Kurdism radical and a threat to internal security, and the PKK a terrorist organization.

¹⁶ This discourse of contestation has been clearly framed as opposition to the state and not to “Turks.” This is a striking point in Diyarbakır where, unlike some other areas of more mixed ethnicity, there has not been a history of communal tensions.

Agreement on the validity of the PKK struggle does not mean associations are simply fronts for the PKK or that they share the same relationship with it. Some groups in Diyarbakır are more closely affiliated with the PKK than others, and it is quite common for some groups to treat the PKK as a legitimate organization with legitimate grievances but at the same time to condemn its actions or criticize it. The PKK does exert pressure on many associations and tries to maintain certain political parameters. One of the most important, for instance, is non-cooperation with the security forces, and associations such as the women's group KAMER that have challenged this have faced considerable pressure (Belge 2008; also see research by Ayşe Gül Altınay). This influence notwithstanding, most associations were not created by the PKK or the pro-Kurdish parties, and some of them pre-date the armed struggle. Even in cases in which the associations are very closely linked to the PKK, their status as legal entities – a registered cultural organization, for instance -- means they develop their own relations with other political players.

Exceptionalism: Diyarbakır as a capital

A fourth pillar of the Kurdist value community concerns the exceptional place of Diyarbakır city as the center of Turkish Kurdistan and as its potential capital. This positioning is promoted by a broad range of actors including political figures and parties, Kurdist television and media, NGOs, and scholars. Public intellectuals such as Şeymus Diken, for instance, construct the image of Diyarbakır as a specifically Kurdish city (Diken 2007, 2009), although in part by simultaneously positioning it as historically multi-cultural to challenge the centrist Turkish national narrative. The presence of a (relatively) large intelligentsia in Diyarbakır helps explain the construction of this Diyarbakır-centric discourse. Some Diyarbakır-based projects are conceived of as (Kurdish) national, in a fundamentally different way than in other cities, because

those promoting these projects conceive of them as building blocks in the construction of a (virtual) Kurdish territory. Symbolic events or sites (the Walls) become part of a Kurdish national agenda, permitting local actors -- notably the municipality -- to use symbolic politics that resonate with local inhabitants. Diyarbakır is not constructed as the periphery vis-à-vis the Turkish state, but as an alternative center.

Again, the fact that associations and NGOs in Diyarbakır form a kind of political and cultural community or a formal and informal network does not mean these organizations always function or position themselves coherently or in the same way. Associations are relatively specialized in their activities, and there tends to be a division of labor between organizations dedicated to cultural promotion and those dedicated to legal work. For instance the Dicle-Fırat Culture Center in Diyarbakır is very involved in Kurdish cultural production, whereas İHD, the Diyarbakır Bar association, and the Diyarbakır Democracy Platform are extensively involved in protest actions, mobilization, and information politics.

Further differentiation can be made in terms of the level of associational politicization and degree to which particular associations are associated with the Kurdish movement, the pro-Kurdish parties, and the PKK, all overlapping but nonetheless distinct spheres of influence and activity. For instance, İHD and the Diyarbakır Bar are both staffed with lawyers and both concern themselves with protection for human rights, but İHD is closer to the pro-Kurdish parties than the Bar. Among women's organizations, the *Selis Kadın Danışmanlık Derneği* (Selis Women's Consultation Association) is closer to the party than KAMER. These differences are reinforced by targeted state pressure that prosecutes particular associations (i.e. İHD) more than others, which creates differential conditions of political participation. Nonetheless, although these distinctions differentiate associations and their work in Diyarbakır they for the most part do

not prevent them from working together on behalf of the same issues, in good part because of continuing structural pressures from the Turkish state and national establishment.

Associations and parties as partners in politics

The close relationship between associations and parties in Diyarbakır is evident in two main spheres of political activity. First, associations affect what can be termed the “internal workings” of pro-Kurdish parties through the recruitment of activists, candidate selection, and the positioning of Diyarbakır as a center of pro-Kurdish party activity. Second, associations, parties, and the Kurdist network work collectively to produce a particularly Kurdist style of local politics. They work with pro-Kurdish municipalities to shape local political agendas through Kurdist municipality projects; they engage in pro-Kurdish information politics, and they mobilize constituent support on behalf of the parties and particular issues. The relationship between the Kurdist parties and associations can thus be seen as constituting a system in the sense that there is a circular flow of ideas and expertise.

Internal workings

Pro-Kurdish parties draw heavily on associations for their administrative personnel (national and regional chairs, administrative councils, etc.) and for candidates at the local and national levels. İHD, in particular, has had a long-term close relationship with pro-Kurdish parties, with the leadership of the association’s branch offices in the southeast regularly serving as a stepping-stone for party entry. Women’s organizations such as the Selis Women’s Consultation

Association and the Rainbow Women's Association (Gökkuşuğu Kadın Derneği), as well as women who have experience in unions – for example, Yurdusev Özsükmenler, former DEHAP mayor of Bağlar, who was involved in the union KESK-- are particularly important for the party because of the party's quota system, which stipulates that 40 percent of candidates in local and general elections must be women. Low levels of education and social strictures mean it is still difficult for party administrators to find qualified Kurdish women from the southeast, so NGOs are particularly important in offering a pool of capable talent.

Some of the pro-Kurdish parties' most prominent figures served in the İHD leadership at some point in their careers, with a list including former pro-Kurdish party chair Murat Bozlak and Diyarbakır mayor Osman Baydemir. Of the pro-Kurdish party deputies to parliament elected in 2007, two were from İHD (Akin Birdal and Selahattin Demirbaş) and the other two also had associational credentials. More generally, the 2007 national legislative elections testified to the socio-political importance of associations and NGOs in party life. Of the ten candidates elected from Diyarbakır to the Parliament in the 2007 elections (four pro-Kurdish candidates and six from AKP), seven had significant NGO backgrounds (TBMM web site; Demir 2005).

So many pro-Kurdish party candidates and administrators have backgrounds in associations and NGOs because people who have trained in NGOs possess social capital that the parties need. Candidates coming from NGOs have already developed regular contacts with the parties through activities such as formal training seminars (e.g. on women's rights, legal issues, fund-raising, etc.). The skills and socio-political capital people build by working in associations – organizational management, an identity as a public figure, international and domestic contacts, legal and language training, ways of presenting information and ideas, etc. — are all needed by pro-Kurdish parties and are incorporated into them. The social capital developed in these

organizations can even be enough to overcome the relevance of ascribed ethnicity: people become Kurdist even if they are not ethnic Kurds (i.e. Akın Birdal; former pro-Kurdish party chair Fehmi Işıklar, when he was chair of the pro-Kurdish HEP in 1990-1991). Again, as discussed above, the prominence of associational capital in candidate selection became more pronounced after 1999 when Öcalan's arrest and the PKK-issued cease-fire gave new practical significance to legal politics in the southeast.

Contrary to common impressions derived from the idea that NGOs are “nonpolitical,” party recruitment of people from associations does not represent a “jump” into the political sphere but, in most cases, merely represents a shift in operating venues for people who are already intensely politicized. To invest in many associations and NGOs in the southeast is a political choice at the outset because of the highly politicized environment in the region. People often move easily from an organization like İHD to the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party because both groups are perceived as supporting the same cause: resisting the state and expanding Kurdish rights. Many individuals who decide to work in associations have already framed their support in political terms, with their activities on behalf of a particular cause (ecology, human rights, women rights etc.) subsumed by a general perception: working for the Kurdish people. This is the kind of rationale evident with students who decide to study law expressly in order to “defend the Kurdish people”. As Reyhan Yalçındağ Baydemir, a longtime activist and İHD administrator, said: “I wanted to be a lawyer because of [the] harassment, in order to protect our rights and defend the victims. I thought maybe I could help my people.”¹⁷

¹⁷Many of her family members were active in leftist and Kurdist politics, especially the DDKD. In her description of her politicization, three sets of events stand out as particularly important: childhood visits to prisons to visit her relatives, some of whom were tortured; the Iraqi Ba'th regime's 1988 chemical bombing of the town of Halabja; and her and her friends' imprisonment and torture in the early 1990s, which occurred after they had participated in some demonstrations in support of Kurdish rights. More generally, the atmosphere of violence and intimidation in the southeast encouraged her, in her own words, to believe that after she finished her legal training in Ankara, she should return to Diyarbakır “to defend the most innocent victims” (Interview, Diyarbakır, June 2006).

The involvement of associations and the existence of the Kurdist value community also shape the geographic dynamics of pro-Kurdish parties by empowering the Diyarbakır branch office and helping make Diyarbakır city a significant base of power within the party. As discussed elsewhere in this volume, typical views of political parties in Turkey depict them as top down organizations with decision making emanating from Ankara. Provincial and local branch offices often work in a subordinate position: local politics with local interests subordinate to national organizations. But, in the case of the Kurdist parties, the dense web of support for Kurdist politics, a Diyarbakır-centric discourse, and the involvement of associations in party affairs allow actors in Diyarbakır to accumulate the resources to counter-balance the power of party headquarters in Ankara, as well as other influential geographic “poles” such PKK-linked decision-makers in Europe. Rather than revolving around Ankara, the pro-Kurdish parties have usually been multi-polar parties shaped by players in several main locales.

Conceptualizing the power of the party in Diyarbakır as multi-polar highlights how the relationship between local and national does not work the same way in Diyarbakır as it does in most other parts of Turkey. Rather than thinking of politics in Diyarbakır as local, it is more apt to consider them *localized*, because the Diyarbakır agenda is not necessary local, and those active there have sufficient resources to assert themselves vis-à-vis the party’s other bases. In this sense activists have built an alternative political center and a new definition of what it means to be “local” in politics, thus giving some credence to the Kurdist claim that Diyarbakır constitutes a “capital of Kurdistan.”

The production of localized politics

On a concrete level, associations play several main roles in working with parties to produce a particularly Kurdist political milieu in Diyarbakır. Associations work with parties to implement programs and develop agendas, promoting specific practices of Kurdish governance that are linked to values of Kurdish nationalism. These practices and activities -- speaking Kurdish, Kurdish literacy programs, official sponsorship of Kurdish films and ethnography, etc. -- help construct a new model of subjectivity and production of the self, in turn developing social practices that legitimize certain types of public policies carried out by the municipalities (see Watts 2010; Gambetti 2005). Because the participation of non-governmental organizations is encouraged and sometimes required by grant agencies, especially European ones, there are institutional incentives for partnership between municipalities and associations, and associational involvement in projects is particularly important for fund raising. Municipal programs concerning the status of women or illiteracy are often crafted and implemented through NGOs. Municipality-sponsored workshops, conferences, and literacy fairs are organized in conjunction with the relevant associations. Long-term and more ambitious projects are also jointly planned and implemented. Between 2007 and 2009, for instance, the Greater Diyarbakır Municipality and the Dicle-Fırat Culture Center together spearheaded a European-funded project to resuscitate and promote Kurdish *dengbêj* (narrative singing) in Diyarbakır. The project included an anthology, concerts, and the opening of a new Dengbej House (Scalbert Yucel 2009).

Associations are particularly important in promoting pro-Kurdish information politics that often clash with the narratives of the state and can garner foreign assistance and attention. Because Diyarbakır is still highly polarized politically and because of state repression, information politics is not used primarily to mobilize the local population (which is for the most part already convinced of the justice of the cause) but to gain transnational and national support

and protection against the state. Due to their expertise on particular issues, particularly legal ones, and their appearance of professionalism, associational reports and statements lend credibility to data and analysis that, if it came only from pro-Kurdish parties, might otherwise be suspect. Association reports, especially from the İHD and the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TİHV), tend to become the basis of international reports on the status of the parties. Written reports, usually distributed electronically, are supplemented through conferences and transnational advocacy network dialogue and exchanges. In addition, most foreign journalists and scholars begin their research in Diyarbakır by contacting these organizations, which significantly influences the way they frame the political situation and the people they talk to. This is also the case during elections, when foreign observers from the European Parliament and other international bodies come to observe election procedures. The Human Rights Association has played a particularly important role in coordinating these visits and in monitoring and publicizing election irregularities concerning pro-Kurdish parties and their candidates.

Under the purview of professional advocacy, associations advocate and legitimate contentious demands that buttress and expand party endeavors to advance the agenda of the Kurdish movement. Associations are especially vocal against torture, in support of human and cultural rights, advocating literacy in Kurdish for children, in appealing for a peaceful solution to the conflict with the PKK, and in condemning state violence against the parties and local constituents. For instance, the Diyarbakır Bar Association, Mazlum-Der, and İHD all produced and publicized important reports examining the 2006 Diyarbakır protests, in which security forces killed 10 people -- including three children under the age of 10 -- in the wake of street protests in Diyarbakır.¹⁸ The Diyarbakır Bar Association's report, which alleged that the security

¹⁸ For the İHD report see e.g. <http://ihd.org.tr/>; for Mazlum Der's see http://www.mazlumder.org/haber_detay.asp?haberID=94

forces had used undue force and that 94 children were among those detained, was particularly important, prompting the Interior Ministry to contact the Diyarbakır Governorate and send two inspectors to Diyarbakır.¹⁹ At the same time, the fact that the events were prompted by debates concerning the burial of four PKK fighters -- and that many people in Turkey saw the clashes as evidence of PKK control of the streets -- meant that the Bar was offering its support to a highly politicized and symbolically important set of events. Lawyer Tahir Elçi explained it as follows:

In the Diyarbakır Events of 2006 the Bar was involved and issued a report because it was about arrests, torture, extrajudicial killings, etc. These are things that concern lawyers. I made a very strong statement to the press. This was our problem—because this was about torture, about a problem of human rights—a social problem. This was not just a political problem. In this situation we had to act. For instance against OHAL [emergency rule law] we had activities against the emergency state and launched a campaign. Political restrictions are also a human rights problem, for instance, the 10 percent threshold in elections. But of course at some point human rights-related activities overlap with the Kurdish movement, for instance, concerning freedom of expression (interview 2009).

In addition to information politics, associations also work directly with parties and mayors in protest and issue-based campaigns. In February of 2010 the Justice and Solutions Initiative, for instance, launched a “two minutes of darkness” campaign to free Kurdist mayors and civil leaders detained in the second half of 2009; the start of the campaign was inaugurated by

¹⁹ Haberaktuel.com, “Bakanlık Diyarbakır’a müfettiş yolladı,” see <http://www.haberaktuel.com/Bakanlik-Diyarbakirrsquo;a-mufettis-yolladi-haberi-24617.html>

Diyarbakır Mayor Osman Baydemir (Milyet, 9 February 2010). The Diyarbakır Democracy Platform over the years variously called for the lifting of emergency rule law, helped create an anti-war platform (*Savaş Karşıtı Platformu*) in Diyarbakır in the run-up to the U.S. and British invasion of Iraq; protested the one-month closure of Kurdish newspapers in 2007; issued a series of protests against attacks on demonstrators at the Newroz festival in Diyarbakır that year, announced a boycott of CHP leader Deniz Baykal for his treatment of the DTP deputies in the parliament and his policies on the Kurdish issue, and spoke out against the village guard system.

Associations also provide explicit and implicit support for Kurdist candidates and pro-Kurdish parties in their election campaigns. In the legislative elections of July 2007, the Democratic Platform endorsed the DTP-affiliated *Bin Umut* (Thousand Hope) candidates for parliament (see e.g. Cihan Haber Ajansı July 3, 2007). They again endorsed DTP candidates in the March 2009 local elections (CİHAN news agency, March 11, 2009). Associations also provided other forms of support for campaign organization such as organizing round-tables for candidates.

Conclusions

For the two decades since they have been participating in elections, pro-Kurdish parties have performed consistently well in Diyarbakır, in contrast to national-level electoral volatility elsewhere in Turkey. More generally, the city has become known as a stronghold of Kurdish nationalism and as one of the most important sites of Kurdish activism in the country and the region. This support for pro-Kurdish parties and politics is not simply the result of ethnic identity or support for the PKK but is linked to the existence of a dense network of local associations and organizations that shape pro-Kurdish parties' internal dynamics, their relations with the local

community, their political activities, and the geographic balance of power within the party. Due in good part to the fact that they share a set of common Kurdist values, these associations together can function as a kind of collective player, both through informal connections and through more formally organized platforms and initiatives. The promotion and prevalence of Kurdish national politics and norms in Diyarbakir is the product of this collective production of politics.

The importance of associational-party linkages in fomenting resistance is not limited to the Kurdish region of Turkey but can be seen elsewhere. Islamic parties, for instance, have used non-political actors to build contentious social coalitions since the 1970s. For Islamists this enterprise has largely been national, and more clearly managed by the party. It is possible, however, to find localized comparative cases with patterns similar to Diyarbakir: for example, Islamists used strong networks of associations and parties to construct a particularly conservative Islamist environment that is not nationally mainstream (see e.g. White 2002).

The relationship between NGOs and parties is not without controversy, since associations can lose legitimacy and their ability to function if they appear to be proxies or tools for political parties. Many NGOs struggle to maintain party-associational boundaries both because of state pressure and because of the risk of losing their social capital. This is one of the reasons why some associations discourage their members from being party administrators or candidates. Paradoxically, it is also the interest of political parties to maintain this distance since independent NGOs can be more effective for legitimating party positions and mobilizing support. Typical descriptions of the triadic relations between armed group, party, and associations as either “manipulation”(of associations) or replacement (of the armed struggle) thus do not adequately

capture relations between the actors, who may often have a vested interest in maintaining organizational distinctions.

Unlike many models in conflict and post-conflict scenarios that see associations and civil society serving as a potential “bridge” between state and challengers, this case highlights how associations can consolidate challengers in their efforts to withstand state power. Associations here take sides, in other words, rather than work as mediators. ‘Civil society’ is thus not necessarily moderate, and does not even necessary work for democratization. In Diyarbakir, associations and NGOs are part of Kurdist governmentality and play key roles in the building of a Kurdish nationalist discourse.

This case also suggests how challengers can contest dominant discourses by building coalitions of associations and political parties in specific locales. This emphasis on the local element in the construction of resistance is distinct from Gramscian analysis, which tends to treat national-level “organic intellectuals” as the key to the contestation of the dominant social order, as well as from subaltern accounts such as those by James Scott, which depict covert and “unorganized” counter-hegemonic discourses as broadly and continuously present in certain social classes. In Diyarbakir, a local political elite has produced an alternative norm at a local level. This ability to produce local alternative dominant norms is probably the product of a weak consensus on the rules of the political game and on the meta-discourse defining the norms of politics. This suggests the need for a reevaluation of the role of NGOs in polarized political contexts, how locally hegemonic coalitions are formed, and how interactions occur between different kinds of institutional actors.

