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The 2007 Elections and Parliamentary Elites in Turkey: The Emergence of a New Political Class?

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ABSTRACT *This essay analyzes the impact of the 2007 elections in Turkey on the structure of the parliamentary elites. The article begins with an examination of the recent trends in turnover rates. The electoral earthquake of 2002 resulted in the highest turnover in modern Turkish politics. In 2007, the turnover rate declined to 59.3 percent as a result of the relative stabilization of party competition. In the subsequent sections of the essay, the data on the social backgrounds of the deputies with respect to age, gender, occupation, education, and knowledge of the Arabic language are examined. The analysis reveals some notable differences as well as similarities between the political parties that entered the Grand National Assembly in 2007. Of particular importance is the fact that 73 out of 341 AKP deputies know Arabic, presumably as a result of their training at the Imam-Hatip schools. The essay concludes with the observation that the AKP's decisive electoral victories in 2002 and 2007 have facilitated the rise of a new political class of parliamentary elites in Turkey.*

The July 2007 parliamentary elections reinforced the ruling Justice and Development Party's (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) dominant role in Turkish politics. By capturing 341 out of the 550 seats in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the AKP, a political party with an Islamist pedigree, far outdistanced its rivals in the party system in terms of both popular support and parliamentary strength.[1] In addition to the AKP, the center–left Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP) and the far-right Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) also managed to win 112 and 70 seats, respectively.[2] The opening of the new legislative session witnessed the emergence of two other small parties as well. The preelection coalition between the two center–left parties, the CHP and the Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti, DSP), proved to be short-lived since 13 of its newly elected members left it to form the DSP's parliamentary group. In addition, 20 out of 26 deputies who had won their seats as independents changed their status following the elections to function as members of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi, DTP). However, these changes did not

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alter the AKP's dominance in the parliamentary arena. As was the case after the 2002 elections, the AKP enjoyed a comfortable majority and formed the government by itself without the need to find coalition partners.

How has the AKP's emergence as the strongest party since 2002 affected the structure of Turkey's parliamentary elites? Have there been major changes in the social composition of parliament following the rise to power of a political party that emerged out of Turkey's Islamist movement? Have the collapse of the old order in the party system and the marginalization of several traditional parties led to the rise of a new political class?

Trends in Parliamentary Turnover

Since 1950, Turkey has experienced considerably high turnover rates among the country's representatives serving in the Grand National Assembly.[3] The average turnover rate in the 15 national elections held since 1950, 63.3 percent, is almost double that of the democratic countries in Western Europe and North America. With the exception of Canada, which had an average parliamentary turnover of 53 percent between 1980 and 1993, the average turnover rate in other Western democracies was about 31 percent during this period.[4] Changes in the membership of the democratically elected parliamentary bodies generally stem from one of three major sources: retirement, electoral defeat, and the addition of new seats.[5] In Turkey, all of these factors have been responsible for legislative turnover. Scores of deputies have not become candidates in the next elections (or have died), the electoral defeats of their parties have either permanently or temporarily ended the parliamentary careers of many politicians, and the number of seats in the Grand National Assembly has increased over the years through the creation of new electoral districts. In addition, several other factors have contributed to Turkey's exceptionally high turnover. The most important concerns regime changes and military coups during periods of major political crises. Three of the four highest rates of legislative turnover took place following the 1950, 1961, and 1983 elections (Figure 1). The 1950 elections came in the wake of a major regime change, when the beginning of honest and free elections witnessed the replacement of the ruling CHP with its main challenger, the Democratic Party (Demokrat Parti, DP). The DP's victory resulted in the entry of a large number of new elites into parliament.[6] Military interventions in politics in 1960 and 1980 had a similar effect regarding the turnover of parliamentary elites. In both cases, the breakdown of democracy and the efforts of the ruling officers to tinker with electoral politics had major consequences for the country's party system and parliamentary politics.[7] While the 1960 coup led to the banning of Turkey's largest party, the DP, the same fate awaited all political parties 20 years later in the aftermath of the 1980 military takeover. The bans imposed on political parties and their leadership cadres by the military regimes were largely responsible for the high turnover in the first elections held following the transfer of power back to the elected elites in 1961 and 1983. In addition to regime changes, two other factors have also contributed to the replacement of incumbent parliamentary elites. First, high rates of electoral volatility have

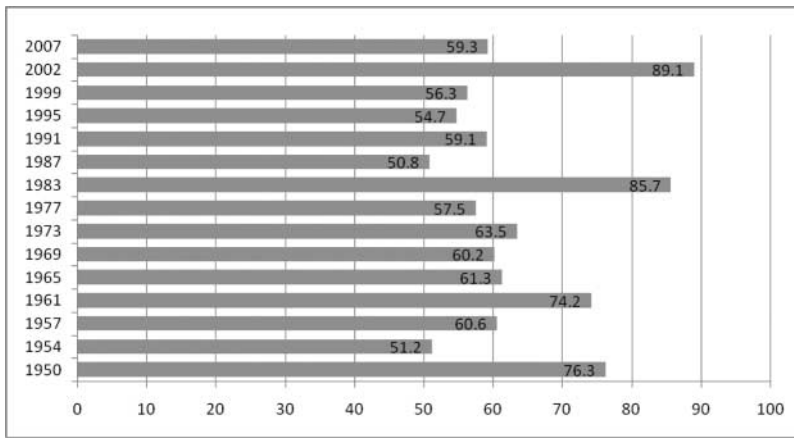

Figure 1. Parliamentary turnover rates in Turkey, 1950–2007 (%).

