

CHAPTER 6

THE BUREAUCRACY AND ITS DISCONTENTS IN MODERN TURKEY: LIBERALISM, NEO-LIBERALISM AND ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM

Cangül ÖRNEK*

*Asst. Prof. Dr., Maltepe University, Faculty of Management and Administrative Sciences,
Department of Political Science and International Relations, Istanbul, Turkey.
e-mail: cangulornek@maltepe.edu.tr

DOI: 10.26650/B/SS30.2020.004.06

Abstract

An important pillar of Ottoman and Turkish capitalist modernization has been the constitution of a legal-rational authority, which is strictly tied to the formation of a modern bureaucracy. The bureaucracy has attained a very special attention in academic writing, getting far beyond considering this category as one of the elements of Turkish modernization. Rather, the bureaucracy was declared as the very subject of this history, which acts according to a special blueprint designed to shape the society and politics. The objective of this chapter is to challenge this presumption by discussing the linkage between the thickening anti-intellectualism especially at the time of changes in the mode of accumulation and the negative approach adopted against the bureaucracy by the political authorities, which tend to establish an arbitrary rule. In this regard, it is asserted that the negative treatment of the traditional Republican bureaucracy, which made a peak in the 1950s and, later, in the 1980s, cannot be explained in a superficial manner with only a reaction to the bureaucratization and the rise in bureaucratic formalities. These two waves of anti-bureaucratism require special attention also because of their legacy that contributed to the vital erosion in the institutional framework of the state administration in the 2000s.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, modernization, anti-intellectualism, neo-liberalism, Turkey

1. Introduction

Throughout Turkish history, the sentiments towards the modern bureaucracy seemed to be very volatile, mainly because of the major shifts in the political circumstances of the country. There were sequences, such as the post-27 May period, which were marked by a strong trust in the bureaucracy above the political class, whereas there were other sequences, such as the 2000s, during which the traditional Republican *bureaucracy* was targeted systematically by the political power and its intellectual entourage for allegedly being a nest of plot against the elected government. In the mainstream liberal historiography, however, the modern bureaucracy appears as the real subject of Turkish history, capable of designing the society and politics according to a self-made blueprint marked by its own *raison d'être* (see Mardin, 1973; Heper, 1985; Keyder, 1987). In the same vein, the bureaucracy is frequently presented as the culprit of whatever is seen as failures recorded and crimes committed throughout the Turkish history. Additionally, this outlook for the most part of this history assumes a relentless power struggle between the bureaucratic cadres, who allegedly consider themselves the owners of the country, and the civilian political authorities, striving for demarcating the sphere of authority between the representatives of the people and the unelected civil servants. Yalman (2002) defines this interpretation of the state-society relations in Turkey as “dissident but hegemonic” and then, offers an alternative approach to understand the same phenomenon through incorporating the neglected class relations into the analysis. This chapter does not propound an assessment of the debates around state-society relations in the literature, but rather attempts to place attention onto a neglected dimension of the issue. To state it very briefly, the main concern of this chapter is to shed light on the political, ideological and economic reasons of the rise in the anti-bureaucratic rhetoric, especially when it culminates into the form of an assault on bureaucracy at certain conjectures of modern Turkish history.

In this regard, the chapter focuses on two periods during which this type of attitude became a dominant thread of Turkish politics. The first such era was the 1950s, the governing years of the Democrat Party (DP) under the leadership of Adnan Menderes. The second was the era opened by the 12 September military *coup d'état* and continued under the Mother Land Party (ANAP) government of Turgut Özal. The main argument of this chapter is that despite their differences, the anti-bureaucratic attitudes observed in these sequences are very much related to anti-intellectualism, which turns into an epidemic, especially at some specific moments of change in the accumulation regime. However, it must be emphasized that not all critical assessments of bureaucratism and interrogation of the role of bureaucracy in capitalist

societies are related to anti-intellectualism. Therefore, in order to differentiate the disdain for the modern bureaucracy, which has been the hallmark of some governments throughout Turkish history, this chapter picks the term “anti-bureaucratism”, referring to a special type of negative perception of the bureaucracy in Turkey, which bears strong anti-intellectual connotations.

On the theoretical ground, Poulantzas’s (1978) approach to the problem of bureaucracy in the framework of the capitalist formation is especially helpful to comprehend the bureaucracy within the context of class struggles. To put it very broadly, Poulantzas (1978, 351-359), in his analysis, emphasizes two important features of the bureaucracy. One is that the bureaucracy, as a social category, assumes a role of its own “but this does not confer on it a power of its own”, and this role is determined by an ensemble of factors in the class struggle under capitalism. This evaluation opens up space to pursue how the impact of the changes occurred in the class relations penetrate the state institutions and its bureaucracy. Thus, without disregarding the class identity of the state in capitalism, this approach enables a historical review of the altering role of the bureaucracy in accordance with the trajectory of the class struggles in different national contexts. This type of an analysis is not extinct in Turkey (see Aydın, 2017), but it is far from setting the agenda in the literature on the role of the bureaucracy in Turkish history.

2. Aversion to Bureaucracy as a Symptom of Anti-intellectualism

Anti-intellectualism as a phenomenon is very difficult to fit into a single definition, as it is not possible to do justice to its historical and spatial complexity by only pointing at some aspects of it. It emerges blended with various other attitudes, sentiments or ideological positions. Therefore, it is better to remain at a simple yet broad level to have an umbrella formulation of the concept. Richard Hofstadter (1993, 7), the renowned writer of *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, formulates anti-intellectualism as “a resentment and suspicion of the life, of the mind and of those who were considered to represent it; and a disposition constantly to minimize the value of that life.” There are few but sophisticated analyses of anti-intellectualism in the literature, which, although not dealing with the connection between anti-intellectualism and anti-bureaucratism, are still helpful in understanding how the two can closely interact (see White, 1962; Glasson, 2012; Shogan, 2007; Morelock, 2017).