**Party Penetration of the State:
The Nationalist Action Party in the late 1970s**

Benjamin Gourisse

On July 21, 1977, Gün Sazak, right hand man to the president of the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, or MHP), was named minister of customs and monopolies in what is known as the Second Nationalist Front government. Upon entering office, he gave ministry posts to party and association activists with whom he had ties. In particular, he set aside twenty or so customs control board posts for young members of the Turkish ultra-right nationalist movement, many of them local or national party leaders or the representatives of *ülkücü* associations.⁰ For several months, they devoted themselves to getting other activists appointed, to facilitating relations between the party and its sections in Europe, to serving as intermediaries between the party's leadership and the ministry, and turning the latter into an MHP bastion. Ultimately, however, governmental instability would force these ultra-nationalists to leave the ministry. When the government was overthrown in January 1978, the minister stepped down and all board members had to resign.⁰ They came to form the group of young party officials responsible for relations with like-minded associations and, in this respect, would become a central element in relations between the party and its environment.

The manner in which the MHP nominated its members as well as the instability of its opportunities for installing them in state institutions testifies to the way in which the state could become a site of partisan implantation. This textbook case helps us understand what the position

⁰ In Turkish, "*ülkücü*" means "idealist". This term is used to describe the ultra-nationalist, right-wing members of the MHP and its satellite associations. Among the many local and national leaders drawn from the party and its allied associations, one finds: Namik Kemal Zeybeck (MHP candidate in Bursa during the 1977 legislative elections), Ramiz Ongun (president of the party's youth section from 31/12/1974 to 21/11/1975), Türkmen Onur (president of the party's youth section from 21/11/1975 to 03/10/1977), Mustafa Öztürk (President of the Kayseri section of the Association of Idealist Civil Service Employees - *Ülküm* - in 1974 and 1976), Lokman Abbasoğlu (deputy to the general president and member of the Association of Idealist Villagers' - *Ülkü-Köy* --administrative council), Sami Bal (President of the Ideal Household Association - *Ülkü Ocakları Derneği* - between January 1975 and January 1976), Abdullah Alay (President of Bursa's ÜOD section) and Abdullah Kiliç (President of the Karabük ÜOD section from 1975).

⁰ Noticed by Gün Sazak during their period at the ministry, this group of inspectors would supply the leaders of the MHP group, all regional directors of the pro-MHP daily *Hergün* and those serving as intermediaries between the Party and allied associations and labor unions. Forming the Party's young guard, they rapidly came to occupy prestigious posts in its hierarchy.

of “challenger” or “member of the polity”⁰ may mean for political parties in terms of social and economic resources.⁰ It also suggests a whole series of uses to which members can put political parties that have access to administrative and political posts.⁰

This policy of partisan appointments to state institutions is in no way particular to the MHP. Quite the contrary, it represents an entirely classic way of rewarding activism⁰ in Turkey as well as a guarantee of competition in a civil service beholden to government majorities. During the same period, many small leftwing groups and associations mobilized within state institutions, with greater or lesser success depending on the majority in power. When the People’s Republican Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, or CHP) arrived in government in January 1978, it also distributed civil service and state enterprise jobs to its supporters, marginalizing the civil servants and the contract-holding public servants of the previous majority. Nor is there any reason to suppose that the practice is exclusive to this period. In this respect, the Turkish state presents itself as an institutional whole to be conquered. While legally defined paths of access to the civil service have existed since the earliest years of the Republic (expressed in a system of examinations and competitions, whether specific to a given type of administration or not), it must be recognized that there is also an informal but institutionalized spoil system. There is much evidence to suggest that it has held sway since the proclamation of multipartism and the arrival

⁰ In the sense that Charles Tilly has used these terms: “A member [of the polity] is any contender who has routine, low-cost access to resources controlled by the government; a challenger is any other contender” (Tilly 1978: 52).

⁰ The definition of resources employed by Gilles Dorronsoro and Elise Massicard nicely corresponds to what I am referring to here: “Resources are defined as what is efficiently mobilized in the political field to win elections, a position of power inside a party, etc.” (Dorronsoro and Massicard 2005: 18).

⁰ As Daniel Gaxie has noted, “apart from elective posts in national or local assemblies, many leadership posts in the administrative apparatus or even public enterprises are thus reserved to the most influential members of political organizations. They can be consciously sought after or simply offered to competent and reliable activists but, in all cases, their occupation assumes the character of objective remuneration for the activity effectuated within the party. While these positions of power are generally reserved to leaders and influential members, other jobs within the state apparatus can be confided to less important officials and grassroots activists for whom their activity is similarly a matter of objective material interest.” (Gaxie 1977: 129).

⁰ By reward, I mean the ideological, material and social value of activism, which function as an incentive for the pursuit and intensification of activist involvement.

of the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*, or DP) to power in 1950,⁰ an event which witnessed the eviction of a large number of “Kemalist” civil servants. Since then, each new majority has seen to it that it will not have to suffer from the action of civil servants drawn from the ranks of what have become opposition parties by distributing the public posts that it controls to its members and supporters. In the framework of an economic policy that sought to substitute for imports (by establishing many large public enterprises) and direct economic activities (up till 1980 by means of five year plans), the control of state institutions became a central, if illegal, strategy for the social implantation of political parties. Yet specialists of the Turkish administration today still denounce the “political pressure”⁰ exerted in the recruitment and evaluation of civil service personnel (Öztekin 2008: 28, 31).

The infiltration of state institutions by the MHP in the 1970s nevertheless remains specific. Indeed, this practice only represents one aspect of what may be characterized as a more global strategy for taking power, the aim of which was to take control of the state *before* coming to power. But this aspect is fundamental to understanding the party’s possibilities for participating, in its manner, in the Turkish political life of the period. As I will show, once in office, MHP civil servants directed the daily practice of their profession in accordance with political criteria wholly foreign to the institutions for which they worked. The party thus profited from its contacts and representatives in certain institutions to centralize a great deal of information that could be used during electoral campaigns as well as to benefit from a certain impunity in the situation of civil

⁰ For a study of appointments to the upper reaches of the civil service in the first years of this period of single party rule, see (Türk İdare Dergisi 1983).

⁰ “For high level civil servants such as our provincial prefects, ambassadors, inspectors and general directors [...] political preferences are most of the time crucial”; “One of the most important problems in what concerns civil service personnel is that meritocracy is not enforced. [...] There continues to be political pressure in the recruitment and evaluation of civil service personnel. [...] Relations of proximity (familial, regional, ideological) play an important role in political pressure” (Öztekin 2008 : 28, 31).

war that opposed it to far left groups up till the coup d'état of 12 September 1980.⁰ The party's efforts in this area are thus part of the tripartite scheme -- "armed violence, infiltration of the state, participation in the legal political game" -- that supplied its general strategy for gaining access to power. Moreover, the partisan seizure of state institutions in the 1970s helps us understand how the Turkish state became involved in the political crisis at the end of the decade and why, rather than strengthening the role of the state as an interlocutor and arbiter (Tilly 1978), radicalized mobilization in fact provoked its collapse in the lead up to the coup d'état of 12 September 1980.

The activities of the MHP in this area at the end of the 1970s thus represent a particular and extreme case of a more general practice. Their study simultaneously allows us to reconsider the relations between state institutions and political parties in Turkey and to rethink the social uses of partisan membership in the 1970s.

While the politicization of the administration and the ties between politics and bureaucracy have been the object of many studies in the Anglo-Saxon world (Helco 1977; Aberbach and Rockman 1988; Sam, Thurber, Fritschler and Rosenbloom 2006; Gillman 2003; Meier and O'Toole 2006; Peters and Jon 2004; Christensen and Laegreid 2004) and continental

⁰ After Alparslan Türkeş once again took control over the party in 1965, the MHP presented itself as a nationalist and anti-communist party. Beginning in the late 1960s, the members of its youth sections and the *ülküçü* associations that it controlled and financed threw themselves into physical confrontations with leftwing activists. The party embodied this "resistance" in the political field. In 1968, the party set up the centers of the ideal (*Ülkü Ocakları*), a network of associations created in order to support the action of the party's youth wing and conceived as a spearhead of anti-communist mobilization. While their statutes made them associations independent of the Party, their officials were appointed by the Party, which demanded regular reports concerning the activities of all of their sections, and the Party delineated the references and ideological education of their members by organizing their training programs, and assured the financing necessary for their activities. Following the March 12th, 1971 coup d'état, leftwing mobilizations experienced unprecedented growth. Certain small groups radicalized their modes of action and set about armed and clandestine struggle. This situation encouraged the MHP to intensify its mobilization against the communist danger. It armed the *ülküçü* associations to make them a "civilian force alongside the state" (Bora and Can 1991: 49) and threw itself into what would nearly become open civil war with far left groups. The result was a rapid increase in violence and assassinations, which increased from 3 in 1974 to 1939 for the first nine months of 1980 before the military intervention of 12 September. For the period between 1975 and 1980, the official toll stands at 5,713 dead and 18,480 wounded (Bozarslan 1999).

Europe (for the French case, see: Dogan 1967; Gaiiti 1985; Gaxie 1973, 1980, 1983), the Turkish case has received little attention. In general, it is the clientelist nature of ties between parties and their environment that receives scholars' attention (Güneş-Ayata 1990 ; Özbudun 1981, 1995 ; Unbehaun 1994).

The scholarly literature devoted to the MHP totally ignores this aspect of partisan activity. More generally, the party's activities before the 1980s have been given little attention, with scholars seeming to have become interested in the party mainly once it entered the government in 1999 (Aras and Bacık 2000; Yavuz 2002; Önis 2003). This type of approach has the drawback of representing the 1980 coup d'état as a total break with Turkish political life and the period following the coup d'état as constituting a sort of revival. In what concerns the MHP and other political parties, however, there is every reason to believe that the investment of state institutions did not abruptly come to an end and that parties adapted their methods to the new constitutional arrangements rather than abandon this practice. The work that has been done on the persistence of clientelist ties (Güneş-Ayata 1990) and inter-acquaintance networks (White 2002) following the 1980 coup encourages us to reconsider the effects of the 1980 institutional break. In some cases, however, the question of the coup's effect is not brought up at all. This has been true of numerous studies of the MHP dealing with its ideology (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu 1991) or program (Arıkan 1998; Can 2002), its place in the history of Turkish nationalism (Çınar and Arıkan 2002), its vision of the world (Kaplan 1996) and the fascinating aspects of its social project (Öngider 2002, Uzun 2006). In this latter case, the lack of objectivity and the desire to stigmatize are glaring.

Studies of political parties in the 1970s are mainly devoted to identifying the factors of fragmentation in the partisan system and the motors of ideological and organizational

polarization that characterizes it (Özbudun 2000). These macro-sociological studies are in keeping with a developmentalist or modernizing paradigm. Scholars thus seek to understand the political crisis as a whole and accuse political parties of failing to support economic and social “modernization” (urbanization and rural exodus, proletarianization of the economy, growth of the student population, etc.). The small number of works that concern the MHP in this decade evade or give only cursory attention to the question of the infiltration of state institutions. Hugh Poulton, for example, merely observes that this practice was common to all political parties at the time (Poulton 2006: 159).⁰ Only Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can go to the trouble of indicating the manner in which the MHP rewarded its activists by giving them access to civil service posts (Bora, Can 1991: 50, 56). But they do not offer documentary evidence for their claims and prefer to linger over the increasingly violent strategy pursued by the party. This is for a very good reason. It is very difficult to find reliable sources vouching for the existence of this illegal and thus hidden practice. The party’s former leaders still refuse to admit that there had been any attempt at infiltration and the works published by those who were party members at the time do not raise the issue (Çalık 1995; Öznur 2001; Güven 2006). This situation can be explained by the fact that the party and its various incarnations in the 1990s have sought to rehabilitate its past. The remarks gathered in interviews testify to a desire to stifle the fascist stigma that has attached itself to the party. No mention is made of the illegal practices of its members.

The research presented here thus draws upon a variety of sources that have been largely unexplored by the sociologists, political scientists and historians who have studied the MHP. First among these sources is the indictment that was presented on April 29th, 1981 by the military prosecutor of the high command in charge of the state of siege in the provinces of Ankara,

⁰ While this activity is condemned, it has almost only received attention in the works mentioned above.

Çankırı and Kastamonu at the trial of the MHP and the institutions of the *ülküçü*.⁰ Although it constitutes a very rich source for studying the MHP in the 1970s, no thorough treatment of this document has been published up till now. Since the acts with which the MHP is charged in this document are presented in order to obtain a judicial decision, not to contribute to the study of a specific social practice, I have approached the indictment with caution. One cannot be too careful in approaching the internal productions of a military tribunal the sole aim of which consisted in shutting down a party that was identified as one of the principal actors in the troubles leading up to military intervention. In a more general way, the large trials held against political parties during the coup of 12 September 1980 essentially aimed to discredit the political actors of the 1970s and make them symbols for the failure of a regime that was incapable of dealing with the socio-economic troubles of the end of the decade.⁰ I have thus chosen to only rely on documents cited and/or totally re-transcribed in the indictment (extracts of correspondence, the diaries of party officials, reports from members on mission, statements of accounts, etc.). Doing so has allowed me to use this unique and absolutely indispensable source without simply echoing the judgments of the military justice in place during the coup.

Internal police reviews also constitute useful material for my study. I went through the Police Review (*Polis Dergisi*) from January 1978 to December 1980 and Police Magazine (*Polis Magazin*) from March 1977 to December 1980. These two reviews published reports, studies, opinion pieces and interviews concerning the manner in which the Directorate of Security (to which the police are attached) was influenced by political parties in its recruitment and general operation. Finally, several works supplied evidence concerning the way in which members of the MHP were able to use the party to obtain public sector employment. These include the memoirs

⁰ The indictment can be consulted at this address:

http://www.catalay.com/main/images/fbfiles/files/MHP_iddianamesi.pdf

⁰ For a critical analysis of relations between political and judicial power, see (Briquet 2007).

of a reformed *ülküçü* (Tanlak 1980), a commander of the state of siege (proclaimed on 26 December 1978) in the provinces of Adana, Gaziantep, Adıyaman, and Kahramanmaraş (Bölügiray 1989) and a policeman who was a member of the leftwing police union Pol-Der during the 1970s (Yiğenoğlu 1995). These sources show how activists who held posts in various institutions were able to considerably facilitate the party's task in carrying out illegal actions by supplying it with logistical support and assuring it a degree of impunity. Since the authors of these memoirs took part in the clashes (ideological and physical) between leftwing groups and the MHP, I was also very cautious in the manner in which I used them. I draw upon them in developing my argument only when their assertions have been verified by other sources (police reviews, the prosecutor's indictment, etc.).

This article is organized around two lines of reflection which allow us to understand the manner in which the party more or less successfully invested in state institutions depending on the period and institution concerned as well as the advantages that it drew from doing so. The first part of the article is devoted to an examination of the modalities of this activity. In this way, I hope to explain the emergence of a conjuncture that favored the party's efforts. I will identify the sites, moments and forms of the activity of infiltration as well as the paths by which the party succeeded, if not in taking control, at least in increasing its influence in certain institutions by means of union activism and the appointment of activists. In the second part of the article, I will examine the degree to which this practice of infiltration allowed the party to increase the resources at its disposal that could be mobilized in the half-legal/half-illegal strategy for seizing power that it implemented throughout the second half of the 1970s.

I. Sites and Moments of the MHP's Implantation in the State: Depending on Government Access.

Electoral Marginality and the Party's Strategic Alliances

It was during its participation in two coalition governments – from 31 March 1975 to 22 June 1977 and from 21 July 1977 to 5 January 1978 – as well as the period, beginning in November 1979, in which it supported the Justice Party's minority government that the MHP penetrated state institutions. Its participation in what are known as the two Nationalist Front coalitions allowed it to exploit state resources as much as possible by building up networks of influence and putting its activists in key positions, particularly (though not exclusively) in institutions that depended on the ministries it controlled. It was able to do this in a way that was disproportionate relative to its electoral scores and this thanks to the place it occupied in the party system and field of political positions, which were to allow it to become an essential ally of the main rightwing party, the Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, or AP). Faced with continual growth in the Republican People's Party's percentage of the vote, the AP chose to take advantage of the communist threat and wage several campaigns to portray it as a pro-Soviet communist-revolutionary party. Though the MHP's responsibility for ongoing street violence was universally known, the AP's leader, Demirel, seemed to count on it since the violence and the intensification of protest events allowed him to denounce the support among left-wing associations enjoyed by the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, or CHP), the powerful center left party led by Bülent Ecevit. It should be noted, finally, that the AP only disposed of a small number of activists and had almost no active members in the universities. This encouraged it to depend on the MHP and its members during electoral campaigns to prepare and distribute tracts and post bills (Tanlak 1980: 73). In the universities, it was as if it had sub-contracted the struggle against

leftwing movement out to the MHP. One can thus speak of an objective alliance between the two parties, which fed off one another to ensure access to government posts.

The MHP thus became a “natural” ally of the Justice Party in the 1970s. In the elections of 14 October 1973, the MHP only received 3.4% of the vote and 3 deputies, but the statements of its leaders and violence of its members had already made it the champion of Turkish anti-communism. The great victor of the elections was the CHP, which received 33% of the vote and 185 seats in the National Assembly. The AP saw its support among the electorate slowly erode, coming in second with 29.8% of the vote and 149 deputies. Neither of these two parties was capable of governing alone. After the fall of the first coalition government, which had been led by the CHP, Süleyman Demirel was obliged to reach an agreement with other parties in order to come to power. It was in this way that the First Nationalist Front government (*Milliyetçi Cephe*)⁰ was formed. It was supported by 210 of the 450 deputies of the National Assembly. The MHP carefully negotiated its participation in the government and obtained two ministries in exchange (MHP leader Alparslan Türkeş was deputy prime minister and the party’s Mustafa Kemal Erkovan became minister of state). During the 5 June 1977 elections, the “social troubles” occupied a central place in the electoral campaign. The MHP received 6.4% of the vote and 16 deputies.⁰ Süleyman Demirel and the AP were once again obliged to form a coalition government, known as the Second Nationalist Front government (*ikinci Milliyetçi Cephe*), which held power between 21 July 1977 and 5 January 1978.⁰ The MHP held 5 ministries within it.

Paths to Party Penetration of the State: Appointments and Mobilization

⁰ This First Nationalist Front government brought together the AP, the MSP (*Milli Selâmet Partisi*, National Salvation Party), the CGP (*Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi*, Republican Trust Party) and the MHP.

⁰ The CHP received 41.5% of the vote and 213 deputies; the AP 36.9% and 189 deputies; the MSP 8.6% and 24 deputies; the MHP 6.4% and 16 deputies; and the GCP 1.9% and 3 deputies.

⁰ The government consisted of ministers from the AP, MHP and MSP and enjoyed the support of 229 deputies.