led to abrupt rises and falls in the political fortunes of parties and their parliamentary strengths. An extreme case in point is the sharp drop in the DSP's votes from 22.3 percent in 1999 to 1.2 percent in 2002. As a result, although the DSP had the largest number of seats in 1999, it failed to enter parliament in the next elections. Second, due to the centralization of the nominating process, party leaders have managed to exclude large numbers of incumbent deputies from the party lists or to demote them to the lower, electorally hopeless places on these lists.[8]

The highest turnover rate in the history of Turkey's electoral politics was recorded in 2002, when 89.1 percent of the incumbents lost their seats. Unlike in 1961 or 1983, this strikingly high turnover resulted from the shifting of voter alignments in party competition rather than the military's political engineering strategies. The political earthquake of 2002 enabled two parties, the AKP and the CHP, which were not present in the previous parliament to become the two largest parties in the new legislature. At the same time, four traditional parties—the True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi, DYP), the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP), the DSP, and the MHP—which had collectively won nearly 80 percent of the seats in 1999—failed to clear the 10 percent national electoral threshold that parties must pass in order to qualify for seats. Consequently, the outcome of the 2002 elections led to the replacement of almost the entire membership of the Grand National Assembly. The collapse of the old order in the party system and the emergence of the newly formed AKP as the dominant force in electoral politics turned the challengers of yesterday into the new parliamentary elites.

In 2007, the turnover rate declined to 59.3 percent. Although still high in comparison to West European and North American democracies, it was nevertheless slightly below the average turnover rate. A total of 233 out of 550 deputies in the new parliament had served in the previous legislature of 2002 to 2007. The decrease in turnover reflected the relative stabilization of party competition after the turbulence that the party system had experienced in 2002. Following the balloting in July

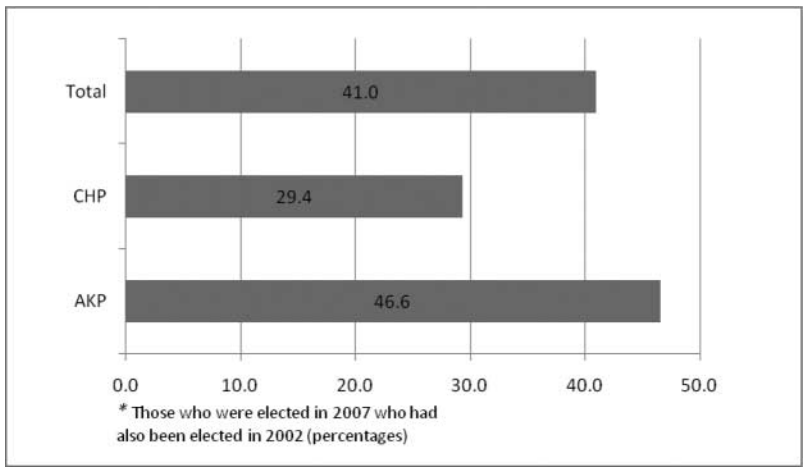

Figure 2. Reelection of deputies in 2007 (%).

2007, the AKP and the CHP remained as the parliament's two largest parties, which helped scores of incumbents to keep their seats. Nevertheless, the fact remains that approximately 60 percent of the incumbents lost their seats in 2007. One major reason for this relatively high turnover rate was the centralization of the nomination process. The leaders of both the AKP (Tayyip Erdoğan) and the CHP (Deniz Baykal) succeeded in their efforts to purge sizeable numbers of the incumbent deputies from their party lists. As a result, the reelection rates for the AKP and the CHP were 46.6 percent and 29.4 percent, respectively (Figure 2). This means that more than half the AKP deputies who entered the legislature in 2002 enjoyed a short tenure, while two-thirds of the CHP's outgoing representatives were absent in the new parliament. Another factor that contributed to the turnover rate in 2007 concerned the entry of the MHP, DSP, and DTP into parliament. None of these parties were present in the previous session of parliament.

The analysis of the data on parliamentary turnover in 2007 reveals that variations in electoral geography produced significant regional differences (Figure 3). Clearly, the eastern and southeastern regions led the others in terms of the proportion of "new faces" who were elected to the Grand National Assembly. The electoral successes of the DTP and the AKP in the country's predominantly Kurdish-populated regions were largely responsible for the high turnover in these two regions. Nineteen of the DTP's 20 deputies were elected from the eastern and southeastern Anatolian regions. The AKP, which became the DTP's chief rival for Kurdish votes in these two regions in 2007, nominated many individuals who had not been members of the previous parliament. In fact, the east and the southeast accounted for the two highest turnover rates for the AKP among all of Turkey's eight regions.

One of the major consequences of the collapse of the old order in the party system and the AKP's emergence as the majority party in parliament in 2002 was the large

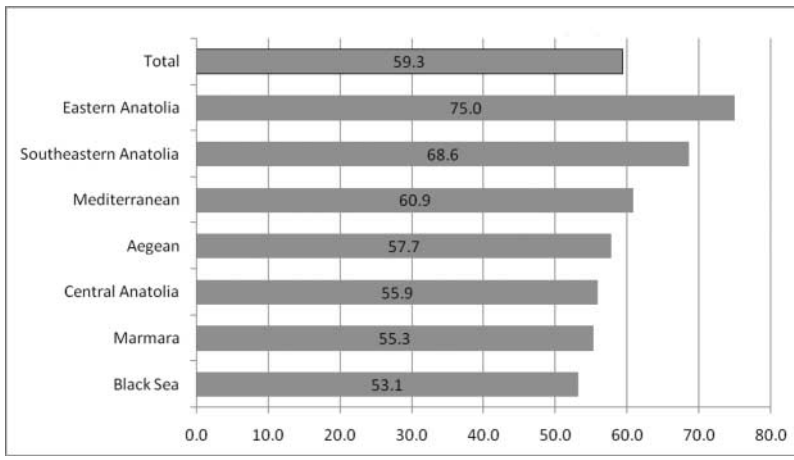

Figure 3. Parliamentary replacement by geographic region in 2007 (%).

number of "freshmen," or first-time parliamentarians, who entered the Grand National Assembly (Figure 4).