In this regard, an important factor that contributes to the resentment at bureaucracy is the change of accumulation regimes, especially if it takes place in the form of a transition from

state-interventionism to free-market economic regimes. For instance, the ascendancy of *laissez-faire* economics under the conservative governments in the US, the UK and in countries like Turkey in the 1980s boosted the traditional anti-bureaucratic sentiments of conservative politics further. As these new political forces adhered to minimal government, deregulation, privatization and cutting down social services, they started to consider bureaucracy as an impediment to their agenda of downsizing the regulative and social roles of the state. Since the bureaucracy they had to work with whilst carrying out the neo-liberal reforms had been shaped by the proclivities of the welfare regime of the post-WII years, this conflict was not likely to be avoided.

A contributing factor to the dislike for bureaucracy during the neo-liberal epoch is the broad-scale dissemination of market values into all realms of human activity, including the political. In this way, the political leaders start to conceive their roles akin to the roles of businessmen. Such an identification is inevitably reflected in the priorities they assume in the decision-making process. Ambitious to take rapid action on his/her own initiative, this business type political-leadership increasingly inclines to disregard law and regulations, which they consider as nothing but mere impediments to swift government action (Shogan, 2007). In other words, the legal procedures and scientific standards that must be overseen in policy making are considered as humpbacks slowing down the efficient and effective decision-making. In this context, the primary quality expected from bureaucracy in a neo-liberal economic order is acquiring the operational standards and adopting the priorities of the market competition. Nevertheless, it must be noted that this does not always result in less bureaucratization in the meaning of a decrease in formalities (Hibou, 2015) as experienced lately.

Neo-liberalism is often invoked in relation to deepening poverty and increasing income inequality at social level and authoritarian or fascistic regimes. In the US, for instance, the neo-conservatism acquired militarization, re-Christianization and racism as ideological assets of its populist politics. Anti-intellectualism, as one of the components of populism (Oliver & Rahn, 2016), is frequently deployed by conservatives in the US and other parts of the world for discrediting the dissident views based on scientific and legal claims. In the same ideological climate, the bureaucrat occasionally finds itself as the object of resentment of the political demagogues and/or the capitalist classes. Disagreement about the benefits of the neo-liberal adjustment policies can be an adequate reason for allegations such as that the hesitant bureaucrats are the guardians of the establishment unwilling to abandon their privileges. In fact, the war wedged on “bureaucratism” by neo-liberal governments, in many

cases, epitomizes such an attitude. Moreover, setting the antagonism between “the state elite” and “the people,” especially at times of deepening social grievances, is instrumental to place the responsibility on the shoulders of the former. This political strategy not only benefits the political class but also those sections of the capitalist classes, whose interests are served by the unbridled market liberalism.

Paradoxically, libertarian anti-statism might have played into the hands of conservative political forces in the neoliberal era. Baer (2017) asserts that neoliberalism proceeded through a libertarian ideology of individual sovereignty and unrestricted market freedom through appropriating the counterculture’s anti-statist demands for personal expression and emancipation. Baer’s point is important as it detects the predisposition for an ideological reconciliation between the conservative and libertarian ideologies in the neo-liberal times.

3. Early Reactions to the State and Modernization

The first National Assembly that convened in Ankara in 1920, whilst the War of Independence was going on in the fronts, became the scene of a fervent debate on how to ensure the people’s participation in the new administrative structure and in the representative bodies at national and local levels. Some parliamentarians, who embraced populist-socialist views, stressed that in the new system, the centuries-long alienation of the people must come to an end. Interestingly though, during the debates, whenever they referred to the fractures in society, they located the main conflict between “the governing vs. the oppressed, governed class” as put by İsmail Suphi, a prominent figure of the first Assembly (TBMM ZC, 1920: 409 cited in Başaran-Lotz & Örnek, 2019). Mehmet Şükrü Bey, who was known as a communist, claimed that the primary conflict rested between the officers/bureaucracy and the people. He further argued that there was not a capitalist class in Turkey, as all people were using their labor to afford their living (TBMM ZC, 1920: 409 cited in Başaran-Lotz & Örnek, 2019). This interpretation of the people’s alienation was of course reflecting the legacy of state-society relations in the Ottoman Empire, as well as the characteristics of the political thought at the turn of the 20th century.

The first factor determining the people’s perception of the state was the grievances caused by the incessant series of wars starting with the First Balkan War in 1912, and continued until the Armistice at the end of the First World War. The unbearable tax burden on the poor used to cover war-costs, the never-ending conscription of the young Muslim men to be deployed to unknown fronts, the sharp decrease in agricultural production because of heavy taxation on the products and lack of work-force as the young men were recruited in the army for years,

the massive influx of refugees to the cities remained under the Ottoman rule that caused increasing poverty and serious sanitation problems in urban areas, etc., were the experiences the Ottoman people had with the state at the turn of the century.