Within the state institutions that it infiltrated, the party worked to marginalize leftwing civil servants. It had the easiest time appointing its activists in the ministries it controlled. During Gün Sazak's tenure as minister of customs and monopolies (21 July 1977 – 5 January 1978), in order to be recruited it sufficed to go to the institutions under the authority of the ministry with a letter of recommendation signed by Alparslan Türkeş (Indictment 1981: 135). The small group that formed the ministry's controllers' council was for its part appointed by order of the minister, who granted them the status of civil servants.⁰ Most often, it was a question of controlling the posts located at the highest echelons of the institutions controlled by the party so that their holders could carry out a policy of pro-partisan recruitment at this level. This was the case, for example, of Abdurrahman Sağkaya, who was appointed to the post of general director of the giant Antbirlik textile production factory at Antalya by Agâh Oktay Güner, MHP minister of trade in the second Nationalist Front government. The new director then got down to recruiting MHP activists from the province on a large scale (Tanlak 1980: 133). The same rationale was applied in the Ministry of Health, where Minister Gökçek nominated individuals with ties to the party to several top hospital posts. Once there, they recruited hospital personnel (independently of medical training) among the MHP's local supporters. Though such practices were not unique to the MHP, they had consequences for the manner in which ill people were cared for, with hospitals selecting who they would take on as patients on the basis of political criteria (Bölügiray 1989: 213).

In January 1978, the CHP convinced a handful of independent legislators to withhold their support for the government in the course of a motion of censure that it had initiated. The government was brought down and the MHP had to abandon a good number of its positions in the state. Ecevit held on for nearly two years but resigned in November 1979 after failing a vote

⁰ They resigned from the civil service once the government changed hands.

of confidence. Supported in the Assembly by the MHP,⁰ which refused to exercise power and was betting on the deterioration of the social situation, the AP had to form a minority government. Its “conditional” support for the AP government, which depended on allies in the Assembly, allowed the MHP to regain some of its influence. One notes, for example, many cases of state institutions being infiltrated by the MHP during this period.

The Ministry of the Interior and the General Direction of Security under its authority became favorite targets for the party, which succeeded in getting a large number of its activists appointed to them (Indictment 1981: 118) by short-circuiting the institutions’ recruitment procedures. With the support of local officials, the MHP helped some party members to be recruited into the police by transmitting lists of activists and sympathizers to the relevant local police offices (Indictment 1981: 134). Sometimes, these efforts were on behalf of particular individuals. Thus, on 3 September 1980, a commissioner at the Izmir Direction of Security wrote to the general president of the MHP. In his letter, he set forth his desire to see a particular individual, described as a member of the party, profit from an upcoming appointment in the Department of Information (Indictment 1981: 131). Other documents suggest that this practice was genuinely organized by the party. The minutes of a meeting found at the party’s headquarters specify the steps to be taken in order to join police training academies (access to which is normally determined on the basis of examinations). There, one can read that “in what concerns the exams that will be organized for entry to police academy Orta K [open to college graduates] and Lise K [for those holding only a high-school diploma] on April 19th, 1980, the necessary steps need to have been taken at least 15 days in advance. The lists will be brought to the party

⁰ The MSP and the MHP were to support the government within the Assembly. It seems that, faced with increasing economic problems, protest mobilizations and violence, these two parties had not wished to risk the potentially negative electoral fallout of participating in a government. At the end of 1979, moreover, all parties were counting on the legislative elections that were anticipated for 1980. These two parties thus preferred giving their conditional and re-negotiable support to the AP, which occupied government alone between November 1979 and September 1980.

headquarters”, from where they were later delivered to the relevant officials (Indictment 1981: 103). As it happens, more than a quarter of the individuals supported by the MHP succeeded in joining the police (Indictment 1981: 130). Thus, out of a total of 590 individuals whose family and given names were mentioned, 155 were appointed as policemen with the agreement of the Ministry of the Interior between April 4th, 1980 and November 24th, 1980. Many of them had their entry exam accepted even though their scores fell short of the necessary minimum.

The institutions of the Ministry of National Education (high schools, universities, graduate schools, teacher training schools, etc.) were also singled out for infiltration. The prosecutor certainly over-estimated the MHP’s grip over the institutions of the national education system when he observed that “little by little, these educational institutes (*eğitim enstitüleri*) have come under its control and become, in the jargon of the party, ‘free *ülkücü* education institutions’ (*Kurtarılmış ülkücü eğitim kurumları*)” (Indictment 1981: 113). But the discovery of blank diplomas and correspondence between officials at party headquarters and National Education officials allowed him to rightly claim that “there have always been MHP officials within the Ministry of Education who work, not for the benefit of the state, but for that of the MHP. The MHP’s leadership organized this undertaking. As soon as its sympathizers joined the ministry, they tried to gain control of the nomination process. As soon as its sympathizers were appointed to a school, they tried to establish an *ülkücü* organization” (Indictment 1981: 117). To this, it can be added that *ülkücü* members at institutions of higher education (and often high schools) managed to have students who sympathized with or were members of the party enrolled there. Once again, the MHP short-circuited the recruitment and certification procedures of these institutions by introducing partisan rules. A report prepared by Mustafa Görür Yılmaz, a local party leader, concerning the party’s activities in the province of Kayseri between March 18th and

26th, 1980, allows us to understand how the MHP locally ensured access for its young activists to educational institutions. It relates the manner in which local bodies of the party worked to get its activists enrolled in the State Academy of Architecture and Engineering in Kayseri (*Kayseri Devlet Mimarlık Mühendislik Akademisi, KDMMA*):

“The President of the Kayseri hall, Hamza Kaya, informed us in early November 1979 that 75 people were to be enrolled at the KDMMA. Under the presidency of A. Yildiz, we drew up the list for pre-enrollments [...] Finally, the pre-enrollments were opened on March 18th. Final inscriptions were taken care of on March 25th and 26th (...) 52 people on our list entered, 15 of whom were on the waiting list. 20 were unable to be enrolled. [...] Finally, the pre-enrollments were opened on March 18th. 420 points were required for enrollment in the sciences. On March 21st, the minimal level was lowered to 395 points. On March 21st, we reached an agreement with Haluk Peker, the President of the D.M.M.A.: either the score received by our candidates would not be posted or the number of points received by our candidates would appear as superior to those of pre-enrolled students” (Indictment 1981: 113).

The “representatives” of the MHP thus allowed young activists to join certain institutions of higher education without having met the necessary conditions for entry. It also guaranteed that they would receive diplomas⁰.

⁰ A six-page report found by investigators and entitled “The Situation in the Schools at the Beginning of 1980” referred to the National Education institutions in which *ülküçü* activists could be sure of receiving their diplomas in the towns of Konya, Denizli, Antalya, Niğde and Muğla (Indictment 1981: 110).

Apart from this policy of partisan appointments, the members of the party were to assure greater representation by means of mobilization in state institutions. They came together and acted as missionaries through the creation of sector associations⁰ such as the Police Union (*Polis Birliđi, Pol-Bir*) in the direction of security in March 1978 and the Civil Service Personnel Association (*Ülkücü Kamu Görevliler ve Memurlar Derneđi, Ülküm*) in 1976. After being closed by the courts during the CHP government, in October 1978 the latter reformed under the name of the Civil Service Union Association (*Ülkücü Kamu Görevlileri ve Memurlar Güç Birliđi Derneđi, Ülkü-Bir*). In regards to the latter, the prosecutor claimed that “by organizing within state institutions, the aim of these associations is to produce reports on the communist members of the staff working there, have them transferred, eliminate members of the staff and managers who do not share their political viewpoint, assure financial support for the *Ülkü-Bir* by collecting dues, managing to dismiss communist members of the institution while assuring that *ülkücü* are named in their stead and trying to exercise influence in the domain of the state” (Indictment 1981: 143). In each institution containing *ülkücü* personnel, a leader was appointed and, at the local level, sections were created that sent regular reports to the general president of *Ülkü-Bir* Yusuf Okumuş. The latter then sent a circular to the headquarters of the MHP that had been elaborated on the basis of the reports that it had centralized (Indictment 1981: 143). Moreover, seminars were organized every two weeks in Ankara to which section presidents and influential members of the association were invited. There, the *ülkücü* doctrine was discussed as well as how to organize infiltration (Indictment 1981: 144). More generally, in the course of the training sessions provided by the party, certain modules were devoted to infiltration methods and internal mobilization within institutions. One such session was thus entitled “the importance of education

⁰ Since unions were banned from the civil service, the status of association allowed civil servants to defend their collective interests.

in the *ülküci* movement, education in our infiltration activity, education for penetrating crowds and education for conquering the state” while another was devoted to “infiltration (*kadrolaşma*), mass dissemination (*kitleleşme*) and state control (*devletleşme*)” (Indictment 1981: 89). In this respect, no doubt remains that the party’s approach amounted to a well-organized strategy.

During their trial, party members were accused of having violated several articles of the constitution⁰, statutory clauses⁰ and the law governing political parties⁰ that had been instituted to safeguard the autonomy of the state. It is for this reason, moreover, that the indictment gives such an important place to denouncing these practices. More than the illegal aspect of this practice, however, what interests us here is the way in which recruitment procedures were circumvented and partisan rules introduced into the operation of the administration. It can be argued that acquaintance networks and political ties – which were to become the two principles of appointment in the state – ran entirely counter to a set of legal measures that had been designed to protect the frontiers of the state, separate the civil servant from ties of class, religion and region and confer public service values upon him via thorough socialization in state institutions. Thanks to the government posts it held, the party could replace the legal rules governing access to the civil service with its particular mode of privileging individual profiles. The MHP (as well as other parties) succeeded in bypassing the paths of legal access to the civil

⁰ The prosecutor appealed to Article 12 of the constitution (“All individuals are equal before the law irrespective of language, race, political opinion, philosophical views, or religion or religious sect. No privileges shall be granted to any individual, family, group or class”) as well as Article 119 (“Government officials and staff members employed in an administrative or supervisory capacity in public economic enterprises, and those who are employed in the central offices of public welfare institutions, whose private facilities and sources of income are provided by law, may not join political parties. Government officials and those employed in public economic enterprises may make in the performance of their official duties no discrimination whatsoever among citizens on account of their political views. Those whose violation of the above principles is established by court judgment shall be permanently dismissed from public service”).

⁰ The Council of Ministers’ March 23rd, 1979 decision (number 7/17339), included in paragraph 30 of Article 8 of the Security Organization’s disciplinary statutes, affirms that “the fact of being a member of a political party or acting for the good of or against a political party or participating in political activities is sanctioned by a disciplinary punishment of being expelled from the profession”.

⁰ Article 7 of law no.657 on civil servants stipulates that “civil servants cannot be members of a political party. They must not behave in a way to disadvantage or promote a political party or individual; in the exercise of their functions, they must act without any distinction of language, religion, race, sex, political opinion, philosophical ideas or religion”. Article 125 of the civil servant law provides for disciplinary punishments (expulsion) for those who keep information or documents capable of harming the rule of law secret.

service and, in this respect, called the professionalization⁰ and autonomy⁰ of the administrative sphere into question. It was no longer the administrative sphere that imposed rules and duties on its personnel but, rather, political parties which, by hijacking the procedures for recruitment and advancement, used them to reward their activists and supporters.

The Difficulties and Constraints of an Activity that Depended on the Exercise of Power

Many documents give the impression that the party organized its penetration of the state when it had access to governmental posts and during the last Demirel government. Others, however, encourage us to question the systematic manner in which this approach was pursued or clearly bring out the party's difficulty in perpetuating its presence in the state when the government changed hands (that is, when it once again found occupying the role of challenger).

Of course, a large number of institutions and public administrations became sites of MHP civil servant mobilization. But an undated summary report found at party headquarters presents the difficulties they encountered in organizing themselves and puts the impression of impunity to which other documents may give rise into context:

⁰ By administrative professionalization, I mean a mode of operation in which civil servants are recruited according to a meritocratic procedure, are often trained in state schools and have their career organized and protected by a particular status.

⁰ Max Weber would have it that administrative autonomy depends on civil servants who: 1) are personally free and only obey the objective duties of their function; 2) are located in a well-established hierarchy of functions in which all are accorded particular competencies; 3) are recruited on a contractual basis in the framework of an open selection process on the basis of their personal qualification, which is usually demonstrated by the receipt of a diploma; 4) are remunerated by fixed cash salaries (regular salary) and exercise their function as their sole or principal profession. Moreover, these civil servants can hope to be promoted according to known procedures and submitted to a homogenous discipline that does not depend on the arbitrary decisions of their superiors and only concerns the accomplishment of their function. They cannot take possession of their post nor of the resources that the administration has allocated to it (Weber 1995).

“4 – Ministry of Public Works and Housing: **As the obstacles to our efforts diminish⁰**, we have been able to meet together again. [...] 8 – Agricultural Bank (*Ziraat Bankası*): despite the small number of *ülküçü* civil servants, meetings were organized and dues were collected among between 30 and 40 people [...]. 13 – The Ankara Hospital: After **the setbacks of our former representative**, the newly elected representative will soon give impetus to a new dynamic. [...] 14 – Ankara Faculty of Medicine: **Our representative cannot exercise his functions.** Although new elections have been organized, we cannot meet. Dues paid are very weak and contacts with the organization are non-existent. [...] 16 – The pension fund: **The communists are growing stronger here and pressure is increasing.** In our organization, the situation is normal. [...] 19 – The Ministry of Commerce: **Despite several problems**, we have re-organized. [...] 23 – *Etibank*: **No representation. No activity, even though we have friends there** [...] 30 – Advanced School for Professors (*Yüksek Öğretmen Okulu*): **No representation.** We are resuming our efforts. We have between 10 and 12 friends there [...] 32 – National Lottery: **Some conflicts between members**, no unity. **Meetings cannot be organized.** With the exception of a few individuals, everyone pays dues [...]”⁰
(Indictment 1981: 169-170)

The report refers to struggles for power within institutions as well as setbacks and sanctions against *ülküçü*. It suggests that the party did not invest in institutions “like one man” and that it experienced conflicts of interest between its local representatives. In many cases,

⁰ Bold-faced text is my own for emphasis.

⁰ Bold type mine.

raising dues and holding meetings are the only activities mentioned by the report. Apart from cases in which the relevant minister was drawn from its ranks, moreover, no document used by the prosecutor at the party's trial mentions party influence over the direction of public policy. As I noted above, this report is not dated. But the difficulties that party representatives encountered suggest that the situation described by the report took place during the CHP government directed by Ecevit from January 1978 to November 1979. During the 22 months that the CHP was in power, the MHP's efforts at infiltration were considerably slowed as its members experienced political discrimination at the hands of the leftwing civil servants it had earlier discriminated against.

When the CHP returned to power in January 1978, the MHP put many of its officials in the administration. There, they carried out an effective recruiting effort among party members. But the change of government was to result in the eviction of a large number of MHP activists from the institutions they had invested. The party suffered from rapid job turn over in the civil service as a result of governmental instability. It thus no longer benefitted from the support necessary for assuring a minimum of impunity for its activities. The number of *ülküci* activists arrested by the police grew spectacularly and the party (in particular in the pages of its daily, Hergün) led several campaigns calling upon the government to step down and hold the anticipated legislative elections. It tirelessly criticized the manner in which the government and its civil servants treated *ülküci* associations and activists and the threats to which they were subjected (several *ülküci* association sections were closed). For the MHP, it became more difficult to organize within state institutions. After *Ülküm* was closed in October 1978, Yusuf Okumuş, the president of the *Ülküm-Bir* association that replaced it reported on the new organizational difficulties to Türkeş:

“Before it was closed down [the *Ülkücü Memurlar Derneği*], we could count on the dues of between 1000 and 2000 members in Ankara [...]. Since we began our activities, the number of members has constantly grown. But with the state of siege, we temporarily halted our activities. [...] We encountered two types of difficulty in our efforts to open sections. We tried to find honest and intelligent people from the point of view of the present situation. We tried to avoid adding to the difficulties that are already facing us. The people whom we chose to open sections were transferred, at least to another place in the province. We looked for civil servants capable of channeling the *ülküci* movement. [...] For the reasons described above, some of them are reluctant and reserved. For this reason, we are too. Despite the present government, our members in Ankara and in the provinces have good morale. They expect nothing from the others apart from a new wave of transfers.” (Indictment 1981: 155-156).

A July 29, 1980 letter to the MHP president from Hayrettin Neşeli, a law student in the province of Hatay, reveals the difficulties facing the *ülküci* during the CHP’s period in government. In this letter, the student explains that he was not accepted into the provincial sub-prefect training program (*kaymakamlık*) in 1979 due to his involvement with the MHP and that he had thus been obliged to take the exams preparatory to becoming a lawyer. He continued: “My Başbuğ, 135 districts lack a provincial sub-prefect (*kaymakam*). Since the majority of sub-prefects in office are leftists, we do not get nominated. Because I belong to the MHP [...] My

Başbuğ, if I wish to become a sub-prefect (*Kaymakam*), it is because I think that I could be useful in this post” (Indictment 1981: 133).

Once the party had been dismissed from power, the difficulties facing it thus seem to have grown. It struggled to find civil servants who wished to represent it in institutions, its members were marginalized by the representatives of the new government and their opportunities for gaining access to the civil service were closed. In this way, the party lost control of many of the resources that had formerly allowed it to reward its activists and supporters. The unfortunate prefectural candidate learned this at his expense. Yet the letter sent to Alparslan Türkeş shows that recourse to the party in questions concerning the attribution of posts was an approach understood by its activists. While involvement in a political party is free, it must be either ideologically or materially motivated (Weber 1995). In the case of the MHP, the hope of obtaining posts or promotions in the civil service could have motivated many individuals to become involved. Yet its access to state resources evolved over time and so did its possibilities for rewarding activism (Gaxie 1977). When access to civil service posts became more difficult for the party, it lost an entire series of rewards that might be distributed among party members, who might then choose to leave the party rather than remaining loyal⁰ (Hirschman 1970).

II. The By-Products of Investment in State Institutions

The party profited in a number of ways from its infiltration of state institutions. It drew on its office-holding representatives to centralize the information it used in electoral campaigns and disposed of a large range of jobs that it distributed to its supporters in order to guarantee their

⁰ The way in which the Party assured the loyalty of its members is not the central question of this article. Apart from financial and social rewards for involvement with the Party (which I discuss below), it is worth mentioning a series of measures of control – ideological, physical and material – which assured partisan discipline and allowed the MHP to contain hemorrhage in the event of reduction in the Party’s collective resources.

loyalty. To better understand how the party was able to distribute the resources it had accumulated, its internal organization must first be examined. I describe the MHP as a highly centralized party because its provincial officials and the local and national leaders of *ülküci* associations and unions were appointed and removed by its center⁰. The center also organized money transfers between allied associations and party sections and provided for the needs of particular associations as required. It was thus able to draw on the mobilization efforts of *ülküci* organizations, use the information and resources they supplied it and determine how these resources were to be redistributed among party supporters. This organizational structure allows us to understand the manner in which the various kinds of resources centralized by the party by means of institutional infiltration circulated.

Accumulation and Circulation of Informational Capital

New recruits and actively serving civil servants in converted posts carried out information-gathering activities for the party and reported them to its hierarchy. Several of the documents found at its Ankara headquarters attest to this:

“Information report on the situation of our regional office (*bölge*). [...] The situation of the 51 people in post is the following. 9 *ülküci*, 7 MSP, 10 AP, 6 from leftwing organizations. The others are generally CHP or neutral. None of 8 *ülküci* friends is an official, all are civil servants..... Conclusion: The number of staff in our new office is soon going to double. In order to ensure influence in our office, we will need more members among the personnel who will be appointed.