First-time deputies accounted for 80.5 percent of the parliamentarians in 2002, which meant that this legislature had one of the lowest numbers of deputies with previous parliamentary experience in the history of the Republic. In 2007, the proportion of first-time deputies decreased to 49.3 percent, or nearly half the parliamentary representatives. The decline in the number of freshmen was partly due to the decline in the turnover rate in 2007.

The number of first-time deputies varied considerably between the parties. The AKP and the CHP had approximately the same number of freshmen deputies in their

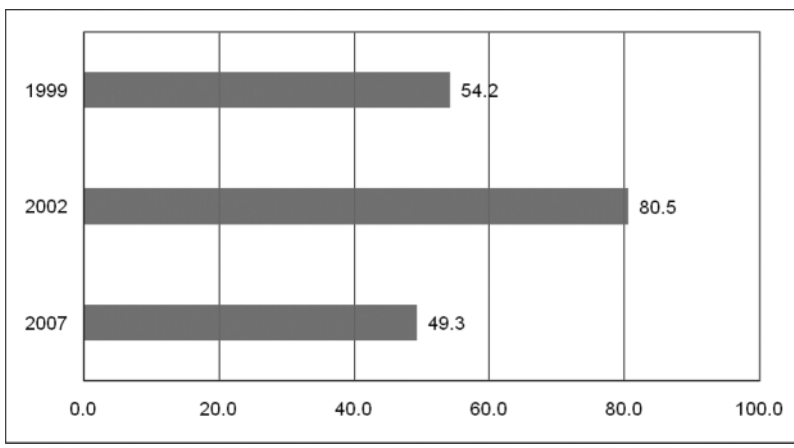

Figure 4. First-time deputies in 1999, 2002, and 2007 (%).

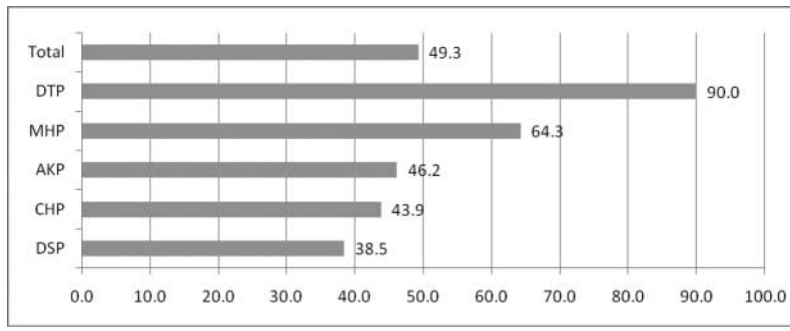

Figure 5. First-time deputies by party affiliation in 2007 (%).

parliamentary groups (Figure 5). Nearly half their representatives were men and women who had never sat in the Grand National Assembly before and consequently had no previous parliamentary experience. The DTP's parliamentary group included the highest proportion of freshmen in its ranks, since only two of its 20 deputies had been members of parliament before. Another party with a high percentage of first-time deputies was the MHP, whose ranks included a large number of individuals without any previous parliamentary experience. Among all parties in the legislature, the DSP had the lowest proportion of first-time deputies. This was partly due to its electoral victory in 1999, when the DSP won the largest number of seats and served as the senior member of the coalition governments between 1999 and 2002. A number of these former DSP deputies reentered the parliament in 2007 through their party's electoral coalition with the CHP.

The pros and cons of high turnover in democratically elected legislative bodies have received extensive scholarly attention.[9] According to some observers, higher rates of turnover undermine the effectiveness of parliaments by limiting the number of experienced legislators who have the expertise to deal with complex domestic and foreign policy issues. Additionally, the institutionalization of a parliament is hindered by large numbers of inexperienced members who are not knowledgeable about the rules and norms of the parliamentary game of politics. However, there are also others who believe that elite turnover is helpful for the functioning of democratic systems since it may lead to greater policy innovation and flexibility. Moreover, the proponents of this latter view argue that high turnover opens up career opportunities for greater numbers of individuals to enter into the ranks of the political elites than would have been possible otherwise.

Studies on the Turkish Grand National Assembly have tended to emphasize the adverse impact of high turnover among deputies on the institutionalization of parliamentary politics and behavior. According to Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, for example, the presence of large numbers of first-time deputies after each election means that the parliament "has to start almost from scratch in the establishment of binding rules and guiding rules of legislative conduct."[10] In addition to the frequency, the manner in which parliamentary elites have been replaced in Turkey presents problems from

the perspective of democratic theory and practice.[11] As noted earlier, large numbers of parliamentary elites were replaced in the 1961 and 1983 elections as a result of the 1960 and 1980 military coups. The forced and unconstitutional exit of incumbent deputies through military intervention along with the efforts of the ruling officers to ban scores of political elites from reentering parliament during the transition back to democracy have not only affected turnover rates but have also impeded progress toward the consolidation of democracy. Moreover, the power of the Turkish party leaders to control the nomination process has played an important role in the frequent changes of parliamentary personnel. The centralization of candidate selection is a major obstacle to internal party democracy since the incumbent deputies are almost exclusively dependent on the party leaders for their nomination in the next elections.