An attempt to pursue the roots of anti-bureaucratism, however, should go back to the mid-19th century in order to decipher the codes of hostility towards the modernizing reforms especially among the critiques of Western-style modernity. During the climax of the *Tanzimat* reforms, a negative connotation of bureaucracy should have appeared, since *the Bab-ı Ali* bureaucracy, as the oppressive executer of the reforms, drew reactions from groups with different class positions and ideological affiliations. For instance, a fierce struggle was launched by the generation of young civil servants and intellectuals, the Young Ottomans, against the rule of Ali and Fuad pashas, who were involved in rapid modernization projects through adopting oppressive governing methods. But authoritarianism was not the only factor that spurred a widespread reaction against the reforms. The high-class elitism of the pashas was usually juxtaposed with the moderate background of the young civil servants in order to explain the latter's discontent for the former. In addition to that, a thorough explanation of aversion to the *Tanzimat*-era modernizers could not be made without thinking over the social repercussions of the accompanying economic collapse and increasing economic dependency on the European powers. Over and above, such a reaction towards the *Tanzimat* was, in fact, directed not only at the state but the Christian *millet*s, who, unlike the Muslims, benefitted from the increasing foreign dependency of the Ottoman economy (Berkes, 1975, p.206). Another source of distress was the provinces and the Anatolian countryside. As stated by Ortaylı (2018, 103), the hegemony of the *Bab-i Ali* meant the formation of modern centralization in Turkish history. This was the primary reason for the anti-*Tanzimat* sentiments of the Ottoman notables, which cut across religious and ethnic identities in the Ottoman countryside (see Berkes, 2006, 244-48). Furthermore, *Tanzimat* reforms introduced a novel idea into the administrative mentality of the Ottoman Empire: "institutions replacing individual rulers" (Heper & Berkman, 2009, p.69). The heavy-handed methods of handling matters, according to Heper and Berkman, was adopted to ensure the autonomy of the civil bureaucracy. Lastly, the role of the religious reactionaries, frustrated by the secularizing reforms and Westernized life-styles, must be considered in order to have an almost complete configuration of the critics of the *Tanzimat* modernization. These reasons enumerated here sketch out the legacy of the *Tanzimat*, which was effective in yielding a negative perception of the modernizing bureaucracy. In the ensuing debates, however, since the power center of the Empire shifted first to the palace again and, then, to the Committee

of Union and Progress after the 1908 revolution, the bureaucracy was relatively dislocated from its position of being the focus of the criticisms.

After the foundation of the Republic in 1923, the state and its bureaucracy were less a target among the political and intellectual figures, as a new state administration had to be established, replacing the centuries-old Ottoman state, which not only collapsed as a political entity but also shrank into a small-sized nation state from a vast, multi-territorial Empire. It should be reminded that a significant portion of the founding cadres of the Republic were also coming from the military bureaucracy of the Ottoman Empire trained in the modern institutions. Yet, this does not mean that the state policies in the early decades of the Turkish Republic were formulated to serve the interests of the bureaucratic class. It is important to note that, for years, the numerical size of the bureaucracy remained low. According to Şaylan, the main reason for that was the limited functions of the state apparatus, which gave priority to “order and security” as the main functions and, in addition to that, finance, foreign affairs, and justice bureaucracy contained the majority of the bureaucratic staff. This was not yet a state that operates effectively in the realms of social and economic matters, except for its support for the market mechanism to operate. The harmony between the political leadership and the bureaucracy during the one-party years of the Early Republican era, which reflected the bureaucracy’s commitment to the former’s mission of radical social transformation (Buğra, 2015, pp.221-222), was another important feature of the era.

4. Anti-communist Populism vs. the Bureaucracy of the Republic

The 1940s were very difficult years for the dissident intellectuals. Particularly in the second half of this decade, the political oppression took a new course and turned into a campaign against the left-leaning elements, not only in the artistic and intellectual circles, but also in the state apparatus. The symbolic incident in this vein was the Yücel-Öner court case, which was opened up in 1947 by Hasan Âli Yücel, the former Minister of National Education, against Kenan Öner, one of the founders of the Democrat Party. Yücel sued Öner for the latter’s accusations of alleged communist activities in the Ministry during Yücel’s ministerial years. Yücel won the case but could not prevent the appearance of false stories about him in the press (Çakır, 1997, p.131). The sensation created by Öner’s accusations denoted a deliberate smear targeting the Ministry’s progressive record. This was followed by a witch-hunt launched at university in 1948, which resulted in the expulsion of three socialist academics from the university (see Çelik, 1998). Again, this case was more than an occasional intolerance displayed towards some academics but a campaign aiming at intimidating the university community as a whole. These two key incidents of the 1940s, took place while the

Republican People's Party (RPP) was the governing party and Turkey was decidedly taking steps towards acquiring the status of the front-line country in the anti-Soviet crusade of the Cold War. Concomitantly, the government launched on a purge within the bureaucracy to get rid of the incompatible elements with the Cold War anti-communism.

Another aspect of the transformation Turkey proceeded in the second half of the 1940s was the change in accumulation regime. Turkey remained outside the Second World War but had to undertake the cost of military mobilization. During the war years, the RPP government, in order to restrict price increases, imposed price controls, which caused a black-market and intensive corruption. These conditions "gave those who were in a position to exploit the black market and government intervention (big farmers, importers and traders, and those officials who handled government contracts and permits) huge profit opportunities" (Zürcher, 1999). With this fresh capital accumulation in private hands and with the motivation of integrating Turkey to the world markets, and the new international economic regime created by the Bretton Woods system, the government stepped in to liberalize Turkey's trade regime and financial markets. Thus, with the change in the economic paradigm, the development plans prepared in 1946 and 1947 remained defunct (see Tekeli and İlkin, 1974). In the new liberal framework, the pivotal role in the economy was attributed to the private sector, thus the *statist industrialization* of the 1930s was abandoned.