⁰ It must be noted that this practice runs contrary to the law on political parties, which provided for elections at each level of the organization and condemned relations between political parties and associations.

We will need to ensure that we have at least a few friends among the officials (the director, for example, or a deputy director) who will soon be appointed.”

(Indictment 1981: 167-168)

This extract of a report from an unnamed service nicely illustrates how MHP civil servants and, more generally, *ülküçü* produced information concerning the balance of power within institutions. Reports found at party headquarters contained the last names, first names and places of work of police officers, most of them employed in the country’s large cities. On these forms, evaluations were offered of the political opinions of these civil servants and the degree to which they shared the author’s ideas was indicated. The correspondence found by the authorities proves that, as early as “1976-77, a portion of the police officers and civil servants working in the Ankara security office produced subjective evaluations of their colleague’s political preferences, specifying whether they were leftwing or rightwing. These evaluations were accompanied by suggestions” (Indictment 1981: 132). In a letter sent to the president of the MHP, the president of legal services in the province of Hakkari informed him that “the personnel of the legal services of Hakkari have been classified by their political opinions and beliefs, [and] this evaluation is based on reliable sources” (Indictment 1981: 132). By means of these efforts to collect data on institutional personnel, the party was able to evaluate its influence and identify the individuals who it could approach. A letter sent to the president of the MHP by an activist who worked in the Ministry of the Interior testifies to these activities:

“....., the prefect of..... is a classic bureaucrat. He performs his duty in all periods. He has real qualities as a member of the administration. He is not an enemy of the MHP., the prefect of....., comes from a Sunni CHP

family in Sivas. He can be trusted on national and moral subjects. He can be considered as having ties to anti-MHP circles. We must carefully and discreetly approach and attempt to convince him....., the prefect of, was Kurdist in his youth but has changed over time. He joined the MSP in order to become *vali*. He then moved towards the AP. His aim is to join Parliament. If the MHP makes him an offer, he may accept. [...] If he is approached in an intelligent way, he may be used.” (Indictment 1981: 169)

Thanks to these descriptions and suggestions, the party possessed the information necessary for engaging in deals with acting civil servants and could for example try to trade elected offices in exchange for support in the administration and sometimes the upper civil service. But the extract also suggests the difficulties that it encountered once it had left government: it was no longer capable of guaranteeing the rewards necessary for maintaining the fidelity of its supporters. The political career of many former party activists and officials who joined other political parties after the 1980 coup d'état suggests that, once the MHP no longer disposed of the state resources necessary for comfortably rewarding its allies after 1980 (in particular, by handing out political and bureaucratic posts), they left it in order to try their luck with competitors who were more favorably endowed with state resources.⁰

An institutional presence also constituted an advantage in electoral periods. In a letter sent to Alparslan Türkeş on 30 June 1980, Nihat Ülkekel, an inspector with the General Directorate of Security, informed the president of the MHP of his activities:

⁰ This hypothesis can be tested for all Turkish political parties. It would perhaps help us to better understand the difficulty that the parties could have in guaranteeing permanent support (local notables, electorate and political personnel), and thus the volatility of the electorate in Turkey.

“In the context of the upcoming electoral campaign, I want to help the MHP win a great victory in every way I can [...]. My activities are presently devoted to electoral campaigns. If the decision to organize the anticipated elections is taken, I would increase my efforts to this end” (Indictment 1981: 131).

In another example, the prefect of Yozgat, Fuat Çapanoğlu, sent a letter to Alparslan Türkeş on 16 September 1979 in which he stated that he was at his command and then supplied information on his activities:

“You must intervene if our party is to win the senatorial elections in Yozgat. A portion of our friends who are party members work in an unconventional manner [...] With your permission [...] I have begun to intensely work. The list of delegates have passed through my hands [...] With your permission [...] Our candidates must be men of faith” (Indictment 1981: 132).

One may thus conclude that the party’s connections in state institutions supplied it with information that it could use in election periods.

These intelligence-gathering activities involved all institutions the MHP was concerned with, including institutions of national education and, more particularly, higher education. A search ordered by the Ankara Security Directorate and carried out at the home of Şadi Somuncuoğlu⁰ on 15 September 1980 allowed a list to be reconstituted that included the names of members of the law and economy faculties of the University of Istanbul, the faculty of

⁰ Şadi Somuncuoğlu was minister of State in the second nationalist front government and then member of the Party’s decision-making bodies.

medicine in Cerrahpaşa and Çapa and the faculty of dental medicine at Istanbul Technical University. These individuals were classified according to “positive” and “negative” categories. The names of those who received a positive evaluation were followed by the signs (*, **, ***), corresponding to: *** nationalist, can be completely trusted; ** can be trusted; * can make concessions if necessary or may be converted. The individuals suspected or convicted of acquaintance with leftwing movements and ideologies were similarly evaluated, with the signs #, ## or ### following their names. In the course of the same search, a two page copy from Who’s Who of the law faculty entitled “Who’s Who – Let’s meet the teachers of the Law Faculty” was found. There, remarks were made on each teacher (one can read, for example: “..... comes and goes between communism and socialism but is unable to make up his mind” (Indictment 1981: 94)).

All this intelligence-gathering work endowed the MHP with informational capital (Bourdieu 1994: 114) that it used for electoral purposes as well as in its confrontations with the far left. Moreover, this information allowed it to guarantee impunity for its more violent activists by intervening in the course of trials⁰ or directly with the police.

Reducing the Risks of Mobilization and Protecting Activists

The information-gathering activities carried out by party members with posts in the above-named institutions and the way in which their partisan membership guided their professional practice allowed the party (save for the 22 month period of CHP government) to

⁰ A document sent to the legal office of the principal ülkücü organization mentions the research conducted on the personnel of the Yozgat and Çankırı courts: “The public prosecutor..... is a leftist.... His assistant..... is a leftist, the prosecutor’s assistant..... is one of us, the assistant of prosecutor..... is one of ours, he is AP, the assistant of the prosecutor..... is leftist, the assistant of prosecutor..... is one of us, the assistant of the prosecutor..... is leftist, the president of the upper court of assizes..... is a sympathizer, the member..... is neutral, the member..... is leftist, the judge of the upper court of the correctional tribunal..... is one of us [...]” (Indictment 1981: 187).

guarantee a degree of impunity and to fully promote destabilization by means of violence. When local *ülküci* associations were closed by the authorities, party officials could use their networks in the provincial administration to overturn the decision. In February 1978, the leader of the Izmir section thus requested the help of the province's prefect after the high court closed the *ülküci* hall of Bornova (Indictment 1981: 97).

With the exception of the period of CHP governance – during which local arrangements differed – the local branch of the MHP contacted party officials (leaders or elected representatives) whenever activists were arrested by police following an armed operation. MHP or AP ministers then had these activists freed after coming to an understanding with the relevant precinct captain (Tanlak 1980: 15). Ömer Tanlak, a repentant MHP activist, precisely described the manner in which he was freed after having been arrested for involvement in a gun battle at a café located at İsmetpaşa in Ankara:

“The following day, we went into town. A search was conducted in the cafés and an arm had been found on a friend who we called Hikmet the Soldier (*Asker Hikmet*). The police gathered us up and made us get into a squad car. Before climbing in, Hikmet the Soldier told the café owner, who was the mayor (*muhtar*), “to inform Necati Paşa” [Necati Gültekin, General Secretary of the party]. They led us to the Anafartalar police station. Two hours later, they let us go.” (Tanlak 1980: 21)

The same Ömer Tanlak, when discussing his involvement as a student at the Etlik high school in Ankara, gives precious information concerning the support that he and his friends

received from the high school's principal, a member of *Ülkü-Bir*. According to Tanlak, during the 1976-1977 academic year, they left their arms with the principal and collected them at the end of the day. When the situation became more difficult for the *ülküçü* (i.e., during the period of the CHP government from January 1978 to November 1979), this same principal entrusted them with his personal weapon for the purpose of conducting operations outside of the school (Tanlak 1980: 37). Sometimes, the party made sure that it had higher-placed support in the administration. Diary notes taken by MHP Secretary General Necati Gültekin show that an unnamed chief of security (*Emniyet Müdürü*) had been thanked during a MHP presidency meeting for his role in gaining authorization for certain party activists to carry a weapon (Indictment 1981: 98).

The party also benefited from Gün Sazak's appointment to the post of minister of Customs and Monopolies in the second Nationalist Front government to import extensive supplies of arms, bombs, ammunition, radios (*telsiz*) and medicine (most of it from Germany). Moreover, the importation of materials to assist in the preparation of illegal operations may not have been organized in the institutions of the ministry since blank forms bearing the official letterhead and signed by the minister were found at the headquarters of the party's youth organization (*Gençlik Kolları*) (Indictment 1981: 138).

Motivations for Involvement and Rewards of Activism

By skirting legal administrative procedures as well as through the private (because partisan) appropriation of the resources of the ministries and administrations, the MHP had embarked on an effort to seize control of state resources. A conceivable and partially realizable goal while the party still had access to the polity, this strategy became impractical once it had again found itself

in the role of challenger. In periods during which the MHP had access to the polity, the civil service posts it controlled constituted to an unparalleled resource for rewarding party activism. It was able to ensure the loyalty of its activists by distributing jobs, from high-ranking posts in the administration to positions in state factories. Indeed, while political parties are “associations based on a (formally) free engagement aiming to procure power for their leader within a group and opportunities – ideal or material – for their activists to pursue objective aims, obtain material advantages or realize both at the same time” (Weber), one can expect that the promise of obtaining material advantages motivated their engagement.⁰ It can thus be claimed that controlling posts in the civil service allowed the party to more easily mobilize the human resources necessary for its political activity. At certain periods, it disposed of a large range of posts – from police officer to provincial prefect – that it could distribute as it liked and according to its needs. The testimony of Nurhan Varlı, police officer and member of the leftwing police association *Pol-Der*, supports this claim. It describes the situation at the Artvin police station in which most officers were “on the right”. There, politically compatible police officers received posts in prestigious sections (such as the political section) while those politically opposed to it were assigned “uninteresting” posts – maintaining order, for example – and found themselves overlooked by the hierarchy (Yiğenoğlu 1995: 60).

When it was in a position to do so, the MHP thus rewarded the most promising or faithful of its activists (as was the case for the members of the controllers’ council at the Customs Ministry) and negotiated support on the basis of its strictly statist resources (by promoting the advancement of party members in provincial administrations). But in order to maintain its control over those who occupied the positions it distributed, the party had to ensure that it retained power over the

⁰ As Max Weber noted, “parties increasingly appear in the eyes of their members as a sort of trampoline which will allow them to reach this essential aim: to provide for the future” (Weber 1963: 143).

positions themselves (Bourdieu 1994: 217). At the moment of recruitment into the civil service, the party had appointees sign a non-dated letter of resignation. This was then sent to the relevant hierarchical superior upon the first sign of misbehavior. Any attempt at free riding or freeing oneself from party control thus became nearly impossible since it guaranteed the fidelity of its office-holding activists by controlling their source of revenue (Indictment 1981: 138).

Moreover, the party's implantation in the state allowed it to ensure a degree of impunity for its most engaged activists in the preparation and realization of violent actions. Activists who had participated in an armed attack, for example, became totally dependent on the party, which looked after them financially, moved them from place to place and supplied them with housing, money and protection. When an activist who had engaged in illegal activity quit the party, this assistance came to an end and he no longer enjoyed the benevolence of certain sectors in the institutions of coercion. He had, moreover, to protect himself from his former comrades (who could physically threaten him).⁰ Thanks to these mechanisms, the party ensured that it controlled the collective and individual resources it distributed among its activists and that it remained master of the game in its relations with those of its activists who were employed by the state.

Conclusion

While the letter of the law imposes a strict separation between the political and administrative spheres, the study of the MHP's institutional investment activities in the 1970s argues for rethinking their relations in terms of porosity and inter-penetration. It also encourages an examination of the continuity of this intertwined relationship in the aftermath of the 1980 coup d'état, even though the legislative measures intended to "protect the state" had been

⁰ Ömer Tanlak readily spoke to the press about his illegal activities and named the individuals from whom he had the most to fear. One can only see in these efforts to draw media attention a certain eagerness to testify in order to protect himself from his former comrades.

strengthened. In this respect, it is not in constitutions but in the conditions of political activity that the concrete rules of politico-institutional interactions must be sought (Gaxie 1992: 98). The results of this study allow several series of questions to be posed concerning the social grounding of political parties, activist uses of parties, and the autonomy of the bureaucracy in Turkey at various moments in the history of the Republic of Turkey.

Penetrating the state, particularly during the period of planned economy, was a central aim of partisan strategies. The results of this study show the extent to which the MHP profited from state resources when it had access to the polity by disposing of a collection of jobs in public institutions and enterprises. When it once again found itself in the role of challenger, its representatives were marginalized in their institutions and it no longer possessed the reservoir of jobs with which it had earlier negotiated support and ensured the loyalty of its members. The present case study bears out the words of Max Weber, to wit, that “no partisan struggle is uniquely a struggle for objectives but is also and above all a rivalry for controlling the distribution of jobs” (Weber 1963: 141).

The results of this study also encourage us to open the “black box” of political parties, to interrogate the social relations that they house and thus to examine the ways in which activists use political parties. Individuals do not all become involved in politics for the same reasons and, while partisan ideology can be a factor in their involvement, the material rewards of activism may also motivate the decision to enter, remain in or leave a party. The case of the MHP shows how political parties find the occasion for rewarding their activists by giving them access to civil service posts or various jobs in state enterprises. The re-transcribed correspondence contained in the indictment often reveals the expectations of activists, the inter-individual arrangements aiming to facilitate the recruitment of a given “deserving” person and the conflicts of interest

among activists. It seems to me that the sociology of activism and the civil service in Turkey would have everything to gain from examining the effects of political careers on professional careers and inversely across the various politico-institutional configurations that the Republic of Turkey has known. The results might inform us as to the social factors at play in public engagement and disengagement and thus on political careers taken as a whole.

I do not claim to have answered this question. I have merely attempted to examine the concrete practices of a political party which – much like others but in its own specific way – was able to develop party structures and intensify party mobilization thanks to its implantation in the state in the altogether particular political context of the late 1970s. This study thus invites yet further studies of other historical periods in order to assess the lasting quality of the interpenetration of the political and administrative spheres in Turkey.

How Political Dynamics Work in Professional Organizations: The Radical Left and the Istanbul Bar Association

Emre Öngün and Manar Hassan

Although the radical left suffered intense repression and marginalization in Turkey after the 1980 military coup, leftists continued nonetheless to exert remarkable influence in certain important arenas, especially professional organizations such as the Turkish Medical Association (*Türk Tabipleri Birliği*) and the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (*Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği* or TMMOB). Particularly noteworthy has been the influence of the radical left on the powerful Istanbul Bar Association, where prestigious lawyers and leftist activists found common cause in a number of issues. These ranged from bar support for hunger strikers in 2000 to the organization of justice courts in Istanbul. This politicization of the Istanbul Bar Association broadened the discourse of small leftist groups, allowing them to step beyond

the constraints of small political parties and into a realm of political opportunities inside the massive professional association. Why does the powerful and respected Istanbul Bar Association -- the largest in the world -- align with the left, itself marginal in the Turkish political field? More generally, how are relations between parties and professional organizations shaped? Indeed, the level of politicization of Turkish society throughout the decades deeply affected the Istanbul Bar, as well as other professional and labour-oriented organizations, which by their nature had vested interests in allying themselves with some political parties. While some professional organizations -- the Chambers of Commerce, employers' union, farm producers' chambers, for instance-- have shown tendencies to gravitate towards the right, others such as engineers and architects chambers unions, bar associations, physician and pharmacists unions, or the Turkish dental association -- have generally adopted leftist positions (Bora 2000). Among these, the Bar Association has been one of the professional associations most affected by the radical left.

This paper examines the influence of leftist politics in the Istanbul Bar Association, with a particular emphasis on the role played by informal networks and their capacity to transmit or convert political capital from one sphere to another. We document how leftists inside the bar have coalesced into an informal but structured electoral coalition called ÇAG, or the *Çağdaş Avukatlar Grubu* (Progressive Lawyers' Group). This informal group gained an extraordinary degree of influence within the bar by successfully electing candidates to the board of the bar, to the degree to which the radical left was over-represented within the bar in comparison with its marginal weight in the Turkish political field, and in comparison to its weight among lawyers of the bar. We argue that ÇAG's ability to extend the reach of the radical left disproportionate of its actual numbers is due to two main factors: first, that ÇAG brought together an otherwise fragmented left wing; and, second, that ÇAG successfully transformed political resources

produced by leftist parties and organizations into elected positions on the board of the association. However, there is an important caveat to this leftist influence peddling: namely, that a distinct professional logic limits the efficacy of leftist activism within the bar.

However, it would be misleading to assert that the bar elections follow only political lines; they do not. In fact, as we suggest, leftist political resources are a critical but insufficient resource for becoming a candidate, with professional prestige also playing an important role in the choice of candidates, particularly for the position of president of the board of the Bar Association. This limit on the overt and direct influence of leftists results in a mediation of leftist politics through the person of more broadly acceptable “great lawyers,” thus – ironically— facilitating the survival of leftism and liberal politics.

Analyzing leftist activism inside the Bar Association is important for understanding the boundaries between organizations and parties and the transformation and mobilization of political resources. As a number of studies of Turkey and elsewhere have documented (e.g. Belge 2006; Arslan 2007; Gaiti and Israel 2003; Le Ray 2009; Shambayati and Kirdiş 2009; Moustafa 2003; Wickham 1996; Sancar and Atılgan 2009; Tezcür 2009), the politicization of legal associations -- especially in authoritarian and less-than-fully democratic contexts -- can produce unconventional and dynamic outcomes. Sometimes associations serve as a political vehicle for various actors and for movements. In the case of Egypt, for instance, the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood used professional associations throughout the 1980s and 1990s to nurture its political activities, which led its members to elected positions in parliament as independents (Wickham 1996). Although the politicization of such associations is relatively easy to identify, a less obvious but equally important insight from such cases is the key role played in such exchanges by informal networks, which may articulate and further demands while keeping state

surveillance at bay (White 2002: 155; Singerman 2004). Informal networks embody the transformation of resources used to mobilize in the interest of certain groups and shape the way political and social dynamics work within formal structures (see e.g. Putnam 2000).

The case of the Istanbul Bar Association demonstrates the role of informal interactions and “organizational informality” in the metamorphosis of the formal rules and associational life in Turkey. Studying the process of politicization through the lens of resource mobilization better informs the tension between the dualistic definitions of formal and informal networking in what Putnam (2001) calls the “gray area” of social settings. By highlighting the concrete mechanisms by which otherwise marginal radical leftism becomes influential within an important professional organization, this study demonstrates the role of resource mobilization in the politicization of parts of civil society, as well as showing how relatively small and isolated parties may exert influence in highly centralized systems.