Who Are the New Parliamentary Elites?

Comparative research on members of parliaments has shown that most representatives who serve in the world's democratically elected legislative bodies tend to be drawn disproportionably from among the better-educated and more affluent middle-aged men who have professional occupations (for example, lawyers and businessmen).[12] These studies have also established that there has been a persistent underrepresentation of women, blue-collar workers, young people, and less affluent individuals. The data collected on parliamentarians over several decades of research clearly demonstrate that there is a basic disparity in the social compositions of parliamentary elites and the voters who elect them in terms of age, gender, occupation, and education. Previous studies on parliamentary elites in Turkey have also underscored similar disparities between Turkish society and members of the Grand National Assembly.[13]

In many respects, the social profile of the deputies in the aftermath of the July 2007 elections did not deviate significantly from that of the parliamentary elites in most other democracies.[14] With respect to age, the newly elected members of parliament were predominantly middle-aged, with those belonging to the 50–54 age group accounting for nearly a quarter of the legislature's membership (Table 1).

The average age of the parliamentarians increased from 48.4 percent in 2002 to 50.8 in 2007. The relative "aging" of Turkey's parliamentary elites is also reflected in the declining proportion of younger deputies and in the rising number of older ones. The proportion under 40 was nearly halved in 2007, while those who were 60 years or older increased from 9.1 percent in 2002 to 15.1 percent five years later.[15] Data on the age structure of the deputies show that there has not been a fundamental change in the average age of those elected to parliament during more than half a century of multiparty politics in Turkey.[16]

Gender has traditionally constituted one of the largest discrepancies between the social characteristics of Turkey's population and the parliamentarians who serve in the Grand National Assembly. During the first decades of the Republican era, the country's authoritarian single-party regime "selected" a small number of women to

Table 1. Deputies' Age in 1999, 2002, and 2007 (%)

	1999	2002	2007
30–34	2.5	5.6	2.6
35–39	9.5	11.5	7.3
40–44	19.1	14.2	16.1
45–49	25.6	24.0	16.2
50–54	21.1	21.8	24.5
55–59	12.0	13.8	18.2
60 and Over	10.2	9.1	15.1
Total	100	100	100
Average	48.9	48.4	50.8

become members of parliament after they obtained the right to vote in 1935. However, following the transition to democracy, even this limited representation declined to a miniscule level (Figure 6). The number of female deputies rose slightly in 1983, then declined again in the next two elections, followed by modest increases between 1995 and 2002. The 2007 elections witnessed an important change since the number of female deputies virtually doubled. This increase was primarily due to two factors. First, the two largest parties, the AKP and the CHP, made a concerted effort to nominate more female candidates and to place them on the more winnable places on the party lists than before.[17] As a result, the percentage of female deputies increased from 3.6 to 8.8 in the AKP and from 6.2 to 9.2 in the CHP between 2002 and 2007. Second, a newcomer to parliamentary politics, the DTP, adopted a 40 percent affirmative action quota to boost women's representation.[18]

Consequently, women comprised 40 percent of the DTP's deputies, which was by far the highest proportion among all parties represented in parliament. The MHP, on the other hand, had the lowest percentage of women deputies in its ranks. Although political parties increasingly seem to recognize the electoral advantage of nominating female candidates, the fact that Turkey's parliament includes less than 10 percent female deputies compares poorly with recent trends in Western European democracies, where the number of women serving in national legislatures, as well as those holding ministerial positions in cabinets, has increased significantly.[19]

Since the early days of the modern Turkish Republic, education has played a crucial role in the chances of individuals to enter the ranks of the parliamentary elites.[20] This trend has remained in full force over the years, and political parties, irrespective of their ideological orientations, have shown a distinct preference for nominating well-educated candidates. As a result, an overwhelming majority of the elected elites have been the products of the Turkish higher education system (Table 2). The proportion of university graduates declined slightly in 2002 but rose again to reach 94.5 percent in 2007. As in the case of gender, there is a major discrepancy between the voters and their representatives regarding education, since university graduates accounted for only 9 percent of the population in the country in