In 1950, the DP, under the leadership of the Adnan Menderes, overthrew the decades long single-party rule of the RPP, but inherited the economic policies of its predecessor. The favoring world prices of the agricultural commodities helped the DP government to enjoy an economic spring in its initial years. This was also made possible by the American aid poured into Turkey for being a staunch Cold War ally. This fiscal support was used to pay for the widening trade deficits and to embark upon agricultural modernization. This favoring economic conditions did not last long though. When the impressive economic growth recorded in the first years of the 1950s ended abruptly, the DP government reacted with recourse to *ad hoc* measures, which were met with a general discontent. Facing this negative reception of its policies, the government, rather than taking the rising concerns into attention, moved to suppress the expression of criticisms. With the aim of discrediting the owners of dissident views existing among the bureaucratic cadres, the government resorted to an anti-intellectual and frequently an anti-bureaucratic rhetoric alongside the physical oppression. Despite this course of developments, it would be still misleading to treat the DP's anti-intellectualism solely as a reaction that occurred under distressing conditions. This attitude had salient features embedded in the class character of the government policies and in its

populist conservatism. During the governing years, the DP, through its policies, favored the big land-owners and tradesman, and garnered support from these classes, which should not be neglected when the dislike pervaded among the ruling circles for the traditional Republican bureaucracy is scrutinized. Since the traditional bureaucracy identified with statist policies and the republican value-set including notions such as “common interest,” there were more than enough reasons for the ruling bloc to averse it. Yet, this aversion did not prevent some high-ranking members of the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie from partaking in corruption, especially in the areas in which the state and bourgeoisie jointly carried out economic activities (Avcıoğlu, 1973, pp.727-757). On the other side, the bureaucratic cadres, imbued with the idealism and professional ethics, found it hard to accommodate the pragmatism of the era and the new form of relationship between politics and the bureaucracy (see Bener, 1991). Besides, the bold rhetoric of Prime Minister Menderes, displaying the self-assurance of a populist leader, boosted disrespect for regulations, procedures or scientific standards during these years. Heper and Berkman (2009, 74) reiterate the assumptions of the liberal historiography, such as “the bureaucratic elite asserted their right to rule”, “they did not look with favor at the efforts to make them more responsive to closer public scrutiny”, they were “imbued with a paternalist philosophy.” While reiterating the basic arguments of the liberal historiography on the role of the bureaucracy in Turkish political life, Heper and Berkman (2009, 73-74), yet rightly point out the new path that Turkish politics had taken, that bothered the traditional bureaucracy: “the intellectual–bureaucratic elites thought that politics was no longer used ‘to promote the interests of the nation as a whole,’ but to promote the ends of ‘a privileged few.’ Second, because of concessions on the Westernization reforms, the ‘irrational’ was preferred to the ‘rational.’ Intellectualism was abandoned; politics were no longer based on ‘reason’.”

Last, but not least, the anti-communist malaise afflicting the political scene crowned the anti-intellectualist current of the era. Anti-communism was embraced so vigorously for a variety of reasons. One was the quick discovery of its functionality for both condemning the criticisms against the government policies for being variants of communistic ideas and convincing the power block to rally behind the anti-communist front led by the government. This was beneficial to stigmatize the dissidents as the alienated others, even as pawns of communism, who endeavored to impair the government due to its alleged loyalty to national values and ideals.

Adopting a combination of these features in varying doses, the DP, under the leadership of Menderes, refused to confer any of its policies either with the relevant groups in the society

or with the scientific/academic community or the bureaucrats in the field. The debates on economic planning exemplified this attitude. Even after the downturn of the economy in the second half of the 1950s, the DP government continued to rely on *ad hoc* measures ignoring the calls for proceeding with a development plan. As a matter of fact, the preachers of planning included the DP's foreign partners as well. Milor (1990) emphasizes how foreign creditors and the indigenous industrial bourgeoisie shared similar opinions concerning the irrationality of the DP's economic policies, and embraced planning as a solution. As a response to internal and external pressures, however, the DP adopted "a 'wait and see' tactic" in economy (Milor, 1990, p.10). Despite that, the government perpetually rejected planning through identifying it with communism. The idea of planning was conjuring up the memory of the statist years during which industrial plans directed the economic policies, which also urged the landowning class to reject this idea. Paradoxically, though, the DP's advocacy for liberal economic policies and the refusal of the statist policies of the previous decades did not prevent the government from extending state capitalism in Turkey, both in scope and in terms of activity.

Even before this uncompromising refusal of conferring the development perspective with the planning bureaucracy, the DP was displaying a kind of instinctive reaction to the institutions such as university, judiciary and bureaucratic offices. The DP's political propaganda rested on presenting itself as the advocator of the "national will" juxtaposed with the modernized intellectuals and bureaucrats, who allegedly harbored values alien to the religious beliefs and national culture of the Anatolian people. In the same manner, the key state institutions were regarded with disfavor for being the bastions of secular and modern character of the Republic. Thus, from the beginning, the DP government set out a rhetorical and legal assault on the traditional bureaucracy of the Republic, in order to enfeeble its power (Atılğan, 2016, pp.400-403). The government started to use different executive instruments in order to intimidate the discontented cadres, including "withdrawing to passive duty", "pensioning off the bureaucrats" and "prohibiting appeals against the decisions of the government." These measures targeted the high-ranking bureaucrats identified with the previous RPP government (Şaylan, 305). But not all measures were written-ones. Throughout the 1950s, the traditional bureaucracy faced a kind of negative wage discrimination that affected their economic prosperity. Thus, the high-ranking bureaucracy and the public employees, including the university professors or the military officers, found it hard to afford their living because of their decreasing purchasing power under inflationary conditions. Meanwhile, the state recruited technical personnel such as engineers, technicians or

economists. Compared to the traditional bureaucracy, these technical cadres were protected from the effects of the worsening inflation with a special wage policy. This led to a division in the bureaucracy between the traditional Republican bureaucracy and the technical bureaucratic cadres (Şaylan, 303-305).

