

**INSTITUTIONAL AND ATTITUDINAL DETERMINANTS OF  
WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE RECRUITMENT: THE CASE OF THE  
REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY IN TURKEY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **INSTITUTIONAL AND ATTITUDINAL DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE RECRUITMENT: THE CASE OF THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY**

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This thesis analyses the process of women's legislative recruitment in Turkey by focusing on the interaction among the certain features of the Turkish political system including the attitudes of the party elite toward the enhancement of women's political representation. It has been demonstrated in earlier studies that one of the reasons behind women's low level of parliamentary representation in Turkey is the fact that the selectors in the political parties fail to support women candidates adequately in the elections. Related to that, women's legislative recruitment is also likely to be impeded by the unsupportive nature of the main dynamics of political system such as political culture, party system and the

electoral system. Considering the fact that these institutional and attitudinal factors are highly inter-related with each other, the insufficient number of women candidates nominated by the major social democratic party, the Republican People's Party in the 1990s, including the latest national elections on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002 calls for an analysis of not only the attitudes of the RPP selectors toward positive discrimination mechanisms such as the quotas for women but also of the relevant party institutional factors rooted in the Turkish political system. The study contends that the RPP's women-friendly party culture and selectors' positive perspectives towards women's political integration are not sufficient factors for the promotion of women's legislative recruitment within the party. The weakness of the intra-party democracy in the RPP which is particularly the result of the oligarchic structure and the problems with institutionalization significantly impede women's legislative recruitment within the party. The study has found that the low level of women's legislative recruitment in the RPP is a consequence of the interaction between the institutional and attitudinal factors within the RPP which perpetuates patriarchal elite oligarchy in the nomination process. The documented gap between the RPP's party rhetoric and practice in this study is found as the reflection of the party's problems in internalizing social democratic values.

Keywords: Legislative recruitment, political system, party organization, candidate nomination, the Republican People's Party selectors, positive discrimination strategies, quota practices.

## ÖZ

### KADINLARIN YASAMA ORGANLARINA YERLEŐTİRİLMESİ VE SEÇİCİLERİN PARLAMENTOYA GİRMEK İSTEYEN KADINLARA YÖNELİK TAVIRLARI: TÜRKİYE'DE CUMHURİYET HALK PARTİSİ ÖRNEĐİ

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Bu tez, Türkiye'de kadınların yasama organlarına yerleŐtirilme sürecini, parti seçkinlerinin kadınların siyasi temsilinin artırılmasına yönelik bakış açıları da dahil Türk siyasi sisteminin belirli özelliklerinin birbirleriyle olan ilişkilerine odaklanarak incelemiŐtir. Daha önce yapılan araŐtırmalarda belirtildiĐi gibi, Türkiye'de kadınların parlamenter temsilinin düşük düzeyde olmasının nedenlerinden biri, siyasi partilerdeki aday seçicilerin, seçimlerde kadın adayları yeterince desteklememesidir. Buna baĐlı olarak, bir siyasi sistemi oluŐturan politik kültür, parti sistemi ve seçim sisteminin kadınların siyasi hayata

katılımlarını destekleyici nitelikte olmamasının kadınların yasama organlarına yerleştirilmemelerine katkıda bulunması da muhtemeldir. Bu kurumsal ve tavrısal iki faktörün birbiriyle yakından ilişkili olduğu düşünülürken, sosyal demokrat bir parti olan CHP'nin 1990'larda 3 Kasım 2002 genel seçimlerinde dahil kadın adaylara yeterince yer vermemesi, sadece CHP seçicilerinin kadınlara uygulanabilen kota gibi olumlu ayrımcılık mekanizmalarına yönelik tavırlarının değil, fakat aynı zamanda Türk siyasi sisteminin barındırdığı parti kurumsal faktörlerinin de incelenmesini gerektirmektedir. Bu çalışma, CHP'deki kadınları destekleyen parti kültürünün ve seçicilerin kadınların siyasi entegrasyonuna olumlu bakış açılarının, kadınların yasama organlarına yerleştirilmesinin artırılması için yeterli faktörler olmadığını iddia etmektedir. CHP içindeki oligarşik yapı ve kurumsallaşma sorunlarının bir sonucu olan parti-içi demokrasinin zayıflığı kadınların yasama organlarına yerleştirilmesini olumsuz yönde etkilemektedir. Bu çalışma, CHP'de kadınların yasama organlarına yerleştirilme düzeylerinin düşük olmasının, CHP'nin aday belirleme sürecini şekillendiren ataerkil seçkinler oligarşisini sürdüren kurumsal ve tavrısal faktörlerin birbirleriyle olan etkileşiminin bir sonucu olduğunu bulmuştur. CHP'nin parti söylemi ve pratikleri arasındaki boşluğun, bu çalışmada, CHP'nin sosyal demokrat değerleri içselleştirmede yaşadığı sorunların bir yansıması olduğu sonucuna varılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yasama organlarına yerleştirme, siyasi sistem, parti örgütü, aday belirleme, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi seçicileri, olumlu ayrımcılık stratejileri, kota uygulamaları.