This paper is based on a fieldwork work carried out during the summer 2007. Our main sources are interviews with a dozen of CAG lawyers and archives of the Bar Association elections and CAG primaries results.⁰ The paper is organized as follows. The first part of the paper analyzes the way ÇAG serves as a mechanism for the politicization of the bar, and then examines several ways in which it facilitates the transformation of leftist political resources into influence within the Bar. The second part of the paper examines the limits of political capital inside the bar and the way professional logic restricts and alters their impact.

⁰ The interviewed lawyers include: Ali Saydı, Bahri Belen, Can Atalay, and Kemal Aytaç.

How leftism became influential in the Istanbul Bar: the Progressive Lawyers' Group

(ÇAG)

ÇAG is a “group” in the Istanbul Bar that even its own members often have difficulties defining. The majority of its rank and file has a background or continuing membership in leftist parties or associations. For older members, such affiliations range from the illegal Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist Leninist (TKP/ML, active especially in the 1970s) and the (legal) Workers Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, or TİP, particularly active in the 1960s and early 1970s) to radical leftist unions. For younger members, such affiliations include the Party of Freedom and Solidarity (*Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi*, ÖDP), the Labour Party (*Emek Partisi*, EMEP) and the pro-Kurdish parties. Some have been leaders, candidates, rank-and file in these parties, while others have simply been passive members or sympathizers.

ÇAG's main activity focuses on the Bar Association elections through the organization of primaries and then the campaign of the chosen candidates. In that sense ÇAG can be considered an electoral coalition. However, the group also continues activities between elections, mainly through thematic commissions on such topics as women lawyers, young lawyers, trainee lawyers, the code of criminal procedure, etc. It is an informal structure with formalized rules. It consists of an elected permanent body called the Secretariat, which plays a minor coordinating role. It also operates with a working committee, a finance committee, and the primaries committee that is in charge of the ÇAG primary elections. However, ÇAG has no membership status or any legal existence. Thus, this secretariat's election and, most important, the primaries, are open to every lawyer of Istanbul. Not an association or a trade-union, ÇAG can be considered a politically oriented loose platform within the Bar Association.

In the following sections we show how political affiliations are imported into the professional field of the Istanbul Bar through ÇAG. Three points are important: first, the process by which politicization occurred within the Bar Association, i.e. the way electoral informal coalitions have been formed around political positions; second, the way the ÇAG managed to bring together otherwise fragmented political forces within the framework of the bar, therefore providing the left with more influence inside the bar than outside; and, third, the way the ÇAG uses political resources (especially the activism of young lawyers) in order to wield special influence in the crucial moment of bar elections.

The formation of politicized electoral coalitions

The various political splits among legal professionals in the bar conveys the idea that the evolution of the Bar Association since the 1970s has been the result not of professional logic but political competition. It is more accurate, however, to see the bar as both a political organization and one serving particular professional needs. Founded in 1878, the Bar Association is a mass professional organization concerned with the material interests of lawyers. It provides professional facilities and mitigates work conditions such as social security rights. Nonetheless, in addition to social and professional matters, the association is also concerned with political issues, and since the 1970s the association has been involved in public debates that combined professional preoccupations with lending its voice to social and political issues, which include criticism of laws and defense of controversial figures. According to Jacques Lagroye's (2003) definition of "politicization," the Istanbul bar is thus highly politicized, and indeed regularly reframes professional issues in terms of general interest and democracy. This re-framing process began in the mid-1970s by activist lawyers who were part of the milieu of a politicized Turkish

society in the 1960s and 1970s. For example, they considered the status of a defense lawyer tied to the demand for a fair trial, something which then gives them a stake in promoting a democratic system.

The politicization of the Bar Association reflects a larger trend of political polarization in Turkish society between the left and the right that developed in the 1960s and 1970s in the context of the Cold War. The right-left political polarization in the Istanbul bar during the late 1970s manifested itself in the internal formation of informal groups along political lines: ÇAG on the left, and the Professional Unity Group (*Meslek Birlik Grubu*) on the right. This tendency for groups to form along political lines continued after the 1980 military coup in the 1984 Istanbul bar elections (the first after the coup), when informal and highly politicized groups in competition for leadership were formed. Each group represented a particular political tendency, with the minor exception of the *Kazancilar*, which revolved around its leader Turgut Kazan, who later gained autonomy from ÇAG and led a group that included right and left-wing lawyers (see below). The informal political rifts varied between right-wing “conservative” lawyers who included supporters of the parliamentary right-wing parties like the Motherland or True Path parties and took over the leadership of the bar between 1984 and 1988; groups close to political Islam; others close to nationalists; ÇAG, which represented the left; and, since the late 1990s, a Kemalist trend represented by several formerly rival groups. Therefore, the configuration of these informal structures inside the Istanbul bar intersects with the broader political context over time.

Political rifts regularly occur in these informal electoral coalitions. Later splinters within the informal group further demonstrate the extent of politicization. The main split inside ÇAG occurred with the autonomization of a Kemalist group in the late 1990s. In the 1996 bar

elections, the ÇAG list won and its leader Yücel Sayman became the president of the Istanbul Bar. ÇAG won the elections again in 1998 and Sayman was reelected; but during these years, tensions appeared regarding the position towards the Kurdish national movement and the war in the South East. These strains reached their pinnacle with the “post-modern” coup of February 1997, when a declaration of the general staff caused the fall of the Erbakan-Çiller coalition between the conservative (*Doğru Yol Partisi*), True Path Party) and the major Islamist party at this period, the *Refah Partisi* (Prosperity Party). Two blocs formed: those hostile to the 28 February coup, and those adopting a more hostile approach toward the Kurdish movement and favorable one to the intervention of the army. This polarization inside the ÇAG led to a split and the creation of a new group inside the bar by the second bloc, referred to as the “Kemalists” ÖI-ÇAG (*Önce İlke-ÇAGdas Avukatlar Grubu*, Progressive Lawyers’ Group- Principle First). The question of the possibility for lawyers with headscarves to take the oath crystallized this opposition insofar as the ÖI-ÇAG members were opposed to such an idea, while ÇAG did not. This rupture was clear with the 1998 elections and the establishment of a constitution of a list led by Müşür Kaya Canpolat stating, “Yücel Sayman was elected the last time with our votes. However, because of a marginal group surrounding him he made concessions from republican principles and the first of them, secularism.”⁰ Canpolat’s list included some famous ÇAG figures like Aydın Aybay, former candidate to the presidency of the Bar Association ; and Kani Eksioğlu, member of the CHP, who was in the steering committee since the Kazan era and the “best elected pre-candidate” for the steering committee in the ÇAG primaries in 1992, 1994 and 1996.

⁰ “Yücel Sayman daha önceki seçimde bizim oylarımızla seçildi. Ancak etrafını saran bir grup marjinalin etkisinde kalarak başta laiklik olmak cumhuriyet ilkelerinden tavizler verdi” (« During the previous elections, Yücel Sayman was elected with our votes. However, because of the influence of some marginal people, he did compromises over the principles of secularism, republic. »), Can Atakli, “İstanbul Barosu yeni yönetimini seçiyor Avukatların türban kavgası” (“The Istanbul Bar association chooses its new leadership, lawyers’ headscarf fight”), *Sabah*, 24th October 1998. <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/1998/10/24/y05.html>

Therefore political affiliations clearly are the dominant imperative along which informal groups that compete for the Bar elections have been formed.

The unification of the left within the framework of the Bar

One reason for the overrepresentation and dominance of leftists within the bar is due to the existence of ÇAG itself, which, in the framework of the Bar Association , unifies political forces that are otherwise fragmented. In the political field, the left has been highly fragmented at least since the 1970s, as evidenced in the profusion of leftist associations and unions in that decade. These included the reformulated *Türkiye İsci Partisi*, and the Turkey Revolutionary Workers' Unions' Confederation (*Türkiye Devrimci İsciler Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*, or DISK). Both due to ideological and personal reasons, by 1975 the left was fragmented between countless movements and organizations, although some were more prominent than others (i.e. *Devrimci Yol*, *Kurtulus*, *Halkın Kurtuluşu*, and the TKP).

However, ÇAG, although an informal group, managed to bring together in the framework of the Bar otherwise diverse political forces through three main groupings: members of the parliamentary Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, or CHP) , ; the United Lawyer Group (*Birlik Avukat Grubu*), which consisted of lawyers from pro-Soviet political organizations; and the Democratic Revolutionary Lawyers group ((*Demokrat Devrimci Avukatlar*, or DDA), which included lawyers from leftist movements that were critical of the USSR and instead inspired by Maoism or Guevarism⁰. In the same way, the Professional Unity Group (*Meslek Birlik Grubu*) united supporters of the “nationalist front” parties on the right, but these groups were less diverse since they were all parties with parliamentary representation.

⁰ However, since these groups were highly informal and centered around leaders, it is difficult to precisely determine who was.

This unification of the left was specific to the Bar, insofar as it contrasted with the existence of more diverse political trends in other professional organizations and unions such as the leftist Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK), the aforementioned Union of Chambers of Turkish Architects and Engineers (TMMOB), and public servants' associations such as the All Teachers' Unification and Solidarity Association (*Tüm Öğretmenler Birleşme ve Dayanışma Derneği*, or TÖB-DER). DISK's leadership was contested by supporters of the illegal pro-Soviet Turkey Communist Party and a coalition of other leftist organizations, while eight different leftist groups were competing for power within TÖB-DER.

More recently, in the same way, different political organizations are present in ÇAG, including CHP and ÖDP, which don't have any established strategy as a party to gain influence in the Bar Association. In fact, members of CHP are divided between ÇAG and ÖI-ÇAG while ÖDP, a result of the unification of several leftist organizations, has never been able to coordinate its activists inside the bar. On the other hand, activists of parties like EMEP, (the new) TKP, small organizations like SEH, and ones close to political organizations such as DHKP-C or *Halkevleri* behave in a very coordinated fashion.

The unification of political groupings within the Bar is due to different factors. First, the political balance inside the bar – specifically, the lack of a clear-cut political orientation and the coexistence of a strong right wing and a strong left wing inside the Bar -- made any fractures detrimental. The ÇAG first united against the *Meslek Birlik Grubu* in power in the mid-1970s. The 12th September 1980 coup meant tough repression on the leftist lawyers and so on the Istanbul bar. Orhan Apaydin, the Bar leader and ÇAG's first successful candidate in 1978, was arrested and condemned. Like other activists, leftist lawyers were tortured and died (TİHV 1996). During these hard times the differences between political groups became blurred and,

according to many different sources within the Bar Association, solidarity prevailed against repression. Leftist lawyers were not only concerned with the repression from the perspective of being victims themselves but also as professionals, because the numerous trials against activists made their professional commitment necessary. These trials also meant some danger for the lawyers condemned for their work, i.e. in 1981 Nihat Toktay, an Istanbul lawyer who spent 6 months in jail after his defence during the famous trial of Erdal Eren, an activist accused of the murder of a policeman. Eren was condemned to death and executed after the military coup despite the fact that he was under 18 and that the evidence against him was very weak.

Second, the electoral system within the Bar encouraged the unification of broad political camps because this was a “winner-take-all” system in which the president and delegates run on a single ticket. In order to coordinate different political forces, informal groups such as the ÇAG organize primaries to select the ÇAG’s list of candidates. In the primary elections the lists are not blocked, i.e. voters don’t vote for a predetermined list of candidates (like in the Bar Association elections) but for individuals. Therefore the ÇAG list resulting from the primaries is often a mix representing different leftist trends. Subsequently, ÇAG primary winners run on a single ticket in the elections for the Bar Association. The struggle between different tendencies inside the ÇAG is therefore settled through the primaries. These primaries, in the case of ÇAG, are open: every lawyer -- member of the ÇAG or not -- can participate and vote for the ÇAG candidate for the presidency of the bar, and the composition of lists of different bodies of the bar (i.e. steering committee, discipline committee, etc.). In each election, ÇAG develops a program for its vision of the Bar Association.

The successful use of political resources in Bar elections

However, the relative unification of the left by ÇAG is only one of the factors that makes the left influential in the Bar Association. The success of leftist lawyers in the Bar Association since the 1970s demonstrates that resources invested by leftist activists do not lose their value; instead, leftist activist lawyers transform the resource of their activism into political capital within the bar. This importation of political capital into the professional realm is particularly important in the electoral campaigns of the Bar Association and the ÇAG primaries, both crucial moments during which the board of the Bar is elected. However, unlike party elections, there is no use of mass media in the Bar elections; therefore, interactive activism is a crucial and valuable resource during electoral battles, as are particular kinds of knowledge, personal dedication and access to informal personal networks.

It is important to note that this importation of political activism into the Bar is mostly a byproduct of transformative activism of young activist students entering the legal workforce, even if, as we will develop later, older leftist lawyers also play a vital role in the coalition. During ÇAG's primaries and bar elections, ÇAG's politicized young lawyers, who belong to various leftist political parties and organizations, produce vital resources as party activists who form and navigate through networks and devote time to campaigning. For both primaries and bar elections there are two stages at which party activists play a role: the electoral campaign and the day of the vote. They organize meetings, use personal networks through informal discussions, and occupy space near the polling station, among other forms of mobilization. During the campaign, the duties of young activists include phone-banking to colleagues and friends in the profession, canvassing for the primary candidates of electoral list, as well as organizing networking opportunities, mixers and meetings.

The second stage of mobilization takes place on voting day, when they might transport supporters to the polls. For the primaries, it is difficult to analyze activism in terms of strongholds or areas where parties or groups have most influence insofar as lawyers are mobile on the voting day, in contrast with the Bar Association elections, which are all carried out in one place. At the primaries, ballot boxes are open all day in various courts in Istanbul, where every lawyer can vote. Lawyers are not assigned to one precise ballot box, but they can vote at the court of their selection. The number of lawyers who vote in areas outside their offices is extremely high. According to a ÇAG survey after the 2000 primaries, this proportion reached 40.8 percent. Therefore, the number of votes in ballot boxes is based on the importance of the court⁰. This means that in the primaries activists must be present in more than one place even if they were to focus on major polling station. One activist from a radical leftist group describes his activity on the day of the election in the following terms:

On the election day, you walk in the halls of the court if it is the primaries or the election place of the Bar Association elections. Here you meet people you know from your job or law school especially if you were an activist student. [At the bar elections] people ask you, ‘So tell me, who should I vote for?’ and I say, ‘This list.’ For the primaries you have to mobilize more politicized people for a complicated operation as you have to say, ‘You should vote for this one and this one, but maybe not this one.’ For the Bar Association elections, the difficulty is that the other lists have their own activists who do the same thing, so there is competition in strategic spots, and you have to command respect to have an

⁰ For example, during the 2000 primaries there were only 13 voters at the children court and 14 at Sultanbeyli court but 336 and 319 respectively at the ballot box number 1 and number 2 of Sultanahmet court or 225 at the Kadiköy civilian court.

influence on the vote. If you do not do this, you are sure to lose, but you cannot imagine the candidates doing this job.

The activism of younger party activist lawyers also gains value because of a generational factor. Young lawyers constitute the majority in the Bar Association; according to an unpublished survey, 19 percent are between the ages of 23 and 29 years old, 16 percent between 29 and 34, 16% between 35 and 40, 12 percent between 41 and 50, 11 percent between 50 and 60, and, finally, 8 percent over 60 years old.⁰ Indeed, the data shows that young lawyers are the electoral basis of ÇAG. These young activists have a similar age to the majority of voters and have personal ties with many of them from law school and trainee phases. The importance of young lawyers for ÇAG increases the importance of young activists able to mobilize their colleagues from the university.

Indeed, young lawyers are especially important for ÇAG, in contrast to other groups like Öİ-ÇAG. It is possible to deduce this from the structure of vote for ÇAG by analyzing the 2000 and 2002 elections in Figures 1 and 2, where ÇAG won in the former year but lost in the latter. The electoral system of the bar is organized by “lawyer identification number”. Each lawyer has an identification number that gets higher as the entry of the lawyer into the profession is more recent. For example, a senior lawyer’s number is about 6,000, while a junior lawyer’s number is 20,000. Therefore, the results of the ballot box provide a very precise set of data on the generational vote in the bar, with oldest generation lawyers making up the “first” ballot box.

Figure 1: Electoral outcome of 2000 Istanbul Bar Association elections

⁰ According to the statistics of the Turkey Bars Union: http://www.barobirlik.org.tr/tbb/avukat_sayilari/2001.aspx. Indeed, the rapid growth of the members of the Bar Association in Istanbul from about 4,000 members in the late 1970s to 22,720 members in 2007 can be attributed to the increase in the number of private universities that grant law diplomas accepted by the Turkish state since a few years, along with the emigration of lawyers from Anatolia to Istanbul.

	ÇAG/ Sayman	Öİ-ÇAG/ Kolcuoglu	Çağrı/ Mollaoglu	BAG/ B. Besler	YOG/ B. Baysal	Aggregate
"Senior" ballot boxes	24,25% (509)	36,97% (776)	4,43% (93)	22,01% (462)	11,72% (246)	100% (2099)
"Middle" ballot boxes	40,12% (1106)	30,79% (849)	10,37% (286)	11,17% (308)	7,22% (199)	100% (2757)
"Young" ballot boxes	50,75% (1684)	17,75% (589)	19,14% (635)	7,11% (236)	4,7% (156)	100% (3318)
Aggregate	40,36% (3299)	27,09% (2214)	12,41% (1014)	12,31% (1006)	7,35% (601)	100% (8174)

As can be seen on the tables, ÇAG's electoral basis is mainly composed of young lawyers -and this extremely different from Öİ-ÇAG. Because young lawyers are most likely to vote for ÇAG, we can presume that they are more likely to participate to ÇAG primaries, which makes the role of young activist lawyers crucial inside ÇAG (to mobilize during the primaries) and to support ÇAG during the bar elections.

Figure 2: Electoral outcome of the 2002 Istanbul Bar Association elections.

	ÇAG/Karagülle	Öİ-ÇAG/ Kolcuoglu	ÇAĞRI/Mollaoglu	Aggregate
"Senior" ballot boxes	23,09% (400)	71,25% (1234)	5,66% (98)	100% (1732)
"Middle" ballot boxes	46,40% (1064)	40,4% (927)	13,17% 302	100% (2293)
"Young" ballot boxes	45,71% (1413)	33,32% (1030)	20,96% (648)	100% (3091)

Aggregate	40,43% (2877)	44,84% (3191)	14,73% (1048)	100% (7116)
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Figure 2 shows that the political Islam oriented *Çağrı* coalition enjoyed large gains in support in 2002 as compared to 2000.⁰ *Çağrı*'s electoral structure also heavily relies on the young lawyers' votes insofar as they represent nearly two-thirds of the group's votes (62.3 percent in 2000 and 61.9 percent in 2002). The strong young lawyer basis of *Çağrı* is similar to ÇAG, but it is more balanced with the "young" ballot boxes constituting 51 percent of the aggregate vote in 2000 and 49.1 percent in 2002. ÇAG's defeat in 2002 can be explained by ÖI-ÇAG's capacity to gather Kemalist lawyers, especially older ones.