Waging its war against the traditional Republican bureaucracy and the institutions assumed loyal to the Kemalist establishment, the government resorted to Islamism as a leverage to win the masses on its side. In fact, Islamism had been burgeoning since the 1940s capitalized on the tacit tolerance of the governments, a phenomenon explained by the term “Islamic revivalism.” Although the DP government, in its initial years, was careful to keep the Islamists under control, it did not eschew the power of Islamist ideology in manipulating the masses under the conditions of multiparty politics. As the economic and political crisis deepened, particularly Prime Minister Menderes started to lean on Islamist discourse more than ever. This had discursive advantages, as the Islamist messages helped the government to solidify its identification with the rural masses, despite the deteriorating economic situation. But this went beyond paying lip service to the Islamic values at the discursive level, since soon it appeared that the government had started to coalesce with some Islamist groups in the process of losing its credibility among the urbanized, educated sectors of the society. The most serious of such accusations was about the support the *Nurcus* gave to the DP government and the government’s lenient attitude toward this group (Toprak, 1988, p.16), which was a watershed development in the history of the Republic.

Overall, towards the end of the 1950s, the DP found itself in dire straits in terms of intensifying political competition, deepening economic crisis and a stalemate in foreign affairs. In face of arbitrary, impulsive and unrestrained government action, the different compartments of the state apparatuses started to evoke their discontent and worries, which further enraged the government, especially Prime Minister Menderes. The tension increased further because of the DP’s totally arbitrary and repressive measures against the opposition and the unsustainable economic conditions. As a consequence, Turkey witnessed the first military coup, which took place on May 27, 1960.

5. The 1980s and Onwards

The re-organization of the state apparatus was among the priorities of the military junta of September 12, 1980. This consisted of creation of new institutions, political purges in the bureaucracy and forged a new version of the Kemalist ideology, known as Atatürkism, aloof from all leftist and progressive elements but mingled with Islamism. The rationale behind

this set of measures was to reassure the cohesion of state apparatuses, which were paralyzed by the class struggles of the 1960s and 1970s. As Poulantzas (1974, 306) points out, the state apparatuses condense the intense ideological contradictions in society, which explains the politicization observed in the state bodies in the decades prior to the military coup. But Poulantzas (1974, 308) adds that the repressive state apparatus is an exception, since “the hegemonic class or fraction generally controls the apparatus.” The developments in Turkey were incompatible with this general rule, as the rising impact of the left and the radical demands of the class movement permeated into the repressive state apparatus, as well as the army and the police. There are various reasons for this exceptionalism, a comprehensive elaboration of which remains out of the scope of this chapter. Even before the 1980s, during the March 12, 1971 military intervention, there were attempts to fix this political contamination of the police force. The ban on unionization within the police was a measure taken for this end, but remained short of eradicating the problem. Another effective method adopted by the March 12 regime was using political trials, the most sensational of which was “the Bomb case”, to impose ideological uniformity on the bureaucracy. These trials were instrumental both to purge politically heretic elements from the military and civilian bureaucracy and to intimidate the incumbent civil servants and high-ranking bureaucrats to establish full uniformity with the mindset of the junta.

The strategy of the junta regime of 12 September was more ruthless as they started to dismiss the unwanted public employees and high-ranking bureaucrats through a couple of legal devices, which cannot be considered lawful. To this end, the Martial Law Act no. 1402 was used to fire ideologically unfitting public employees, including dissident academics. The Security Inspection Directive was used as a weapon to eliminate undesired candidates for bureaucratic positions, based on their background checks. The Supreme Board of Supervision was established, which was defined by Tachau and Heper (1981, 30) as the president’s watchdog over the bureaucracy. The new regime changed the Government Employees Law in order to enlarge the scope of mandatory retirement. The Martial Law gave authority to martial law commanders to order public offices to dismiss their employees, and no judicial appeal could be made against these decisions. The 1982 Constitution, prepared by the junta regime, imposed constitutional restrictions on the right of association for members of the armed forces and other security forces and prohibited membership to political parties for civil servants.

These and many other measures taken in the same vein aimed at the purification of the state apparatuses from the influence of the socialist ideology and the reflection of the class

cleavages. Yet, this relentless operation was not intended to accomplish neither depoliticization of the bureaucracy nor the introduction of a recruitment policy based on meritocracy. In this new era, the primary criterion sought for serving in the state offices was designated as ideological loyalty to the Turkish-Islamic ideology. But this was not the only warrant for especially the high-ranking bureaucracy to work harmoniously with the junta regime and the subsequent civilian government of Turgut Özal's Motherland Party, which replaced the military rule in 1983. The hegemonic mindset of the post-1980 years can be encapsulated briefly in the definition "Turkish-Islamism molded with neo-liberalism". This amalgam was espoused by the military as well, which should come as no surprise since the military no longer insisted on the traditional statist policies of the early Republic, despite the exaggerated evocation of the symbol of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. This explains the junta leader General Kenan Evren's support for the economic austerity plan orchestrated by Turgut Özal (Tachau, 1988, p.116). In fact, high-commanding military officers were among the primary beneficiaries of the neo-liberal economy. The Armed Forces Trust and Pension Fund (OYAK) was a massive holding and a key economic actor in the economy, and contributed to the economic prosperity of the military officers (see Akça, 2017). Furthermore, in the 1980s, it was a widely applied policy among the holdings to appoint retired high-ranking military officers to their board of managers in order to take the advantage of their influence and ties within the state institutions.