To my parents, the source of my happiness...

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Objectives and Significance of the Study

While democracy definition of today's world is demanding equality between men and women despite the prevailing force of patriarchy in all spheres of life, and while this demand is more often than ever expressed at both international and national levels around the world, the proportion of women members of parliament (MPs) in many parliaments worldwide still stands as a serious challenge for egalitarian principles of democracy. In this context, although women in Turkey gained their political rights decades earlier than many European countries, this did not mean that the problem of women's representation could be solved earlier. The political careers of women are still impeded by male hegemony in politics. As an indication of this fact, the Turkish women are conspicuously absent among the legislative elites.

The objective of this thesis is to inquire into the puzzle of the co-existence of pro-equality rhetoric of Turkey's major social-democratic party the Republican People's Party (RPP) and its failure to recruit women in the elections to the parliament (the TGNA) on an equal basis with men. With the exception of the early years of the Republic, the rhetoric of political parties on women's involvement in politics has not matched with the actual political outcomes in Turkey. In practice, not different than many other political systems in the world, the role of Turkish political parties in promoting women's political position has remained inadequate. Moreover, the lack of institutional arrangements that would support women's legislative recruitment has perpetuated the problem.

Currently, there are only twenty-four women in Turkish parliament, making up 4.4 per cent of the whole. Among the three political parties which currently have seats in the Turkish parliament, the RPP is the oldest political party which has initiated the democratization process in the political system since the 1940s. Today, however, as the other mainstream political parties, RPP is often accused of being highly unrepresentative in terms of the proportion of women placed on its top party posts and of not paying attention to gender equality in nomination practices for the parliament. This situation seems surprising and warrants explanation given the fact that the point at which women were represented the most in numbers in the Turkish political history was historically achieved under the RPP governance during the single-party period. It is also interesting that the RPP which claims to be a modern social-democratic party concerned with equity issues in social and political life does not seem to be supportive enough for women's political representation.

While the current situation in the Turkish parliament, with regard to equal representation of men and women, provides a disappointing scene for Turkish politics, it should be emphasized that low levels of women's representation in Turkish politics can be explained with a variety of inter-related factors embedded in the society. Without doubt, gender-differentiated roles of men and women within a patriarchal system are highly explanatory not only on the differences in political participation patterns of men and women but also on the distanced position of women from politics as well. At first sight, women's lack of political resources and their token position in the pool of eligibles, the local level power relations set out among the male party members, the lack of an influential women's movement to force the political parties to take action for equality policies may, among others, provide possible explanations for the exclusion of women from politics.

In addition, another factor, which at the same time constitutes the subject matter of this thesis is the strength of oligarchic structures prevailing in political parties of Turkey. This means that women's movement to the higher levels of political

office usually depends on the choices of the leadership cadres who jealously keep the political power at hand. In fact, it can be said that the absence of particular mechanisms which can be designed within the internal structures of the political parties to achieve higher levels of women's representation in politics and thus, facilitate the enhancement of women's political power within the national decision-making mechanisms is a significant deficiency of the Turkish political system today. Research worldwide on women's low levels of representation in the political arena also supports the view that the situation cannot only be attributed merely to the socio-cultural and individual factors circulating the male-dominant system. The point should be emphasized that this is also a result of the institutional factors emanating from the political system.