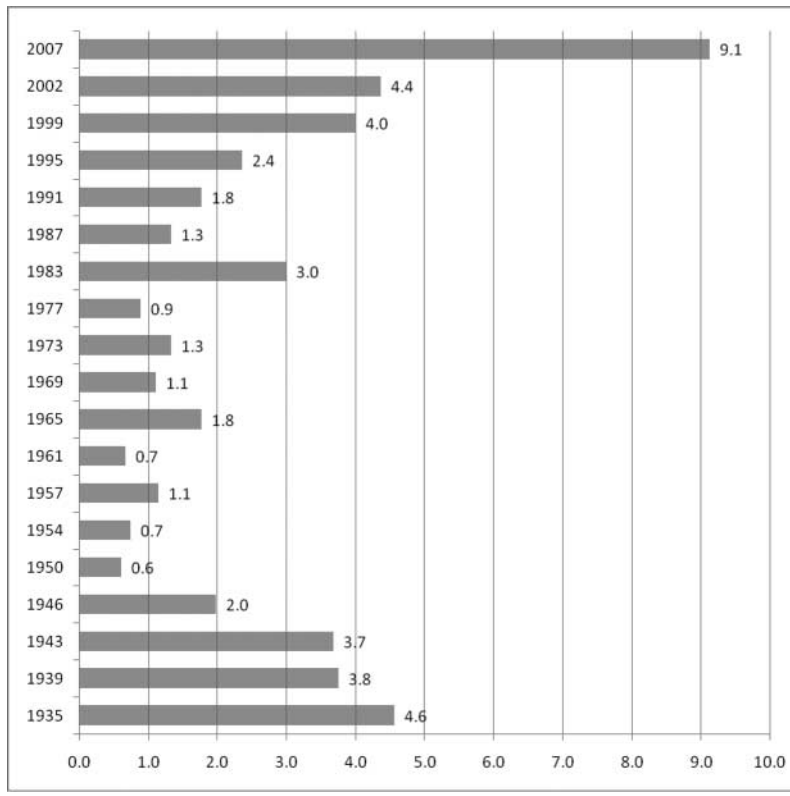

Figure 6. Women deputies in the parliament, 1935–2007 (%).

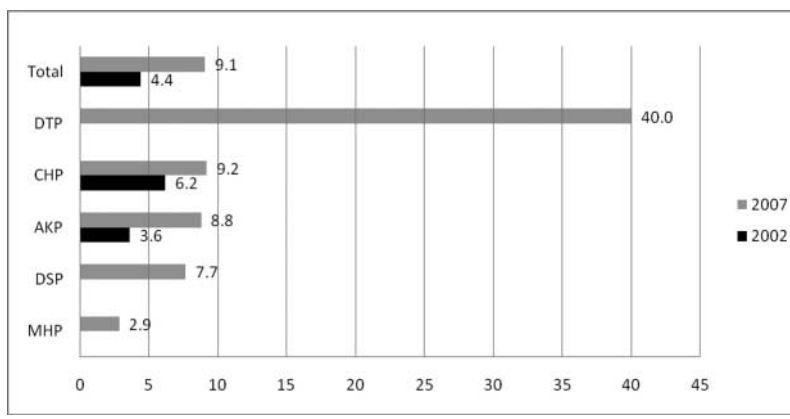

Figure 7. Women deputies by party affiliation in 2002 and 2007 (%).

Table 2. Educational Level of Deputies, 1999, 2002, and 2007 (%)

	Elementary	Middle	Lycee	University	Total
1999	1.1	1.8	5.6	91.5	100.0
2002	1.5	2.2	6.2	90.2	100.0
2007	0.4	0.4	4.7	94.5	100.0

2004.[21] As Table 2 indicates, the number of parliamentarians who have had only elementary school training has decreased to a miniscule level.

Analysis of the data on the educational levels of the deputies according to their party affiliations shows that there are some differences between parties (Table 3). For example, all of the DSP's deputies are university graduates, whereas those who hold a university degree account for 70 percent of the DTP's parliamentarians. It is instructive to note that while the CHP has been the perennial favorite of the better-educated voters, its deputies do not have the highest educational attainment among the parties that hold seats in parliament. Also worth noting is that although nearly all of the AKP's representatives in the legislature are university graduates, the AKP is also the only party that includes several deputies who have not advanced beyond elementary school.

The high degree of educational attainment among parliamentary elites in Turkey is also reflected in their knowledge of foreign languages. The official biographies of the deputies, based on the information provided by them, indicate that many profess to speak at least one foreign language. There are also scores of deputies who claim competence in more than one foreign language. English seems to be the favorite second language of many who serve in the Grand National Assembly. The dominance of English represents a notable change from the early decades of the Republic, when most of the parliamentarians "who knew a foreign language knew French."[22] In addition to "Western" languages such as English, French, or German, Arabic is also spoken by a substantial number of parliamentary elites. In 1999, 11.8 percent of the deputies claimed competency in the Arabic language. Most of them belonged to the two center–right parties, ANAP and the DYP (Table 4). However, in 2007 a clear majority of the parliamentarians who knew Arabic

Table 3. Educational Level of Deputies by Party Affiliation in 2007 (%)

	Elementary	Middle	Lycee	University	Total
AKP	0.3	0.6	2.9	96.2	100.0
CHP	0.0	0.0	8.2	91.8	100.0
DSP	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0
DTP	0.0	0.0	30.0	70.0	100.0
MHP	0.0	0.0	2.9	97.1	100.0
Total	0.4	0.4	4.7	94.5	100.0

Table 4. Deputies' Knowledge of Arabic by Party Affiliation, 1999, 2002, and 2007 (%)

	AKP	ANAP	CHP	DSP	DTP	DYP	FP	MHP	Total
2007	21.5		5.1	0.0	5.0			5.0	14.8
2002	21.4		6.2						16.2
1999		12.6		6.6		9.6	25.0	6.8	11.8

were elected from the AKP. Parliamentary elites in Turkey are likely to know Arabic, either by having been born in provinces where Arabic is widely spoken such as Hatay, Mardin, or Şanlıurfa or by attending educational institutions that specialize in teaching religious knowledge, norms, and traditions, such as the Imam-Hatip schools (*İmam-Hatip okulları*) and Higher Islamic Institutes (*Yüksek İslam Enstitüleri*). Whereas the very tiny percentage of CHP deputies who profess an ability to speak Arabic belong to the first group, a large majority of the AKP's parliamentarians who know Arabic were not born in the provinces where Arabic is widely spoken.[23] It is safe to assume, therefore, that they learned it in the educational institutions where religious training is emphasized. The presence of substantial numbers of individuals who are products of these institutions among the AKP's parliamentary elites and in the party's leadership ranks is an important indicator of the party's origins and its support for a greater role for Islam in Turkish society and public affairs. The fact that 73 out of 341 AKP deputies profess to speak Arabic whereas only a handful of CHP parliamentarians do so also suggests a very strong cleavage between the two parties that "represent[s] two distinct political and social subcultures based on opposing views regarding religion's role in public affairs."[24]