Turgut Özal, the prime minister of the ANAP government, who came to power in 1983, found the most favorable conditions to implement the unpopular neo-liberal economic reforms. In fact, Özal had been appointed as the Deputy Under-Secretary of the Prime Minister in the Süleyman Demirel government, responsible from the implementation of the stabilization program known as "24 January 1980 decisions", months before the military coup. But now he was free of all social and political shackles. For one thing, all potential sources of political and social opposition were suppressed by the military. Thus, free from any contestation from political rivals or any resistance from society, Özal had a monopoly of power over the allocation of the resources available at his disposal, a power which he used arbitrarily. Thus, the neo-liberal transition of ANAP years was associated with partisanship and corruption, unprecedented in Turkish history. Especially the export incentives provided to the export-related industries without implementing strict regulations and necessary controls, which was legitimized by simplifying the procedures and, thus, promoting exports, gave an opportunity to this business group to extract huge public resources through "fictitious exports." The chain of fraud also included corrupted public employees and bureaucrats of the

responsible trade and economic offices. On top of everything, Özal explicitly refused to take legal action against these firms, which violated the law, with statements such as the one that envisaged “economic punishment for economic crimes” (Öniş, 2004, p.114).

Corruption at this extent became possible also because of the change in the bureaucratic organization, carried out through the installment of new institutions (Öniş, 2004, p.121) and hiring new bureaucratic cadres that altered the formation and mindset of the bureaucracy. The military, by bequeathing this task largely to Özal, gave him the opportunity to reshape the bureaucracy on his own will in the ensuing years. Enjoying the authority of a one-man order, Özal’s favoritism imprinted the bureaucratic transformation of the 1980s. The ANAP governments monopolized the decision-making power in the hands of the executive. The dissolution of the traditional bureaucratic structures and hierarchies to give more authority to the government escalated the tension between the politicians and the bureaucrats (Buğra, 2015, p.228) In this process, he also benefitted from his own experience as a leader coming from a bureaucratic career himself. Öniş (2010, 49) argues that in the early phase of Turkish neo-liberalism, during the 1980s, a narrow bureaucratic elite, under the leadership of Turgut Özal, played a key role in the policy transformation. But this small cadre of Özal’s, known as “Özal’s princes,” eschewed the legacy of the traditional bureaucracy of the Republic and its *etatist* mindset. They mostly consisted of the professionals Özal transferred from the private sector, who were acquainted with the global financial markets. In this cabinet, according to the information given by Arat (1991, 144), sixteen out of twenty ministers had a private sector background. Most interestingly, “his Ministers of Justice, Finance and Customs and a Minister of State had close ties with the Enka Holding Company, and another Minister of State with the Sabancı Group; both the Company and the Group had been leading TÜSİAD members. TÜSİAD had ‘organic’ links to the government in power.” The owner of the one of the biggest holdings in Turkey, Sakıp Sabancı, recounts how Özal, with his colleagues from the State Planning Organization, with whom he had close relations, started to work for their companies. Özal himself played an intermediary role in the transfer of the bureaucrats to the private sector (Sönmez, 1987, p.48). The other way around, he gave positions to many young private sector professionals within his team in the economic administration. But, even these princes could not avoid the attacks directed at them by Turgut Özal and his fellows in his party. Buğra (2015, 228-229) gives interesting examples of the disputes between these two groups.

The spearhead of Özal’s neo-liberal policies at the ideological front was an anti-intellectualist stance, mainly observed in the form of self-assurance and anti-bureaucratism.

A scrutiny of his anti-bureaucratic attitude reveals a multi-layered phenomenon with a variety of components. First, considering his leadership style, it should be stated that he exemplified a typical conservative neo-liberal, in the style of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in the West, or Carlos Menem in the Third World. One of the features of his stance, acclaimed among the capitalists and mostly the anti-statist liberals, was his attitude of businessman-cum-politician. He had a bold pragmatic style giving a strong message to the markets that he virtually abdicated the social and economic role of the state. On the contrary, the only priority he had was triggering economic growth with all means and at all costs. Nor did he not hide his weak commitment to the legal framework. He publicly made statements like “no harm would be done by violating the Constitution once.” Gönenç gives remarkable examples of how, during his term in the Presidency, he stretched the limits set by the Constitution, and even contravened the Constitutional principles (Gönenç, 2008, pp.506-510) Another interesting aspect of his style, which was in fact quite complementary to his disregard for law, was the instances when he popularized his disrespect for rules or formal procedures and customs of the state. He once inspected the military troops in swimming shorts, which was his way of giving a message to the military. It was proven in time though that such a loose style of leadership, contravening the customs and the rules of the state affairs, was conducive to the erosion of the institutional culture in the long run.