Among these institutional factors, political parties remain major agents largely determining who gets the parliamentary posts. Thus, it can be contended that women's token position in the parliament can also be explained by the political parties' position to the issue. In the light of this view, it can be said that the institutional structure of the political parties and the perspectives of top-level party officials undertake a particular importance to explain the women's situation in Turkish politics.

This thesis aims to shed a light on the party institutional factors in Turkish politics on women's legislative recruitment by examining the RPP of today. The main focus of the thesis is especially on the RPP of the 1990s since the re-establishment of the RPP after eleven years break following the 1980 military coup has symbolized the emergence of new social democratic party which is loyal to Kemalism but at the same time positions itself as the same line with the European social democratic parties.

The thesis hypothesizes that the significantly low numbers of women MPs within the RPP is an outcome of the RPP recruitment style and process which work as particularly disadvantageous for women under the effect of both party-related factors and the Turkish political system. One of the most important reasons lying

behind this thesis is the RPP's disappointing nomination record during the latest parliamentary elections November 3, 2002 which put women aspirants at highly disadvantaged position compared to RPP men. Moreover, it was unsurprising, given the positive record of the social-democratic parties in Western democracies with this regard, that a political party with a social democratic identity emphasizing gender equality did not position enough number of women in its candidate lists. Thus, the insufficient number of women in the RPP's candidate lists resulted in very low numbers of women MPs in the last parliamentary elections. This situation calls for a closer analysis of the institutional structure of the party and attitudes of the RPP elite which stands on the heritage of the Republican reforms of gender equality. Taking the determinative role of political parties in legislative recruitment on its departure point, this study aims at examining the positions and perspectives of the RPP officials and deputies as they are situated in the specific institutional structures towards implementing equality policies that promote women's legislative recruitment. Such an institutional and attitudinal examination of a political party can help us identify the major reasons of the fact that women in Turkey lag behind their European sisters in terms of sharing political power with men at the highest levels of political decision mechanisms. Accordingly, in this thesis, in the light of the perspectives on women's representation, an evaluation of the existent structure of the RPP is undertaken to highlight the deficiencies in this structure and to add a new perspective to the question of women's under-representation in Turkish politics.

It should be stated that this research does not have the objective of making a micro-politics analysis, but it rather analyzes the macro-level politics in the RPP. As Ayata (1992) demonstrated in her valuable research on the RPP at local politics, the complementary effect of micro-politics within the whole political system cannot be denied. However, although this thesis does not totally exclude the significance of micro-politics, it is confined to a macro-level analysis of the institutional and organizational profile of the RPP and to the attitudes of RPP leadership cadres in so far as these factors have an impact on the decision-making process within the party in general and, specifically, on gender issues.

In addition to an examination of the relevant party institutional factors, the focus of analysis in this thesis is on the perspectives of top-level party selectors about the women candidates and on the RPP's nomination practices during the last general elections of the November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002. To this end, first, the structure of the Turkish political system and the RPP's present position towards women in the frame of its party structure is analyzed, secondly, the values, attributes and beliefs of selectors in the recruitment process, their perspectives on positive discrimination strategies for women and the criteria under which these selectors made their choices on candidate short-lists are studied. Such an analysis is expected to provide a fresh look at the causes behind women's under-representation in Turkish politics within the framework of the interaction between the political institutional factors and the recruitment process in the RPP.

## **2. Methodology**

As explained in the previous section, this study looks at the party-related factors on women's legislative recruitment in the case of the RPP.<sup>1</sup> Even a preliminary survey of the coverage of the nomination prior to the election of November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002 demonstrates that the RPP was a favorite party for many women political aspirants. In addition, the selectors had the power to put women on the top of the election lists, since the candidates were determined by the formal-centralized nomination. However, it was a disappointing scene to see few women in the TGNA as the representatives of the RPP. Therefore, I first set out to conduct interviews with five leading members -one women and four men members- of the Central Executive Committee (CEC) to understand the reasons behind the low numbers of the RPP women candidates and the recruitment practice in the party in general. In addition to the interviews with the members of the CEC, I also