In terms of the occupations represented in the legislature, Turkey has witnessed some significant changes over the years. During the early years of the Republic, individuals with backgrounds in the bureaucracy and the military comprised a large proportion of the members of the Grand National Assembly. The democratization of Turkish politics in the aftermath of World War II was accompanied by a growing number of deputies with backgrounds in the free professions such as law or medicine. In more recent times, other occupations have also become prominent. The data on the occupational profile of those who won seats in 2007 show that parliamentarians with backgrounds in an occupation categorized as "economic and business" (business professionals and managers, traders, bankers, financial consultants, and owners of small or medium-sized businesses) have the highest representation in the Grand National Assembly (Table 5). The number of deputies with this particular occupational background has increased steadily in the last three elections. Educators, lawyers, and engineers constitute the next three largest occupations among the elected elites. In comparison with the parliaments of the 1960s and 1970s, the number of educators has risen significantly, to the point where they became the second largest occupational group in 2007. The ranks of the educators include scores of university professors and researchers along with secondary school

teachers and administrators. Similar to most other national legislatures, parliaments in Turkey have traditionally included large numbers of lawyers. In 2007, 15.9 percent of the deputies were members of the legal profession. Engineers have played a very prominent role in Turkish politics since the 1960s.[25] Some of the country's leading political figures, such as Süleyman Demirel, Turgut Özal, and Necmettin Erbakan, were educated at the Istanbul Technical University and began their careers in various fields of engineering. It is instructive that several occupations that had traditionally large representations in the legislatures, such as the military and agriculture, have virtually disappeared from the Grand National Assembly in recent years.

That Turkey's parliament had become more homogenous with respect to the occupations of the deputies became evident in the studies conducted in the 1970s and 1980s.[26] This trend has continued over the years. In 2007, the occupational profiles of the parliamentarians from the AKP and the CHP were quite similar (Table 6). The majority of the deputies in the two largest parties are businessmen, educators, lawyers, and engineers. It is interesting to note, however, that the proportion of businessmen in the CHP is slightly higher than that of the AKP. While the occupational backgrounds of the deputies in other parties did not deviate significantly from the overall trends, there were some differences. For example, the MHP had the highest proportion of former civil servants, educators, and military officers in its parliamentary group, while the DTP ranked first in terms of the proportion of lawyers among its deputies.

The degree of localism—or the percentage of deputies who were born in the electoral constituency that they represent—in the Grand National Assembly has

Table 5. Occupations of Deputies, 1999, 2002, and 2007 (%)

Occupation	1999	2002	2007
Economics/Business	20.2	22.7	25.9
Education	19.8	18.2	19.5
Law	13.6	15.3	15.9
Engineering	18.9	16.2	15.9
Government	5.5	7.5	4.6
Medicine	5.1	3.8	3.5
Dentistry, Pharmacy, and Vet. Med.	3.5	3.6	2.7
Journalism	2.4	1.6	2.0
Art and Architecture	1.1	1.6	1.8
Agriculture	2.4	1.8	1.5
Military	0.5	0.0	0.7
Labor Union	0.5	1.1	0.7
Religion	1.8	0.9	0.4
Other	4.7	5.6	4.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 6. Occupations of Deputies by Party Affiliation in 2007 (%)

Occupation	AKP	CHP	DSP	DTP	MHP	Total
Economics/Business	26.2	31.6	15.4	10.0	22.9	25.9
Education	18.8	18.4	23.1	10.0	27.1	19.5
Law	17.6	16.3	7.7	25.0	4.3	15.9
Engineering	16.2	17.3	15.4	5.0	17.1	15.9
Government	3.8	2.0	7.7	5.0	11.4	4.6
Medicine	3.5	4.1	7.7	0.0	2.9	3.5
Dent., Pharmacy, and Vet. Med.	2.9	3.1	0.0	5.0	0.0	2.7
Journalism	1.8	2.0	15.4	5.0	0.0	2.0
Art and Architecture	2.4	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8
Agriculture	1.2	0.0	0.0	5.0	2.9	1.5
Military	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	0.7
Labor Union	0.6	1.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.7
Religion	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4
Other	4.1	2.0	7.7	30.0	5.7	4.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

increased steadily since the formative years of the Republic, from the 1920s to the 1940s, when many deputies were not locally born. However, the advent of multi-party politics significantly increased the number of parliamentarians with strong roots in the constituencies from which they were elected. In the nine parliaments from 1950 to 1983, deputies who were born in the constituency they represented averaged 67 percent.[27] In more recent years, the degree of localism increased from 63.6 percent in 1999, to 67.5 percent in 2002, and finally reached 75.2 percent in 2007 (Table 7). As this trend indicates, political parties have become increasingly interested in nominating candidates who have strong local connections. However, the data on localism in the 2007 elections also reveal important differences both between regions and political parties. For example, among Turkey's seven major geographic regions, Eastern Anatolia had the highest proportion of locally born parliamentary elites. Nearly all of the deputies who represent Eastern Anatolian constituencies were born in these provinces. The Black Sea region also had a very high proportion of locally born deputies in 2007. The Marmara region, on the other hand, ranked last in terms of deputies with local birth connections. Slightly less than half the newly elected parliamentarians from this region were born in the provinces that they represented. The relatively smaller proportion of the locally born deputies in the Marmara region can be partly explained with reference to the massive flow of migrants from other parts of Anatolia into the major cities located in the Marmara region. In particular, the rapid expansion of Istanbul's population has been accompanied by the changing composition of party activists in Turkey's largest city, where local political party organizations are largely staffed by individuals who are not natives of Istanbul.[28]