Indeed, ÖI-ÇAG shows an extremely different electoral structure in contrast with ÇAG and *Çağrı*. Older lawyers are evidently over-represented as they constitute 35 percent of ÖI-ÇAG voters in 2000 and 38.7 percent in 2002. Above all, the "first" ballot boxes in which senior lawyers vote are ÖI-ÇAG strongholds with 36.97 percent in 2000 and 71.25 percent in 2002, inferring a hegemony among older lawyers leading to its key success in 2002. The main difference between 2000 and 2002 is that in 2002 ÖI-ÇAG managed to gather other Kemalist lists who had run on their own in 2000, like those of Berra Besler's United Lawyers' Group (*Birlesik Avukatlar Grubu*, or BAG,) or Belkis Baysal's New Formation Group (*Yeni Oluşum Grubu*, or YOG), whose motto was "really attached to the principles of the rule of law and Kemalist-progressive, democratic-secular republic."⁰ This motto apparently gained significant favour among old lawyers in 2000, as in 1998⁰. Consequently, ÇAG owed its 2000 victory to the

⁰ This evolution continued during the 2004 and 2006 elections: in 2004 Çağrı got 19,3%. In 2006, its continuation, the *Hukukun Üstünlüğü Grubu* (Superiority of Law Group), got 18.8%. For these elections we do not have result by ballot boxes.

⁰ "Atatürkçü-çağdaş, demokratik-laik, cumhuriyete-hukuk devleti ilkelerine içtenlikle bağlı..." ("Deeply attached to the Kemalist-progressive, democratic-secularist, republic-nestaaat principles") quoted by *Evrensel*. "Barolarda seçim heyecanı" ("Election thrill int the Bar Associations"), *Evrensel*, 24/11/2000.

⁰ In 1998, ÇAG received 37.4%, of the vote, ÖI-ÇAG (Canpolat) 35%, *Çağrı* 14.9%, the *Yeni Oluşum Grubu* 10.9%. Like in 2000 and 2002, the ÖI-ÇAG and Yeni Oluşum lists had their best results among the first ballot

division of the Kemalists among three lists. However, in 2002, a clear majority of the senior lawyers who joined the bar before its foundation (during the 1960s and early 1970s) and had previously supported the ÇAG began to support the Kemalist ÖI-ÇAG. In the 2004 elections, ÇAG again lost against ÖI-CAG with 31.1 percent, and in 2006 with 32.3 percent. The autonomization of the Kemalists from ÇAG, mobilizing first and foremost among older lawyers, means that the vote of young lawyers is even more crucial for ÇAG. This young electoral base is also most likely to be mobilized for the primaries. This further contributes to assigning young party activists a crucial role in internal campaigns.

II. Enduring professionalism: limits on the use of political resources

However, it would be misleading to assert that the Bar elections only follow a political logic; in fact, the importation of political resources into the bar is limited in particular ways that, perhaps counter intuitively, may serve ultimately to ensure the continued influence of the left. More precisely, leftist influence is refracted or muted in three fashions. First, some groups form in ÇAG along non-political lines, demonstrating the possibility of the autonomization of professional from political logic, even in electoral matters. Second, even if leftist activists are crucial in gaining influence in the electoral process, candidates themselves are not leftist activists. On the contrary, being a candidate – even a ÇAG candidate -- involves “eligibility,” for which open activism is not enough and may even be counter-productive. This eligibility comes first and foremost from professional achievements. Finally, despite the pervasiveness of political logic within ÇAG , political views are usually not expressed and displayed as such.

Some groups have formed in ÇAG that are not based on leftist or political affiliation, indicating that sometimes other interests may take precedence. Turgut Kazan, a former member

of the Workers Party of Turkey from Eskisehir, was imprisoned after the 1971 “coup by memorandum,” won the Bar elections as a ÇAG candidate both in 1988 and 1990. As an activist, he became the voice of the bar concerning legislative reforms and social issues. However, he also engaged in more specifically professional interests of the lawyers. In particular, he organized social representation for lawyers by founding the housing cooperative AvKon and a holiday residence in Bodrum, known as AvTa. AvKon and AvTa had their own administration council, external to the bar but presided over by Kazan himself. Tensions, particularly about the management of these structures, developed between Kazan and some of his followers (*Kazancilar*) and other ÇAG activists, which became public in the form of a critical letter about the steering committee of the bar. Subsequently, seven members of the steering committee resigned, and Kazan ran independently from the ÇAG list of candidates. Nonetheless, Kazan won the 1992 and 1994 bar elections. In 1994 his list was even open to right-wing lawyers, showing the full autonomization of this group from leftist political and party logic. Thus, Kazan’s autonomy and success is correlated with the accumulation of resources through his activities with AvKon and AvTA, which allowed him to redistribute resources and constitute his informal group. The *Kazancilar* benefited from the prestige, network and initiatives of its leader, and his position as president of the bar. However, since these resources were related to its leadership figure, with the retirement of Kazan the group was unable to sustain itself without its icon and disappeared.

The second important limit to the pervasiveness of political logic in the Bar is the resources necessary to become “eligible” and nominated as a candidate, even within a group such as ÇAG. ÇAG indeed works as an electoral coalition combining both transferred activist resources and professional prestige. The profile of ÇAG candidates for the leadership of the Bar

contrast both with the ÇAG's youthful electoral base and with the young activist lawyers who play a crucial role in mobilizing this base. When asked who within ÇAG is selected as a

candidate, an interviewee responds, “To be leftist is not enough.”⁰ Indeed, ÇAG candidates must be much more than partisan bodies. They must be considered “great lawyers,” a characterization of professional prestige that entails success in “big” trials, which include political, criminal and commercial cases, and being published in law reviews. In addition to professional accomplishments, successful candidates must display certain personal characteristics such as calmness, eloquence, and moderation in the way they express their opinions. The respected lawyer’s professional regard and character are evinced in spaces like her or his office and in personal interactions. To the uninformed eye, this kind of respected lawyer eligible as a candidate is not readily identifiable as a leftist. Clues are often as discreet as an absence of portraits of Mustafa Kemal or stylized prayers in Arabic text. Thus, professional space, such as an office, is in fact an informal representation of candidates.

Useful indigenous categories enable us to better illustrate the structuring of lawyers’ roles in ÇAG. For the older lawyers, the term *duayen* (from the French “doyen,” which indicates senior rank, age, or profession) designates a respected elder who has accumulated professional prestige and reputation that enables him to gain broad-based support. ÇAG *duayens* are left-wing lawyers who have proven their dedication to leftist causes in the past but are rarely still members of a political parties or activists. They are potential candidates for the Bar leadership. The complementary role is that of *hammal* (water carriers). This term refers to lower-class workers who are often involved in manual and hard labor. In the Turkish vernacular, this word is used in

expressions like “doing the *hammal* part of the work,”⁰ which means to do the difficult and behind the scenes part of the job. The term implies a back-stage position involving young lawyers. These role-defining categories help us visualize the formalization of campaigning inside an electoral coalition with no official members: *hammals*, i.e. young political activists, are invariably at the service of the *duayen* who form the bulk of eligible candidates.

This social hierarchy at play within ÇAG is in some ways quite contradictory to the leftist, worker-centric discourse espoused by many of the associations and parties the ÇAG membership supports; nonetheless, this same hierarchy and, sometimes, outright discrimination, may ironically be one of the reasons leftists can continue to exert influence, explicitly because their political positions are mediated through a more generally acceptable structure of elite leadership.

An example of this sort of tense dynamic was evidenced in the ÇAG primary elections of 2006, when a lawyer from Gaziosmanpaşa, Kemal Aytaç, ran uncontested up until the last days of the campaign. Aytaç had only been a lawyer since 1986 and therefore was not a *duayen*. Although he was not officially a member of any party, he closely affiliated with political organizations much more than traditional ÇAG leaders. Indeed, as a mayoral candidate in 2004 for Gaziosmanpaşa, - a poor district of Istanbul which grew exponentially because of urban-rural migration - he gained endorsements from several leftist parties and the Kurdish movement. Moreover, his background was different from other prestigious lawyers as he came from a small village near Amasya where his father was a leftist teacher. He worked in a bakery, and after secondary school he left Amasya for Istanbul to become a leftist student activist. Upon attaining his law degree, he settled in Gaziosmanpasa and specialized in commercial cases. He subsequently prospered as the lawyer of domestic electric appliance companies and continued to

be active inside and outside the bar. Despite his commitment to leftist politics and ÇAG as well as his success as a young lawyer, this was not enough when he faced *duayen* Yücel Sayman, who was by then the former president of the bar, having served in that capacity from 1996 to 2002. The prospect of facing a *duayen* candidate was sufficient for many of his own supporters to urge him to withdraw. Thus, when a “good neighborhood lawyer” from Gaziosmanpaşa was pitted against a “great, reputable lawyer” of Istanbul, it became clear that prestige was a sufficiently powerful resource for ÇAG to shift to the latter’s favor. Evidently, Aytaç too realized this, as he left Gaziosmanpaşa to settle in Mis Sokak near Taksim Square in the heart of the more prestigious area of Beyoğlu in search for recognition and legitimacy through status and reputation. However, in spite of his relentless efforts and his position in the steering committee from a past ÇAG victory in the bar, he ultimately withdrew to clear the way for Sayman (who, nonetheless, lost the race).

It is possible, however, for former *hammals* to become *duayens* if they are patient, and this social fluidity is part of what makes the hierarchy tolerable for younger leftist activists. The case of Bahri Belen, who had embraced radical leftist politics early in his career, has thus been an important model. In the 1970s, he was a young radical lawyer, or *hammal*, and a member of the Democratic Revolutionary Lawyers group. He came into close contact with leftist groups when he was in high school in Burdur in southern Turkey, and went on to study law in 1970 at the Istanbul University, a stronghold of leftist student movements since 1968. As a student activist, he became a supporter of Communist Party of Turkey, and upon graduating in practicing the law in 1976, he worked as a volunteer for several organizations including unions like Maden-İs, Bank-Sen; professional associations such as TÖB-DER and TMMOB. Belen eventually joined ÇAG at the 1978 elections. After ÇAG’s victory that year, he joined the Human Rights

and Thinking Freedom commissions of the bar. In the following years he transformed from a typical young leftist activist lawyer of the 1970s to a respected *duayen*, who led a flourishing practice and became a candidate in the 2002 primaries. Despite his past activism, he no longer belonged to political organization, further adding to the importance of a functional autonomy and informality of candidates and leaders.

Moreover, an at-least implicit commitment to the left still serves as an important resource for the *duayen*. For example, when Sadık Akıncılar was included in the ÇAG's list for the steering committee to the Bar Association he was both not very representative of the young Democratic Revolutionary Lawyers (DDA) activists nor was he an official "member" of the group. However, he could be seen as a "big brother" to other DDA activists as he began his career in 1971, nearly ten years before the organization formed. His credibility stemmed from his prestige as the lawyer of the famous radical leftist student leader Mahir Cayan, founder of the Turkey's People's Liberation Party-Front (*Türkiye Halkın Kurtulus Partisi-Cephe*, or THKP-C), which is famous for the kidnapping and the execution of the Israeli ambassador in 1971 (see e.g. Landau 1974). Thus, successful ÇAG candidates have informal connections with leftists and a formal detachment from membership to such organizations in order to maximize the mobility of their resources and ability to be accepted by a wide range of voters inside the Bar Association.

It is clear, then, that the articulation between party activism and professional commitment in the Bar Association is mediated by the functions and relations between *hammal* and *duayen*. Party activists do not exert an explicit or official influence over candidates, and the logic of party politics is hazier since *hammals* only informally support *duayen* candidates, who are not members of their various leftist parties. For example, EMEP traditionally supported an informal group of *duayens* called the "Central Bureau" that exists as a network of personal ties between

duayens who share a common history, and specifically the figure of Ali Saydı. Saydı studied law at the age of 16 from the University of Istanbul where he became particularly politicized in 1975. He participated in Patriotic Revolutionary Youth (*Yurtsever Devrimci Gençliği*), which was the youth organization of People's Liberation (*Halkın Kurtuluşu*) and one of the main leftist movements of the late 1970s that had a pro-Albanian political alignment. He described his life from 1977 to 1980 as a “professional revolutionary’s” life. During these years, even as a lawyer he had no activities in the Bar Association. In 1980, he propelled his career with political trials of activists from TDKP, founded by *Halkın Kurtuluşu* but formally split from it in February 1980, as well as trials involving *Devrimci Yol*. By the late 1980s, he began to take on fewer political trials and, by the 1990s, he altogether halted his involvement in political cases and headed his own practice in Kadıköy. In 1998, he became the steering committee pre-candidate in ÇAG’s primaries with the support of EMEP after Tüzel’s withdrawal. In this perspective, Saydı was a good candidate inasmuch as he was close to the party for a long-time, but not an official member, opening him up to a broader base of support. By the late 1990s, Saydı had also become a respected *duayen*. In fact, he won and became member of the steering committee of president Sayman between 1998 and 2000 when he became general secretary of the Bar Association. Saydı was also on ÇAG’s defeated list in 2002 and candidate for presidency in 2004, but lost to Belen who was a few years older than Saydı with a similar course.

In a situation where neither prestige alone nor mere commitment is sufficient to win in the bar elections. Without the young *hammal* activist lawyer who belongs to the peripheral leftist parties, there would be little to no resources for activism, networking, and mobilization. Similarly, without the respected elderly *duayen* lawyer who is seen as “post-partisan” professional veteran, leftist politics would not resonate to a larger audience in the bar. Therefore,

the informal relations between *hammals* and *duayens* are functional and interdependent. The commitment between the two separate categories is informal and canny. Thus, while the *hammals* are the foot soldiers of electoral successes of *duayen* figures inside the bar, the usefulness of the partnership between the two actors hinges upon the autonomy of *duayens* from party membership while maintaining a pervasive loyalty to the left. Even the contributions to ÇAG of young activists who belong to various leftist political parties are paradoxically both autonomous and representative of their party affiliation. Despite the party affiliations of activists, political parties continue to be unable to monopolize ÇAG's activities and internal politics. These resources maintain their value because they are not used directly for a specific party, but rather to informally serve professionally recognized and prestigious lawyers, who are not members themselves. On the contrary, established party affiliations would jeopardize a large coalition of supporters and electoral successes in ÇAG primaries and bar elections. So while the young lawyers and party activists provide valuable resources of mobilization, a candidate must not hold party positions or ties to partisan organizations in order to maintain a professional esteem and a broad appeal. Therefore, the ÇAG's success in elections is contingent on the very limitation of political logic, and on the recognition of the professional hierarchy inside the profession. The bar therefore provides capital for leftist parties to communicate their positions to broader audience than their core constituency, but these positions are not framed explicitly as related to the left. This helps us understand why positions taken by the bar board when ÇAG is in power may be leftist in orientation but not explicitly leftist nor linked to a party in particular.

Conclusion

Involvement in the Istanbul Bar Association has been a path by which leftist parties have to some degree broken their marginalization and gained public audience through discreet access to the bar's leadership. In order to do this, these parties and groups comply with professional logic even if it contributes to reproducing social hierarchy among lawyers by strengthening the position of *duayen*. The informal electoral coalition ÇAG has thus combined resources of transferred activism and prestige, or political and professional logics respectively, to produce political opportunities inside associational life.

This interconnectedness is twofold: first, radical parties and organizations are politically and institutionally marginal – some of them being illegal. However, they produce activism and know-how, a resource that can be useful in other social fields, and above all in spheres where elections are held. Second, radical parties and organizations are places where networks are created that again can be mobilized in other social fields. Thus, the way ÇAG works corroborates the role of informal networking in shaping the “rules of the game” in the formal associational life. The impact of informal networking on associational life conveys the porous relations between seemingly isolated societal actors. Increasingly, the lines between social and political networking have been blurred, and so has the conceptualization of informal and formal networking. The analysis of leftist activism inside the Bar Association serves an important case to understand these boundaries between networks, organizations, and parties through the analysis of resource transformation and mobilization.

Being Elected as an Independent in a Party Environment⁰

Ilter Turan

Since the transition to political competition between 1946 and 1950, Turkish politics have been predominantly party politics. The number of parties that have taken part in the elections has varied over time, as has the intensity of their competition. Such variation, however, has not affected the basic characteristics of parliamentary life in which political parties rather than individual members of parliament have determined political outcomes. In an environment characterized by party politics, anomalous as it may seem, independent candidates and deputies have never been lacking. In all elections since May 14, 1950, independents have stood as candidates in many electoral districts with varying success. As can be seen from Table I, in six of the fifteen elections held during the 1950-2007 period (the period included in this study), no

independent has been elected to the Turkish Grand National Assembly. In two elections, on the

other hand, their numbers have exceeded ten.⁰

[TABLE I ABOUT HERE]

The presence of independent candidates in elections may not necessarily be an interesting political phenomenon in and of itself. There are always people interested in popularizing causes through elections, adventurers, pranksters, persons with exaggerated perceptions of self and occasional nuts who offer their candidacy. The financial requirements to get on the ballot are

moderate⁰ and do not constitute a sufficient disincentive for such persons to shy away from putting their names on. What makes the Turkish case interesting to study is that independent candidates not only receive a noticeable percentage of the general vote but, also, some manage to

get elected.⁰ Since the phenomenon persists and appears to have gained renewed relevance in the elections of 2007, it is important to better understand the emergence of independent candidates and the conditions under which they succeed.

Running as an independent candidate may appear to constitute an act of courage in an environment in which political parties prevail in electoral politics. Campaigning is time consuming and costly which, one might conclude, would direct the serious independent candidate to engage in a careful calculus of his/her resources and chances of winning. Only after the chances of winning are judged to be promising is the decision to run as an independent made.

Three types of considerations are likely to enter this calculation. First, legal constraints need to be evaluated. Second, a judgment about the prevailing political conditions and whether they lend support to the electoral aspirations of the independent candidate needs to be made. Third, the personal, social, political and financial resources available to the candidate need to be reviewed. A comprehensive study of this process would necessitate such research strategies as participant observation and extensive interviews with successful candidates. The aims of this study are more modest. I try to identify some of the factors that account for the success of independent candidates using mainly unobtrusive data. Information deriving from interviews with a limited number of independently elected deputies will also be brought in. I begin by examining the legal framework within which the decision to run as an independent is made.

Electoral Laws and Independents

The Turkish electoral system may claim a record among democratic societies for having gone through changes before (or after) every election. Twice the changes have been fundamental for understandable reasons. During the initial transition to competitive politics (1946-1950)

significant changes were introduced in the electoral system since the existing system, having been designed to serve the interests of the single party system, did not contain sufficient provisions for free, fair and direct elections. The system underwent another major transformation after the 1960 military intervention with the introduction of proportional representation. The

change was motivated by the fact that the simple plurality/multi-member district⁰ system was wholly insensitive to major changes in electoral preferences, giving the winners an unusually high percentage of parliamentary seats.