Another feature of the era that gave impetus to a distaste for the modern bureaucracy was the growing strength of the Islamist groups, not only in social and political life, but in the state apparatuses as well. There were accumulating evidences showing that Islamist *cemaats* and *tarikats* were infiltrating the state institutions, which could not have been achieved without the leniency and/or even endorsing approach of the Özal governments, as well as the military. At this point, it should be noted that, for decades after the 12 September coup, the military protected the position of being the last decision-maker in the essential policies regarding the domestic affairs and the national security. Özal’s affiliation with the *Nakşibendis* and his brothers’ radical religious orientations, and the strong ties they had with the newly rising Islamist financial institutions were no secret to the military. In these most favorable conditions, the Islamists capitalized on the neo-liberal assault on the traditional bureaucracy. There was an increasing appeal of the anti-establishment propaganda among the neo-liberal political cadres, liberal intellectuals and the Islamists, which basically accused the traditional bureaucrats, particularly the cadres in the judiciary, of holding on to their privileged status by adhering to an obsolete version of Republican *laicism* and therefore, rejecting the idea of change, which was allegedly imposing itself both from within the global environment and the

previously excluded segments of society. The traditional bureaucracy was accused of lacking the capacity to adapt to the necessities of a competitive-global economy, of relying on bookish knowledge, of developing an obsolete style of administration and therefore, of inhibiting the political and bureaucratic cadres equipped with the practical qualities that render them responsive to a rapidly changing environment. The attack on the traditional bureaucracy harboring such and similar accusations had strong anti-intellectual connotations.

But this does not mean that the traditional bureaucracy remained as a unified body and resisted change by insisting on a purely ethical position. Boratav (2005, 95), comparing the bureaucratic mindset of the 1970s and 1980s, points at a change in the approach of the bureaucracy to the state's endorsement of private interest. During the 1970s, according to Boratav, the bureaucracy considered itself as the owner of the state and opposed the abuse of the state resources. This "monitoring" role, although not favored by the individual capitalists, still worked for the general interests of the capitalist class by ensuring a certain level of stability. Aydın (2017, 233), in his research on the issue, sets forth a different explanation. He argues that the changing role of the bureaucracy in the 1980s cannot be explained solely by changes in their ideological affiliation or institutional ethics, but with the social relations of the era. The growth model of the 1960-1980 period was inward-oriented, i.e., depended on industrial production for the domestic markets, which entailed increase in the incomes of the people in order to ensure a certain level of consumption capacity. Thus, the policies accentuating relatively equal income distribution were implemented. However, Aydın aptly states that despite the social functions of the state, the state was still a capitalist state in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite the statist, social and pro-labour disposition, these were intermingled with policies protecting the interests of the capitalist sector. What changed in the 1980s, was the change in the accumulation regime of Turkish capitalism, which brought about the repudiation of these policies. This very same reason shook the status of the traditional bureaucracy and rendered the cadres loyal to a statist mindset vulnerable to the attacks from the neo-liberals including the Islamists.

6. In the Lieu of Conclusion

The history of anti-bureaucratism in Turkey follows a long and interesting path starting from the reactions to the institution-building *Tanzimat*. In short, it is convenient to conclude that the distaste shown for the traditional bureaucracy by the political power in different sequences had little connection with a real attempt at downsizing the state mechanism and its formalities. On the other hand, the intensification of such a negative attitude is correlated with changes in the accumulation regime, which necessitates an adaptation to the new class

interests without reservation. In Turkey, during the sequences analyzed in this chapter, because of the intolerance of the capitalist classes and their political representatives to the demands of the working class, and the unwillingness to grant concessions, pushes the state institutions and its bureaucracy too hard to adopt the new accumulation regime. Not surprisingly, because of the Republican mindset of the traditional bureaucracy in Turkey, which is known for giving priority to the well-being of the Republican unity, they had incompatibilities with the changes in these eras. In this confrontation, the governments frequently resorted to anti-intellectual claims, especially, when the struggle conveyed to the ideological sphere. And when the ideological cleavages form the ground, it becomes a frequently adopted strategy to accuse the traditional bureaucracy of lingering behind the necessities of the new order in both the economic and administrative planes.

Placing the 1950s, the 1980s and the last couple of decades under scrutiny also demonstrates how, in time, the anti-bureaucratic discourse and the actual policies to restructure the state institutions and to staff the bureaucracy in the neo-liberal fashion has resulted in a serious erosion of the institutional infrastructure of Turkish capitalism. Thus, the ground had been prepared for the latest destruction of the the institutional context of the state administration and policy making in the 2000s. In this regard, it can be deduced that the anti-bureaucratic legacy of the previous decades contributed to the institutional collapse of the latest decades, of course, with the contribution of the latest wave of anti-intellectualism swaying the Turkish political and cultural life recently.

References

- Akça, İ. (2017). Kolektif Bir Sermayedar Olarak Ordu [The Military as a Collective Entrepreneur]. In A. Insel&A. Bayramoğlu (Eds.), *Bir Zümre, Bir Parti: Türkiye'de Ordu* [A Coterie, A Party: Military in Turkey] (pp. 225-270). İstanbul, Turkey: Birikim.
- Arat, Y. (1991). Politics and Big Business: Janus Faced Link to the State. In M. Heper (ed.), *Strong State and Economic Interest Groups: The Post-1980 Experience* (135-147). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Atılğan, G. (2016). Tarımsal Kapitalizmin Sancağı Altında [Under the Flag of the Agricultural Capitalism]. In G. Atılğan, C. Saraçoğlu &A.Uslu, (Eds.), *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Türkiye'de Siyasal Hayat* [Political Life in Turkey from the Ottoman Empire to Present] pp. 387-514.
- Avcıoğlu, D. (1973). *Türkiye'nin Düzeni: Dün, Bugün, Yarın* [The Order of Turkey: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow]. İstanbul, Turkey: Cem.
- Aydın, R. (2017). *1980'li Yıllarda Türkiye'de Siyasal İktidar Bürokrasi İlişkisi*. (Doctoral Dissertation, Ankara University). Retrieved from: <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezSorguSonucYeni.jsp>
- Baer, N. (2017). *American Idiot: Rethinking Anti-Intellectualism in the Age of Trump*. Retrieved from: <http://www.publicseminar.org/2017/08/american-idiot/>