Table 7. Deputies Born in Constituency Represented: By Political Party Affiliation, 2007 (%)

	Mediterranean	Eastern Anatolia	Aegean	Southeastern Anatolia	Central Anatolia	Black Sea	Marmara	Total
AKP	81.8	100.0	74.3	94.4	77.8	98.2	43.8	78.5
MHP	88.2	100.0	64.3	100.0	73.3	100.0	40.0	71.4
DTP	0.0	88.9	0.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	70.0
DSP	100.0	0.0	66.7	0.0	66.7	0.0	66.7	69.2
CHP	88.9	100.0	66.7	66.7	45.5	92.3	53.1	68.4
Total	85.5	98.3	69.0	86.3	73.1	96.1	46.9	75.2

The data presented in Table 7 also show that the degree of localism among deputies varied significantly between political parties. Arguably, the most important difference is between the two major parties, the AKP and the CHP. Whereas the AKP had the highest percentage of deputies with local roots (78.5 percent), the CHP had the lowest percentage of locally born deputies (68.4 percent) in its parliamentary group. It is evident that the AKP's leadership gave greater importance than all other parties to choosing candidates for parliament from among men and women who were locally born. The only exception to the AKP's policy was the Marmara region, where the percentage of deputies without strong local ties was higher than the locally born. The degree of localism among the CHP's deputies, on the other hand, was considerably lower in the Central Anatolian and Marmara regions than in other parts of Turkey.

Conclusions

As noted earlier, the 2002 elections witnessed the highest turnover rate in Turkey since the beginning of free and honest elections in 1950. The political and social dynamics that propelled the newly formed AKP to power with a solid majority in 2002 remained in force in 2007, when Turkey's ruling party increased its electoral support at the polls and continued its dominant role in party competition. As the data presented in the preceding sections show, the AKP electoral victory in 2002 led to a major change in the composition of the Grand National Assembly, since nearly 80 percent of the newly elected deputies had no previous parliamentary experience. A majority of the "freshmen" in the legislature that emerged from the 2002 elections belonged to the AKP. Several prominent AKP deputies, such as Abdullah Gül, had previously served in parliament as members of Necmettin Erbakan's pro-Islamist parties in the 1990s (that is, the Welfare Party and the Virtue Party). However, most of the AKP's newly elected members had never sat in parliament before. The ranks of this large group of deputies include the AKP's leader, Tayyip Erdoğan, who entered parliament for the first time after winning a seat in a by-election that was held in early 2003.

The large-scale replacement of parliamentary elites in Turkey in 2002 marked the emergence of a new political class in the country.[29] As a result of the AKP's success

at the polls in 2007, this new political class has further consolidated its place and power. In terms of such social background variables as age, education, or occupation, the AKP's parliamentary elites do not differ radically from their counterparts in the other political parties represented in the legislature. However, in one important respect, namely, knowledge of the Arabic language, there is a significant difference between the AKP's deputies and members of other parties. The fact that more than one-fifth of the AKP's deputies profess to know Arabic (most probably as a result of their secondary school education at the Imam-Hatip schools) underscores a major difference between the country's traditional, pro-secular elites and the newly emerging political class, which has been identified with the AKP's electoral ascendancy since 2002. Although the AKP's leadership has recruited a number of individuals from the secularist elements in Turkish society and nominated them for candidacy in the 2007 elections, the majority of the party's parliamentary representatives support the adoption of traditional Islamic values, norms, and lifestyles.[30] The fact that many of the AKP's parliamentarians, including Prime Minister Erdoğan, favor covering their wives and regularly attend Friday noon prayers in one of Ankara's large mosques (at the expense of suspending parliamentary proceedings for lack of quorum) is among some of the many indicators of their preference for lifestyles that stand in sharp contrast to the lifestyles of their secularist counterparts. As Ian Lesser has noted,

> individuals with more religious and traditional outlooks, products of religious schools (*imam-hatip*), and those broadly in the AKP milieu have become more visible in the infrastructure of the Turkish state, the interior and education ministries, and even the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, long the exclusive preserve of the Kemalist establishment.[31]

The emergence of a new political class of parliamentarians is an important part of this process of change that Turkish politics, society, and economics have witnessed in recent years. The shift of power from the country's secularist establishment to the emerging elites associated with the AKP is likely to continue in the near future as Turkey's ruling party further consolidates its power by controlling the country's major political institutions.

Notes

1. The AKP won 341 seats. However, soon after the parliamentary elections, Abdullah Gül was elected president, leaving the AKP with 340 seats in the Grand National Assembly.
2. Although the MHP won 71 seats, one of its newly elected deputies died in a traffic accident before the opening session of the parliament.
3. For analyses of the Turkish Grand National Assembly's structure and role of the parliamentarians, see Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "The Turkish Grand National Assembly: A Brief Inquiry into the Politics of Representation in Turkey," in Çiğdem Balım, *et al*. (eds.), *Turkey: The Political, Social, and Economic Challenges in the 1990s* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), pp.42–60; Ergun Özbudun, "Parliament in the Turkish Political System," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.2 (1978), pp.44–73; İlter Turan, "The Turkish Legislature: From Symbolic to Substantive Representation," in

Gary W. Copeland and Samuel C. Patterson (eds.), *Parliaments in the Modern World: Changing Institutions* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press), pp.105–28; and Gilles Dorronsoro and Elise Massicard, "Being a Member of Parliament in Contemporary Turkey," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* (September 2005), http://www.ejts.org/document115.html.