The first law under which competitive elections were held in 1946⁰ allowed voters to use pre-printed ballots bearing the names of candidates, typed or hand-written lists which they could bring with them, or to write the names of candidates of their preference on a blank sheet furnished by the election board (article 24). This practice rendered the counting of votes an extremely tedious process but also provided opportunities for individual candidates to obtain votes. By concentrating on individual voters, independent candidates could have their name inserted into the ballots. The election board of the electoral district would rank candidates according to the number of votes they had obtained with the number of seats the district was entitled to constituting the cut-off point (articles 24 and 29). This system allowed seven

independents, including three from Istanbul, to be elected as independents in the 1946 elections.⁰

A minor change in 1948 made it possible for parties and independents to employ symbols,⁰ a change that would render the act of voting simpler for many citizens in a society in which the rate of literacy was not particularly high at the time. Further changes came in 1950 with the

enactment of a more comprehensive Law on the Election of Deputies,⁰ but none seemed to be in areas that would closely affect the election of independent deputies. Article 35 introduced an innovation that gave fifty voters the right to nominate a candidate provided that the notarized

consent of the candidate was also secured,⁰ and perhaps more significantly, parties and independent candidates were allowed to distribute ballots printed on differently colored papers (article 88). Otherwise, voters were free to cross off or write in names on printed ballots or write the names of their preferred candidates on a piece of paper (article 89).

Shortly after the elections of 1954, changes that rendered running as an independent more

difficult were introduced. An amendment to the existing law⁰ prohibited those who had wanted to become a candidate on a party ticket but had been turned down by the party to run as an independent (Article 35). This change was part of a bigger package in which candidates were no longer allowed to run simultaneously on the ticket of two parties or on the ticket of one party and as an independent (same article). Another poorly worded change barred the use of typed or printed ballots comprised entirely of independent candidates or a combination of party and independent candidates (article 109). These changes appeared to aim at shaping political competition as an inter-party race. No independents were elected in 1957.

The year 1961 marked the introduction of fundamental changes in the Turkish electoral system. The membership of the Grand National Assembly was fixed at 450 in contrast to the earlier practice of allocating one seat to each 40 000 citizens such that the total had reached 610 in 1957. Since the number of votes that an independent needed to get elected would go up, one would expect that getting elected as an independent would become more difficult. The 1961 Law

on the Election of Deputies⁰ does not refer to independent candidates until the article on the ballots. Article 23 says that a sheet of paper on which the name of an independent candidate is either printed or written is admissible while Article 28 renders invalid a ballot on which the name of more than one independent candidate is written.

Another major change was the adoption of the principle of proportional representation to replace the winner –take-all system of the pre-1960 period. In the new system, whether an independent is elected is determined by his/her rank in the ordering of votes. First, the number of votes received by each party in an electoral district is divided by 1, 2, 3 through to **n** where **n** is

the number of deputies to be elected from that district.⁰ The quotients are then rank ordered from the highest value to the lowest. The vote received by each independent candidate is also included

in the rank ordering. Those in the rank ordering up to n are declared winners.⁰ Among n winners, each party gets the number of seats corresponding to the frequency with which its name appears. If there are independents among n , they are also declared winners.

In its initial form, the law contained no minimum percentage clause but focused only on the rank, which had to be n or lower. Under such provisions, if the vote is dispersed among many parties or the rate of participation in the election is low, we might expect higher success rates for independents. Table I lends partial support to this expectation. During the 1961-1977 period, the two elections at which the independents achieved greatest success (1969 and 1973) were at the same time those with lowest levels of participation and high levels of fractionalization. The relationship is not supported, however, for the 1981-2001 period. During 1961-1977, there were no electoral thresholds. The absence of such impediments meant that lower levels of participation or wider dispersal of the vote among parties opened the way for independents to be more successful. The introduction of a district level threshold in 1983 (there was already a national electoral threshold of 10 percent), on the other hand, rendered it more difficult than before for independent candidates to be successful. After the removal of the district level thresholds by a decision of the Constitutional Court in 1995, independents reappeared in the parliament in 1999 and 2002 elections, confirming our expectation. One might have also speculated that the chances of independents had received a boost by the enlargement of the membership of the Grand National Assembly from 400 in 1983 to 450 in 1987 and to 550 in 1995, since, as numbers increased, the votes a candidate needs to get elected would be reduced, but this is not supported by the available evidence.

In contrast to the district level thresholds, the national threshold of ten percent appeared initially not to affect decisions regarding becoming an independent candidate. This was reversed

in July 2007, however, by the Democratic Society Party (DTP) that judged its chances of achieving the national electoral threshold was low but that it did possess sufficiently strong local support in some districts such that it could put up the candidates of the party as independents. The idea was that those who strongly identified with the party could be instructed to vote for the party's so called "independent" candidate. The plan worked and nineteen independents that were known in fact to be DTP candidates were elected to the parliament. Soon after their election, they reassumed their party identification and constituted a party group in parliament. The same tactic was adopted by the Great Unity Party (BBP) to get its president elected as a deputy from Sivas where he had a solid group of followers. The Freedom and Democracy Party (ÖDP) also employed the same method by forging a coalition with the DTP in Istanbul I to place its leader in the Grand National Assembly.

As it became apparent that the DTP had decided to run its candidates as independents, the Law on the Election of Deputies was changed in October 2006 with the clear intention of making the act of voting for independents difficult for voters. The change required that the names of all parties and candidates appear on the same ballot with independents placed below party lists. It was thought that the illiterate and semi-literate peasant and squatter settlement voters, mainly Kurdish in origin, would get confused and make mistakes, thereby invalidating their votes. The DTP, to counter the negative effects, apparently used rectangular cartons cut in such a way that

when placed at the lower right corner of the ballot, it showed where to stamp. Strings with knots

where knots showed where to stamp the ballot were also used.⁰

Electoral laws are but one of the many factors that influence the electoral chances of independent candidates. As may have become evident, however, they constitute a part of an environment in which these are taken into consideration as part of a broader evaluation process in which other factors weigh heavily. Another important element of that environment is the political conditions prevailing at the time of the elections.

Prevailing Political Conditions

The decision to run as an independent necessitates an evaluation of the prevailing political conditions and the political environment both at the national and the electoral district level. It may be useful to separate national and local conditions.

National Political Conditions and Environment

National political conditions include, among others, such factors as whether an election is a transition from military rule, the characteristics of the party system, i.e. how many parties are to take part in the elections, the expected dispersal of the vote among them and the degree of political polarization that characterizes interparty relations. Beginning with the elections of transition from military rule to competition, it might be expected that political parties, as larger and more coherent organizations that have a stake in the restoration of democratic life, are likely to be perceived as more effective instruments than independents for the revitalization of competitive politics. Table I shows that in the two elections of transition, 1961 and 1983, no independents were elected. But while the independents' share of the national vote in the 1961 elections, was in fact the lowest for the 1961-1977 period, it is not so for the 1983-2007 period.

Furthermore, the 1973 elections -- which represented an exit from the indirect military intervention of 1971 -- produced six independent deputies. Therefore, exit elections from military rule seem not to be a condition that necessarily operates against independents.

Turkish laws are designed to discourage too many parties from entering elections. In addition to the 10 percent national electoral threshold, laws pertaining to political parties developed by military governments include rather stringent provisions for parties to be able to

participate in national and local elections.⁰ The presence of a comprehensive national party organization is required. Despite the existence of such a legally adverse environment intended to discourage them, centrifugal forces promoting an abundance of parties competing in national elections are not lacking. An increase in the number in the number of parties taking part in the elections may be taken to indicate the fragmentation of the party system. It might be hypothesized that growing fragmentation, as indicated by an increase in the number of parties contesting national elections, would be accompanied by an increase in the number of independents for two reasons. First, the dispersal of the vote is likely to lower the minimum number of votes needed to get elected is likely to go down, encouraging the emergence of independent aspirants. Second, some political parties that do not perceive their chances for placing representatives in the parliament to be good may prefer to back independent candidates who they hope will affiliate with the party after elections. The data, however, does not justify these expectations. Table I giving both the n of independents that won in a particular election, the n of parties that took part in those elections, and the index of fractionalization for each election is at variance with the hypothesized relationship. A different but related argument would be that polarization of parties would reduce election opportunities for independents since politics in a polarized situation would be perceived in a highly partisan light. While a direct measure of polarization is lacking, the index of fractionalization that we may employ as a surrogate does not support the argument.

[TABLE II ABOUT HERE]

These observations lead us to two different lines of possible explanations. First, the success of independent candidates may be a function of personal or district related idiographic factors. While it is natural that idiographic factors are present in each individual case, they largely remain

outside focus of this article. Second, there may be different underlying factors than what we have looked at so far that may account for the success of independents. Further, these may change over time. Table II shows that while 27 provinces have elected independents since 1950, those that have elected independents more than once or more than one independent during the same

election are concentrated in Turkey's East-Southeast.⁰ Their election in greater numbers has occurred in two different periods, 1969-1977 and 1997-2007. During the first period, a peak was reached in 1969 and then a decline commenced. In the latter period, the numbers have increased in successive elections. The 1969 election marked the beginning of a major realignment in the party system. As the new configuration of parties became more identifiable, the n of independents declined. In the latter period, the dissatisfaction with the existing parties characterized by their failure to respond to local aspirations appears to have led to a breakdown

of the party system and an accompanying sense of distinctiveness that manifests itself as support

for independents who are representatives of an ethno-regional political tendency and party.⁰

Regional and Local Political Conditions and Environment

The evaluation process that one expected to precede the decision to run as an independent candidate necessitates an evaluation of the local, i.e. district based conditions as well. Some of these, such as the size of the electoral district and its level of socio-economic development, are easy to identify and measure, while others like the political preferences of the local political establishment may be more difficult to examine.

Electoral District: Size

National parliamentary elections are races between political parties. Local factors such as the ability of a particular person to generate electoral support for the party are naturally taken into consideration in designating candidates. It may be hypothesized that in large, urban districts where a large number of candidates are running on the same party ticket, the appeal of the political party takes precedence over the qualities of individual candidates, whereas in smaller, more remote districts, the personal virtues, visibility, appeal and local connections of a candidate would carry greater importance in determining electoral chances. Pursuing this logic, it may be argued that independent candidates would have a better chance of getting elected in small sized electoral districts.

As already explained, Turkey's electoral districts for parliamentary elections correspond to the administrative division of the country into provinces which vary both in geographic size and population. They are multi-member districts that have sent as few as two and as many as more

than sixty deputies to the parliament. After 1995, a measure was introduced to break down oversized districts into smaller units. Accordingly, provinces that were entitled to eighteen or fewer deputies would continue to constitute a single electoral district. Those entitled from 19 to

35 deputies would be divided into two and those with more than 36 deputies into three.⁰ This led to the division of Istanbul into three, and Ankara and Izmir into two relatively large electoral districts. Otherwise the principle of province cum electoral district has continued.

Table II describes the electoral districts from which independents have been elected over

time. It appears that independents have been elected from 28 districts among a total of 85.⁰ Fourteen districts have produced only once, the remaining 14 twice or more. An initial examination of the data shows that the median district size for the 2007 elections for the entire country is nine, but for those provinces that have produced independents it is five, confirming the expectation that more of the districts from which independents have been elected are in fact smaller districts. That smaller-sized districts are fertile grounds for independently elected deputies is lent further support if we look at the districts that have elected independent deputies several times. Table II shows that those provinces that elected independent deputies during the 1950-2002 period more than three times were all small districts electing three to six deputies.

Furthermore, many of the districts that have elected independents in the past have also elected

independent deputies in 2007.⁰

Since 1961, it has also been the case that independent candidates have needed fewer votes in smaller provinces than in larger provinces to get elected, deriving from the method of allocating

parliamentary seats to electoral districts.⁰ This numerical modesty appears to have helped the election of independent deputies. Examining how many votes are needed to elect a representative, it is clear that in districts in which the independents won seats between 1950-2007, both the mode and the median were 50000<votes/deputy<60000 whereas the same figure for the entire country is 60000<votes/deputy<70000. If the number of votes it takes for a deputy to get elected is rank ordered with 1 going to the lowest, the picture becomes even clearer. In 2007, the arithmetic mean of the ranks (with the exception of Istanbul) was 21.1, much below the national average of 40.5. Even the inclusion of Istanbul only raises the figure to 25.1 but does not change it. The corresponding numbers calculated only for independent deputies are 30.3 and 31.1 respectively, still considerably below the overall average. It is clear that smaller districts present greater electoral opportunities for independent candidates to get elected. Yet, since not all small districts necessarily produce independent deputies, other variable need be examined.

District and Regional Characteristics

I have already noted that a significant number of deputies elected as independents come from the Southeastern-Eastern provinces (see also Table III). These provinces are among the economically less developed and ethnically more heterogeneous provinces in the country. It may be useful to see where those provinces that produce independents stand in comparison to the rest of the country. The Turkish State Planning Organization periodically rank orders Turkish provinces using a large number of variables. Although the ranks of provinces may change over time, there has been no fundamental change in the rank ordering of provinces during the recent years. The socio-economically most developed province is ranked 1 and the least 81. If we take

the most recently available 2003 rankings of provinces,⁰ southeastern provinces in which independents won elections achieve an average ranking of 77.8, significantly below the national average of 40.5, to be followed by the eastern region with an average of 75.0. In the remainder of the country where independents were elected the figures are 53, 37 and 1. Other indicators yield comparable results. For example, in the 2007 elections, only six of the provinces (including Istanbul) electing independents had a better ranking than the median 41, while 18 had lower rankings. Similarly, in identifying the provinces that should receive priority in economic

development, the State Planning Organization named all of the provinces from which

independents were elected except Istanbul as priority provinces for development.⁰

[TABLE III ABOUT HERE]

The trend is quite clear. Electoral districts in eastern and southeastern Turkey that do not have the same level of socio-economic development as other parts of the country tend to produce more independent deputies than other provinces. Why is this the case? It may be argued those districts that are relatively well advanced in socio-economic terms are likely to be more integrated to national economic and political life, including linking up with national political parties to express themselves politically. In such districts, social relations may be less person and more institution and rule based. There may also be more money available for political activity producing a proclivity to prefer more costly campaign techniques which parties can finance more easily. These considerations, taken together, might suggest more professional and less personal campaign techniques associated with political parties are likely to be employed in these districts. Some evidence from personal surveys of voters and deputies from socio-economically disadvantaged provinces indicate that the former are more likely to expect personal services

while the latter recognize that it is important to cater to constituents.⁰ This constituency service orientation provides the independent deputy with a direct channel of reaching the voters and maintaining their allegiance. As a result, however, s/he is usually inundated with visitors seeking favors since they feel they have sent someone to the capital that is responsible for taking care of their needs. This linkage is not institutional but highly personal.

Small, economically less well off districts in the east and southeast regions of the country tend more persistently to produce independent deputies. I must also note that there are some districts that have produced independents one time only and not again. Why do some districts deviate from partisan politics and produce an independent deputy on occasion? Are there other forces at work in addition to the size and the socio-economic characteristics of the electoral district. The one time only districts do not display a consistent pattern and there may well be incidental reasons for the election of an independent. Looking at the political conditions in the district may give us some understanding of the phenomenon.

Political Conditions in the District⁰

I have relied so far on unobstrusive data. Such data is not useful in identifying the prevalent political conditions in a district at a given election. I was able to conduct a limited number of interviews with deputies that had been elected as independents . These provide some understanding how local political conditions may produce an independent deputy. Here is one story of a person who had earlier been a deputy for a political party:

When I had disagreements with my party's leadership, I had decided to quit politics. But the leading politically important people in my district were disillusioned with the candidates the major parties considered. I was popular. They came to me and insisted that I run as an independent. After some hesitation, I acceded. They helped me organize my campaign and helped me with funding. My district is small and I ran an active campaign. I won the elections. Had I run as an independent this time, I would not have been able to win because the people who backed me up thought that this time the government party should be supported.”

Disaffection with existing political parties and candidates appears to be an important political condition that promotes the emergence of independent candidates and eventually deputies. Here is the account of a successful candidate from one of the three electoral districts from Istanbul:

The idea that independent social democratic candidates could be offered in major cities was developed and popularized by some academics. These

people were inexperienced and were confident that this strategy would work without cooperating with other parties such as the DTP. Suddenly, hundreds of web sites were opened pushing the candidacy of this or that person. But in the end, it proved impossible to agree on a candidate even in Istanbul II where the movement was launched. One person that was approached declined on account of other responsibilities and reluctance to

rely on Kurdish support from the DTP. When Baskin Oran's⁰ candidacy was eventually agreed on, the DTP was not consulted, leading them to offer their own candidate. They both lost. My party, while not wanting to pursue the Kurdish line of the DTP, decided that tactical cooperation with it was possible. The idea was that there was no socialist party in the parliament and we should be there. The DTP did not demand anything from us. They view us as a buffer. They helped us with their organization

which enabled me to reach potential voters that we would have never been

able to reach through our own organization...⁰

This account suggests that the support of voters unhappy with the existing parties and those coming from a party that has no chance of achieving the 10 percent electoral threshold , i.e. unique and district related political conditions, may come together to produce an independent candidate. Conversely, misjudgment of conditions may lead to failure as they did in Istanbul II. More broadly, there is in each district a political context that affects the chances of an independent candidate getting elected.

Resources Available to the Candidate

Resources available to a candidate constitute the last factor that contributes to the election of an independent candidate. Such resources include both personal assets of the person and socio-political assets such as family prominence, primordial connections, earlier political experience, accumulated good will among the electorate, professional experience that can be used both in the campaign and in the discharge of duties as a deputy. Understandably, personal resources count more heavily in the election of independent candidates than in the case of party candidates. Candidates on a party ticket, particularly in multi-member districts rely less on personal assets than on the appeal of the party. Not so for the independents other than those who are in fact party candidates but are running as independents in order to bypass the 10 percent national threshold provisions.

Quantitative data on the resources available to independently elected deputies are not available. Personal accounts, however, may give us an insight into how resources affect the

election of an independent. TGK, decided to run as an independent when it became apparent that

his party would not nominate him in 2007.⁰ He explains:

I had been elected earlier on the Republican ticket. The party leader did not like my independent mind and did not renominate me. The True Path people knew that I had a following and Mrs. Çiller invited me to be on the True Path ticket. I won in 1999. Our party remained below the threshold in 2002. When the election was coming up this time, I looked around and found no party to my taste. I thought I would run as an independent. Friends in the district also encouraged me. One friend gave me centrally located office space. Some young people volunteered their help free. My district is small. There is no need to hold mass rallies. I drove to several subprovincial capitals in my car with my aides. There was no need to charter even a minibus except in a couple of instances. We rented coffee houses to meet with the voters; and those are inexpensive.

These remarks point to the fact that earlier political experience under a party label may have provided the independently elected deputy with recognition and an achievement record which s/he uses as a resource. Furthermore, earlier partisan political experience may have served as a way of developing political goodwill that may be translated into electoral support. The same deputy said that he had served as a case examiner judge in the administrative court in Ankara for a long time and therefore knew the way of the bureaucracy and many of the bureaucrats in the capital and knew how to make them deliver. He further said that many bureaucrats knew and respected him, and he had been successful in serving his constituents.