- Başaran-Lotz, N.&Örnek, C. (2019) Milli Mücadele Yıllarında Sosyalizm Etkisinde Halkçılık [Populism under the Impact of Socialism During the Years of National Struggle]. *Toplumsal Tarih* [Social History], 58-65.
- Bener, E. (1991). *Bir Büyük Bürokratin Romanı: Memhud Aytür* [The Novel of a Prominent Bureaucrat: Mehduh Aytür]. Ankara, Turkey: Bilgi.
- Berkes, N. (1975). Türk Düşününde Batı Sorunu [The Western Question in the Turkish Thought] Ankara, Turkey: Bilgi.
- Berkes, N. (2006). Türkiye’de Çağdaşlaşma [Secularism in Turkey]. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi.
- Boratav, K. (2005). 1980’li Yıllarda Türkiye’de Sosyal Sınıflar ve Bölüşüm [Social Classes and Income Distribution in Turkey in the Years of 1980]. Ankara, Turkey: İmge.
- Buğra, A. (2015). *Devlet ve İşadamları* [The State and Businessmen]. İstanbul, Turkey: İletişim.
- Çelik, M. (1998). *Üniversitede Cadı Kazanı 1948 DTCF Tasfiyesi ve Pertev Naili Boratav’ın Müdaafası* [Witch-Hunt at University 1948 DTCF Purges and the Defense of Pertev Naili Boratav]. İstanbul, Turkey: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı.
- Glasson, B. J. (2012). The intellectual outside: Anti-intellectualism and the subject of populist discourses in Australian newspapers. *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 26(1), 101-114.
- Gönenç, L. (2008). Presidential Elements in Government. Turkey. *European Constitutional Law Review*, 4/3, pp. 488-523. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1574019608004884>
- Heper, M. (1985). *The State Tradition in Turkey*. Walkington: Eothen.
- Heper, M. and Berkman, A. Ümit (2009). Bureaucracy in the Ottoman-Turkish Polity. In A. Frazmand (Ed.), *Bureaucracy and Administration* (65-82). New York: CRC Press.
- Hibou, B. (2015). The Bureaucratization of the World in the NeoLiberal Era: An International and Comparative Perspective. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hofstadter, R. (1963). *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Keyder, Ç. (1987). Türkiye’de Devlet ve Sınıflar [State and Class in Turkey]. Ankara, Turkey: Yurt.
- Mardin, Ş. (1973). Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics? *Daedalus*, 102: 169-189.
- Milor, V. (1990). The Genesis of Planning in Turkey. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 4, 1-30.
- Morelock, J. (2017). Authoritarian Populism Contra Bildung: Anti-Intellectualism and the Neoliberal Assault on the Liberal Arts. *Cadernos CIMEAC*, 7(2), 63-68.
- Oliver, J. E., & Rahn, W. M. (2016). Rise of the Trumpenvolk: Populism in the 2016. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 667(1), 189-206. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0002716216662639>
- Ortaylı, İ. (2016). İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı [The Longest Century of the Empire]. İstanbul, Turkey: Ötüken.
- Öniş, Z. (2004). Turgut Özal and His Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-Liberalism in Critical Perspective. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40(4), 113-134.
- Öniş, Z. (2010) Crisis and Transformations in Turkish Political Economy. *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 3 (3), 45-61.
- Poulantzas, N. (1974). Fascism and Dictatorship: The Third International and the Problem of Fascism, London: Verso.
- Poulantzas, N. (1978). *Political Power&Social Classes*. London: Verso.
- Shogan, C. J. (2007). Anti-Intellectualism in the Modern Presidency? A Republican Populism. *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(2), 295-303.

- Sönmez, M. (1987). Kırk Haramiler: Türkiye’de Holdingler [The Fourty Thieves: Holdings in Turkey]. İstanbul, Turkey: Gözlem Yayıncılık.
- Şaylan, G. (1983). Cumhuriyet Bürokrasisi [Republican Bureaucracy]. *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of the Republican Turkey] (298-308). İstanbul, Turkey: İletişim.
- Tachau, F. and Heper, M. (1983). The State, Politics, and the Military in Turkey. *Comparative Politics*, 16, (1), 17-33.
- Tachau, F. (1988). Political Leadership in Turkey: Continuity and Change. In M. Heper & A. Evin (Eds.), *State, Democracy and the Military in Turkey in the 1980s* (103-117). Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Tekeli, İ. & İlkin, S. (1974). *Savaş Sonrası Ortamda 1947 Türkiye İktisadi Kalkınma Planı* [The 1947 Development Plan in the Post-War Conditions]. Ankara, Turkey: Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi.
- Toprak, B. (1988). The State, Politics, and Religion. In M. Heper & A. Evin (Eds.), *State, Democracy and the Military in Turkey in the 1980s* (119-136). Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- White, M. (1962). Reflections on Anti-Intellectualism. *Daedalus*, 91(3), 457-468.
- Yalman, G. (2002). Tarihsel Bir Perspektiften Türkiye’de Devlet ve Burjuvazi: Rölativist bir Paradigma mı Hegemonya Stratejisi mi? *Praksis* (5), 7-23.
- Zürcher, E. J. (2004). *Turkey: A Modern History*. London; New York: I.B. Tauris.