4. Lynda Erickson, "Canada," in Pippa Norris (ed.), *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.35.
5. Ibid., p.34.
6. See Frederick W. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1965).
7. See Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "The 1983 Parliament in Turkey: Changes and Continuities," in Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin (eds.), *State, Democracy, and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), pp.47–62.
8. Since Turkey uses a proportional representation electoral system with "closed" lists, the voters are not allowed to change the order of candidates within the party lists.
9. For a useful summary of these different views, see Robert D. Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976), pp.64–8.
10. Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "The Grand National Assembly of the Post-1983 Multi-Party Era," in Ergun Özbudun (ed.), *Perspectives on Democracy in Turkey* (Ankara: Turkish Political Science Association, 1988), p.163. İlter Turan similarly notes the low level of institutionalization of the parliament in Turkey. See his "Volatility in Politics, Stability in the Parliament: An Impossible Dream? The Turkish Grand National Assembly during the Last Two Decades," *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, Vol.9, No.2 (Summer 2003), pp.151–76.
11. See Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*, pp.67–8.
12. See Norris, *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracie*s; Putnam, *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*; and Michael Gallagher (ed.), *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective* (Beverley Hills, CA: Sage, 1988).
13. See Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite*; Frank Tachau and Mary-Jo D. Good, "The Anatomy of Political and Social Change: Turkish Parties, Parliaments, and Elections," *Comparative Politics*, Vol.5, No.4 (1973), pp.551–73; Frank Tachau, "Parliamentary Elites: Turkey," in Jacob M. Landau, Ergun Özbudun, and Frank Tachau (eds.), *Electoral Politics in the Middle East; Issues, Voters, and Elites* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), pp.205–42; and Frank Tachau, "Political Leadership in Turkey: Continuity and Change," in Heper and Evin (eds.), *State, Democracy, and the Military*, pp.103–18.
14. Data on the social background characteristics of the parliamentarians were collected from the biographies of the deputies listed on the official website of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (www.tbmm.gov.tr). This biographical information is based on questionnaires that were completed by the newly elected deputies. The background information for those elected in 2002 and 2007 can be found at: http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekillerimiz_sd.sonuc?donem=22&adi=& soyadi=&il=&parti=&kelime= and http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekillerimiz_sd.sonuc?donem=23&adi=&soyadi=&il=&parti=&kelime=.
15. According to the minimum age requirement imposed by the Constitution, candidates for parliament have to be 30 or older.
16. Tachau, "Political Leadership in Turkey: Continuity and Change," pp.110–11.
17. In the AKP, the proportion of female candidates increased from 13.6 percent in 2002 to 14.1 percent in 2007. The CHP's female candidates increased from 22.3 percent to 28.3 percent. The proportion of female candidates who were placed in the first three positions on the party lists increased from 2.6 percent to 6.4 percent in the AKP and from 5.2 percent to 12.6 percent in the CHP. The data were compiled by KA-DER (Kadın Adayları Destekleme ve Eğitme Derneği/Organization to Support and Train Women Candidates). See http://www.adrena.com.tr/kader/?p=istatistikler.
18. See *Radikal*, May 12, 2007.
19. Pippa Norris, "Conclusions: Comparing Passages to Power," in Norris (ed.), *Passages to Power: Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies*, pp.208–31.
20. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite*, pp.29–72.
21. OECD, Country Statistical Profiles 2007, http://webnet4.oecd.org/wbos/default.aspx?DatasetCode=CSP2007.

22. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite*, p.108.
23. Of the five CHP deputies who know Arabic, two were elected from Hatay and one was born in Mardin.
24. Sabri Sayarı, "Towards a New Turkish Party System?" *Turkish Studies*, Vol.8, No.2 (2007), p.206.
25. On the prominent role of engineers in recent Turkish politics, see Nilüfer Göle, "Engineers: 'Technocratic Democracy,'" in Metin Heper, Ayşe Öncü, and Heinz Kramer (eds.), *Turkey and the West: Changing Political and Cultural Identities* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993), pp.199–218.
26. See note 14.
27. Calculated from the data presented in Tachau, "Political Leadership in Turkey: Continuity and Change," p.113.
28. See Sema Erder and Nihal İncioğlu, *Türkiye'de Yerel Politikanın Yükselişi: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Örneği, 1984–2004* (Istanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2008).
29. Unlike the traditional usage of class based essentially on economic power and differentiation, the concept of political class in modern political analysis is used to identify political elites who derive their power through political parties and other institutions. See Klaus Von Beyme, "The Concept of Political Class: A New Dimension of Research on Elites?" *West European Politics*, Vol.19, No.1 (1996), pp.68–87.
30. The AKP's leadership has adamantly refused to be identified as an "Islamist" party and instead has repeatedly strove to define itself as a "conservative democratic" party. To project the image of a centrist party and also to allay the concerns of the secularists, it nominated a number of individuals such as Ertuğrul Günay, a former secretary-general of CHP, and Haluk Özdalga, who had been in the leadership ranks of the center–left DSP.
31. Ian Lesser, *Beyond Suspicion: Rethinking US–Turkish Relations* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2007), p.40.