Such accumulated goodwill may also precede a person's election. BGU who served as an independent deputy during the 2002-2007 period, was a professor of medicine. Before he was recruited into politics, his office was always full of people from his province for whom he found

the appropriate doctors, hospital beds, etc. He spent his summer vacations in his parental home in

the provincial capital and always tried to serve his 'provincial brothers.'⁰

Family fame and name, and tribal affiliation were important in earlier times. It seems, though, that its importance has been declining in recent years, Urbanization, the emergence of new centers of power in society through economic change, the emergence of civil society organizations that mobilizes citizens into political activity and other factors have reduced the significance of such traditional sources of voter alliance in politics. Furthermore, the leaders of traditional groups often choose to align themselves with a party through which they may wield more generalized influence rather than exchange their vote for occasional favors from the government party which is a condition that obtains only when such a vote is needed.

Personal resources may help a candidate to get elected as an independent but it is difficult to be an effective deputy in terms of taking part or performing functions from constituency service to speaking on the floor or serving on committees. Maintaining the independent status even if elected as such is a difficult and costly proposition.

The challenges of maintaining independent status

Electoral success achieved by an independent candidate appears to initiate a process of his /her incorporation into partisan politics. In the case of independents by proxy (deputies who ran as independents simply because their party had pockets of electoral support where independent candidates could win, but where it did not expect to receive a high enough percentage of the national vote to place party candidates in the parliament), reassuming their partisan identity is

normal. But what about other types of independents like representatives of the traditional elites,

“favorite sons” and protest candidates? ⁰

Let me begin by noting that parties are generally interested in recruiting successful politicians to their ranks. An independent deputy, having already proven that s/he can get substantial electoral support from his/her district, constitutes a target for recruitment to party membership. But the independently elected also soon discover that political parties prevail in almost all aspects of parliamentary life while independents possess few means to be active in this process. A brief glance at the Standing Order of the Turkish Grand National Assembly reveals that the independents are hardly accorded acknowledgement. The Standing Order takes political parties that have enough representatives to establish a “group” (currently 20 deputies) as the

fundamental unit whose interests are to be served. Assistant speaker positions, committee

memberships, debate time and setting the agenda are all done by parties with groups.⁰

Opportunities for independents to participate in the legislative-political process are limited if not totally lacking. They may raise points of order in floor debates, ask written or oral questions to ministers, get a chance, if rarely, to offer amendments to proposed legislation under discussion and if they work hard enough (like setting up tent in front of the door of the deputy speaker who

will chair the session that day to take the floor briefly), they may even manage to get a chance to

address the general session.⁰

Another line of activity that occupies much of the time of an independent deputy, as discussed earlier, is constituency service. Unless the demands of a deputy are unreasonable or not in conformity with the laws, the bureaucrats are usually accommodating to deputies even if they may not belong to a government party. My observation has been that deputies, irrespective of party label, are sympathetic to all other deputies pursuing constituency business. The bureaucrats and the ministers tend to be accommodating to independents since it is always possible that an independent may decide to join the government party. In one unusual case, a deputy from a small Southeastern province elected on the basis of tribal leadership in 1973, announced that he would join the party that built a much needed bridge in his district. He delivered on his word and joined the majority partner in the coalition government in 1975 after the bridge was constructed. Similarly, an independent deputy whom I interviewed responded to my question regarding the conditions under which he might consider joining the government party by saying “the only condition under which I would consider terminating my opposition activities to the government and join them is their building a bridge across the dam lake so mu

voters do not have to travel for hours to get to a good hospital without having to rely on an

unreliable boat service. “⁰

Depending on the political context, independents may also constitute a target for joining a political party. For example, if the government is a coalition with a small majority margin, the independents become a favorite target of both government and opposition parties for recruitment to their side. Even when the government is a one party government with a safe margin, rendering the “demand” for independents low, an independent may still find it attractive to join a political party to have better access to all aspects of the parliamentary process. Going it alone is not easy; the reward of reelection is remote.

Concluding Observations

Being elected as an independent deputy to the Turkish legislature is a difficult feat and appears to be possible under specific conditions. Most deputies elected as independents have come from electoral districts that are small in size and at the lower end of the scale in terms of socio-economic development. A considerable segment of the population is of Kurdish ethnicity. These districts are probably less integrated to the national social, cultural, economic and political life. A sense of deprivation and an ensuing sense of alienation probably permeate its local political leaders and voters.

Politics in Turkey is a partisan process. Competition even at the electoral district level in multi-member districts tend is, to a large extent, shaped by national parties. The election of an independent candidate is heavily dependent on the political context, that is, the conditions prevailing in a specific electoral district at a particular time. Personal resources of a deputy may also be a factor in his/her election but such resources are usually not enough to assure election. Electoral success of independent candidates is inextricably linked with this partisan process. For

some, the non-party status may be no more than a necessity to avoid the national ten percent threshold for parties to place deputies in the Grand National Assembly. For others, it may be a strategy to extract concessions from the government party(s) on behalf of the constituents as a prelude to joining one. For still others, it may be a temporary status deriving from the dissatisfaction of local elites and voters with the policies and candidates of national political parties at a specific election.

On two occasions, in 1969 and 2007, the percentage of the vote that has gone to independents has exceeded five percent. The 1969 elections marked the end of the ascension of the Justice Party (AP) in Turkish politics. During that period, voters demonstrated low mobility between what they perceived to be the right and left ideological camps. It appears that some of the disaffected local party leaders and voters, rather than moving to the left, opted for independent candidates. In the following elections in 1973, the CHP, describing itself as left of center, persuaded enough voters from the right side of the political spectrum to lead the elections. There was an accompanying decline of independents. In 2007, the rise of the independents, as we have already seen, derived from an effort to bypass the national electoral threshold by devising the independents by proxy system. Otherwise, it seems that the likelihood of independently elected deputies is declining. If the ten percent national electoral threshold provision is reduced to a lower level like five percent or repealed altogether, an deputy elected as an independent may well become a thing of the past. If the provision is retained, the method of electing independents by proxy is not only likely to continue but also be emulated by other small parties.

TABLE I Independents in the Turkish Parliament

Year	% of the <u>vote</u>	n of parties <u>in elections</u>	n of indep. <u>in parliament</u>	index of <u>fractionalization*</u>	total n <u>of votes</u>	voting <u>participation</u>
1950	4.8	3	2	0.56	383 282	89.3
1954	1.5	4	3	0.54	137 318	88.6

boxes.

0 Interview with Can Atalay, a young lawyer, 12 August 2007.

0 *Isin hammaligini yapmak* is the original Turkish idiom.

0 I am greatly indebted to Professor Gül Turan for securing and processing much of the statistical information on the votes independents have received and the socio-economic characteristics of provinces.

0 These numbers do not include those who have been elected as independents on a party ticket. The Turkish electoral system allows candidates to run as independents on party tickets. This simply means that a particular candidate is not a member of the party on whose ticket s/he is running. The law requires that such candidates give their written consent to the Provincial Board of Elections prior to their being listed in the party ticket. Independents on party tickets have generally been prominent people whom parties have recruited for their experience or appeal to the voters. Although the possibility continues to exist today, this method has not been employed since the elections of 1987. Tuncer reports that six such candidates were elected in 1950 and nine in 1954. The number went down to two in 1957 and to one in 1961, 1965 and 1969. None were elected in 1973 or 1977. After the election of four candidates in 1983, the method appears to have been abandoned. Cf. Erol Tuncer, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Seçimler* (Ankara: TESAV, 2003), p. 149.

0 Paragraph 7 of Article 78 of Law 306 dated May 25, 1961 on the Election of Parliamentary Deputies as amended by Law 2234 dated May 17, 1979 required that an independent candidate post twice the gross salary of the highest ranking civil servant as a deposit with the provincial office of the national treasury. This amount was to be returned after the elections if the number of votes the independent candidate received exceeded one third of the number obtained by dividing the total number of votes cast to the number of deputies to be elected from that district. The amount was reduced to one month's gross salary in 1983 (Article 21 paragraph 2 of Law 2839 on the Election of Parliamentary Deputies) but it became a non-returnable fee. By way of comparison, political parties each set their own fees for those who offer their candidacy for getting on the party ticket. For major parties, these fees are usually considerably higher than that which is asked of independent candidates. Ironically, the independent candidate gets on the ballot automatically while a person who wants to become a candidate of a party may not even be designated as a candidate.

0 As seen in Table I, in eight of the fifteen elections held since 1950, the share of the vote of independents has remained below one percent of the general vote. In two elections, on the other hand, it has exceeded five percent.

0 Turkish electoral districts are organized on the basis of the administrative division of the country into provinces. They are multi-member districts. Since district populations vary, so does the number of deputies elected from each district. The plurality system meant that the winner took all the seats no matter how thin the margin of victory.

0 Law no. 4918 dated 5 June 1946. The electoral and related laws from 1976 to 1982 have been compiled by Tarhan Erdem in *Anayasalar ve Seçim Kanunları* (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1982). Unless otherwise stated, I have relied on this excellent source for the pre-1982 laws.

0 The numbers come from Erol Tuncer, *Osmanlı'dan op.cit.*, p. 247.

0 Law no. 5258 dated 9 July 1948, article 24.

0 Law no. 5545 dated February, 1950.

0 The text of the law states broadly that individual applications for becoming a candidate may be accepted. The first paragraph says that all Turkish citizens possessing the proper qualifications may offer their candidacy. The following paragraphs, however, specifying how one becomes a candidate, stipulate that being nominated requires no less than the signature of fifty voters.

0 Law no. 6428 dated 30 June, 1954 amending Law no. 5545 of 1950. Elections were held on June 2, 1954.

0 Law no. 306 dated 25 May 1961.

1957	0.1	4	0	0.60	4 994	76.6
1961	0.8	4	0	0.71	81 732	81.0
1965	3.2	6	1	0.63	296 523	71.3
1969	5.6	8	13	0.70	511 023	64.3
1973	2.8	8	6	0.77	303 208	66.8
1977	2.5	8	4	0.68	370 035	72.4
1983	1.1	3	0	0.66	195 588	92.3
1987	0.4	7	0	0.75	89 521	93.3
1991	0.1	6	0	0.79	32 721	83.9
1995	0.5	12	0	0.83	133 895	85.2

0 Law 306, article 32. N is determined by the High Board of Elections based on the distribution of the population among provinces (simultaneously electoral districts) according to the most recent census.

0 It should be added that during the process of candidate designation either through primary elections or more typically through the choice of the national organs of a party (generally meaning the leader of the party), the candidates of each party are also rank ordered on the ballot. Therefore when a party wins m number of seats, those candidates from 1 to m are declared winners.

0 Interview with SUU who won as an independent in Istanbul's first district by agreeing to work with the DTP though representing another party that did not have a chance of achieving the 10 percent national threshold.

0 Article 36 of Law no 2820, the Political Parties Law of 1983 amended in 1988 depicts that a political party that want to take part in a forthcoming election must have been fully organized in half of the provinces in the country (two thirds before the amendment) and in more than one third of the subprovinces in each of those provinces (one half before the amendment) six months in advance. Other provisions ban regional or ethnic parties, effectively reducing participation in elections to reasonable well organized national parties.

0 These provinces include Muş, Siirt, Ağrı, Mardin, Van, Bitlis, Tunceli, Bingöl, Diyarbakır, Hakkari, Şırnak, Batman. Sometimes Elazığ and Urfa are added.

0 Gilles Dorronsoro and Nicole F. Watts offer an interesting and persuasive case study of this phenomenon in the local elections in Diyarbakir province in "Toward Kurdish Distinctiveness in Electoral Politics: The 1977 Local Elections in Diyarbakir," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 41(2009), pp. 457-478.

0 Article 4 of the Law on the Election of Deputies, no. 2839 dated June 10, 1983 as amended by article 1 of Law no. 4138 dated 23 November, 1995.

0 In 1961, there were only 67 provinces. After 1987, new provinces were carved out of the existing provinces in order to appeal to voters that perceived being designated as a province not only a status symbol but also as an opportunity to get more monetary allocations from the central government, if nothing else, in the form of construction of new public buildings and the appointment of additional salaried bureaucrats. Currently the number has stabilized at 81. The number of electoral districts has reached 85 because three large ones have been divided into subdistricts as explained above. Since I have taken the electoral districts of 2007 as the basis for counting, the independent deputies would appear to be somewhat more dispersed among provinces than they would be if a pre-1987 administrative division map with fewer provinces were employed.

0 In 2007 elections, Istanbul also produced two independent deputies. This deserves an additional study focusing on specific neighborhoods and results from such polling stations. Impressionistically, the votes of independent candidates came from semi-urban, semi-rural precincts in the district with concentrations of newly arrived ethnically Kurdish settlers. These new settlers, still not well integrated to their new environment, were mobilized by the DTP to vote for their candidates. The candidates ran as independents in order to avoid the 10 percent national threshold but those voting for independents were no doubt aware that they were voting for party candidates.

0 Law 2839 on the Election of Deputies (1983) gave one seat to each district, however, small. A change in 1995 a change was introduced whereby each district first got a seat, and then the remaining seats were distributed according to the size of the population. Since there is no district so small that it does not qualify for a representative, those deserving only one seat end up getting a bonus seat. But more general effect is that in small sized districts fewer votes are needed for independents to get elected.

0 <http://www.dpt.gov.tr/bgyu/seg/iller2003.html> visited on October 8, 2009.

0 The overall average of all provinces in the Southeast and the East, 69.9 and 64.6, are also significantly below that of other provinces. In two of the three provinces outside the two regions, the independents were favorite-sons, a phenomenon that will be discussed later. An possible explanation for the third,

1999	0.9	20	3	0.85	270 365	87.1
2002	1.0	18	8	0.82	314 251	79.1
2007	5.4	14	26	0.71	1 835 486	84.3

Source: The percentage of the vote, n of parties in elections, n of independents in parliament have all been compiled from Erol Tuncer, Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Seçimler (Ankara: TESAV, 2002) except for 2007 which comes from Erol Tuncer, 22 Temmuz 2007 Seçimleri: Sayısal ve Siyasal Değerlendirme (Ankara:TESAV, 2007). The index numbers have been calculated by the author save for 1961-1995 which come from Ergun Özbudun, Contemporary Turkish Politics (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000), p. 77.

*The index is based on the distribution of the votes and comes from D. Rae, The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws (New Haven: Yale University press, 1967), p. 56. The index is one minus the sum total of squares of the percentages of the vote each party has obtained in the elections expressed as a decimal fraction.

Istanbul, has already been suggested earlier.

0 Chong Lim Kim, Joel D. Barkan, Ilter Turan and Malcolm Jewell, The Legislative Connection: The Politics of Representation in Kenya, Korea and Turkey (Durham, N.C.:Duke University Press, 1984), part II on resource allocation; "İlter Turan, "Parlamentoların Etkinliği ve Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi," in İlter Turan, ed. TBMM'nin Etkinliği (İstanbul. TESEV, 2000).Yasushi Hazama also reports that the smaller the constituency size, the greater the demand for constituency service and that the economically less developed constituencies generate more demand for constituency service. See his "Constituency service in Turkey: s survey on MPS," European Journal of Turkish Studies (<http://www.ejts.org/document471.html> visited on October 1, 2009. See esp. para. (21).

0 Interview with BGU in his office in the parliament on November 2, 2007.

0 A professor of International relations well known for his political liberalism and his interest on human rights questions.

0 Interview with deputy SUU on 30 November 2007.

0 Personal interview with the deputy in his office in the Turkish Grand National Assembly on November 1, 2007.

0 Personal interview in his office in the Turkish parliament on November 2, 2007.

0 Traditional elite representative is used here to describe a deputy who got elected because of tribal, family, lineage or religious prominence in a particular locale. A favorite son is an independent deputy who owes his election to his popularity among the political establishment and/or the general public and his personal efforts. A protest candidate is a person who offers candidacy and wins election simply because the voters are disenchanted with the options offered to them, i.e. a vote for the person is seen as a vote against the establishment parties.

0 Cf. Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi İç Tüzüğü (Standing Order of the TGNA). The Standing Order was adopted by a decision 584 of the parliament dated 5 March 1973. Many changes have been made since the original text was adopted but its essential features, particularly preservation of the "party group" as the key parliamentary actor have been retained.

0 TGK, an independent deputy whom I interviewed, referred with pride to his familiarity with the Standing Order and his ability to embarrass the presiding officer of a session by raising points of order.

0 Interview with TGK in his office in the parliament on November 1, 2007.

Table II Electoral Districts of Independents (1950-2002)

Districts	n of		n of dep.		district size	tot
	Elections	per elect.	2007	2002 -2007		
Mardin	6	4 x 1, 2	2	6	8	
Elazığ		4	4 x 1	-	5	4
Muş		5	4 X 1	2	4	6
Siirt		5	4 X 1	1	3	5
Bingöl		2	2 x 1	-	3	2
Diyarbakır		3	2 x 1	4	10	6
Malatya		2	2 x 1	-	7	2
Bitlis		3	2 x 1	1	4	3
Adıyaman		1	1	-	5	1
Bayburt	1	1		-	2	1
Erzurum		1	1	-	7	1
Hakkari	2	1		1	3	2
Hatay		1	1	-	10	1
İğdır		2	1	1	2	2
Konya		1	1	-	16	1
Niğde		1	1	-	3	1
Ordu		1	1	-	7	1
Rize		1	-	1	3	1
Seyhan (Adana)	1	1		-	14	1
Sivas		1	-	1	6	1
Şırnak	2	1		2	3	1
Şanlıurfa		2	1	2	11	3
Tokat		1	1	-	7	1
Tunceli	2	1		2	2	3
Van		2	1	2	7	3
Batman	1	-		2	4	2
İstanbul 1		1	-	1	24	1
İstanbul 3		1	-	1	25	1

Source: Prepared by the author on information from Erol Tuncer, *Osmanlı'dan ...*, *op. cit.*, and *22 Temmuz 2007... op. cit.* It is to be remembered that district sizes have varied over the years depending on changes in the size of the membership of the TGNA as well as changes in the population. The basic standing of provinces in relation to each others have, however, remained reasonably stable.

TABLE III
Regional Distribution of Electoral Districts (Provinces)

Electing Independent Deputies (1950-2007)

<u>Eastern Anatolia</u>	<u>Southeastern Anatolia</u>	<u>Meditarranean</u>
Bingöl	Adıyaman	Burdur
Bitlis (1)	Diyarbakır (4)	Hatay
Elazığ	Mardin (2)	Kahramanmaraş
Erzurum	Siirt (1)	Adana
Hakkari (1)	Şırnak (2)	
Iğdır (1)	Şanlıurfa (2)	
Malatya	Batman (2)	<u>Black Sea</u>
Muş (2)		Bayburt
Tunceli (2)		Kastamonu
Van (2)		Ordu
		Tokat
		Rize (1)
<u>Inner Anatolia</u>	<u>Aegean</u>	<u>Marmara</u>
Konya	Denizli	İstanbul (2)
Niğde		
Sivas (1)		

Prepared by the author. The figures in parentheses are the numbers of deputies elected as independents during the 2007 national elections

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