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<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of this research, my aim was to conduct a case study on the recruitment of the RPP women by analyzing both supply and demand factors. That is, I planned to examine how the political capital of the women aspirants and the expectations of the selectors interacted within the RPP. However, my attempts failed to reach the lists of the aspirants who applied to the RPP for candidacy since the membership registration office of the RPP was not accessible even for the party members. Therefore, the confidentiality on the party records directed me to conduct this research by focusing on the demand side of women's recruitment, i.e. those related to the party selectors.

conducted interviews with 50 men party officials -among whom there were 10 former deputies, 10 former local party leaders and 30 party members- and analyzed their attitudes toward both the selection of women for candidacy and toward the adoption of gender equality policies within the party and the centralized nature of the nominations.

I used the snowball technique while I conducted the interviews. Except the members of the CEC, party officials directed me to another. Consequently, I interviewed 50 party officials. The research data consisted of the qualitative analysis of these interviews. These interviews took a two months' period covering April-May 2004 and they were conducted in Ankara. The interviews conducted with the members of the CEC consisted of ten open-ended questions which aimed to understand their attitudes and values determining the candidate selection and promotion of women in the party. The interviews were conducted both in the party offices and in the parliamentary offices of the CEC members. Apart from the interviews of the members of the CEC, other party officials were interviewed in their individual offices in Ankara. The interview questions consisted of two major question sets to identify the selectors' attitudes toward women's political representation and the establishment of the women-friendly mechanisms for the promotion of women's legislative recruitment, namely quotas. In addition to the interviews, the data on which the analysis of this thesis relies is based on the literature on women's legislative recruitment and the relevant party documents of the RPP.

### **3. Organization of the Study**

In the first chapter of this study, different perspectives on the problem of women's equal political representation are introduced. This is necessary to look closely at the distinction between women's *substantive* and *descriptive* representation and to understand how each of these two representation models affect women in political life. This chapter also aims at presenting the theoretical approaches that justify the

necessity for women's descriptive presence in the political decision-making mechanisms.

In the second chapter, the factors behind women's selection and election into representative bodies in established democracies is reviewed within a framework of a basic legislative recruitment model. In this context, the chapter provides information about the determinants of the legislative recruitment including the supply and demand-side factors of the recruitment and, how these determining factors interact with other components of the political system including political culture, party system and electoral system.

This chapter looks at the strategies implemented by the political parties to promote women both in the internal party organizations and in the parliamentary bodies. Among these positive discrimination strategies, the chapter also looks at the quota practices for women by evaluating the pros and cons of the quota applications and by giving examples of the quota practices in some of the Western political parties. In this chapter, examples of quota practices are given from Western political parties because of the fact that the levels of women's representation in the most Western countries have significantly been high which is also a result of these quota practices implemented in the political parties.

In the third chapter, the components of the Turkish political system and the RPP in the pre-1980 period are analyzed on the basis of their relative significance for women's legislative recruitment. The Turkish political system including the political culture, party system and electoral system is analyzed to understand to what extent the Turkish political system is supportive for women's legislative recruitment.

The fourth chapter of this study looks at the ideology and organizational structure of the RPP in the 1990s including the nature and extent of centralization and the institutionalization levels within the RPP. Since legislative recruitment is largely

shaped by the party organizational factors, the nomination process is analyzed through the organizational aspects of the party.

The fifth chapter focuses on the demand side factors of women's recruitment by analyzing the attitudes and the values of the RPP selectors in the selection process. In addition to the selectors' attitudes toward the adoption of women-friendly mechanisms within the RPP, the perspectives of other party officials on the enhancement of women's integration into politics are analyzed.

Finally, in the conclusion, the institutional and attitudinal factors which resulted in low levels of women officials within the RPP are analyzed. The RPP's insufficient party mechanism to promote women's legislative recruitment is highlighted and also the question of how the RPP can evolve to a political party where women are sufficiently represented is examined.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **THE CASE FOR WOMEN'S EQUAL REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENTS**

The question of “what women can offer different than men in politics” has always been the major issue in the debates about the political representation of women. Although women’s presence within the population has never made up a minority position, their minority representation in politics has always been an issue that needed some form of justification. While women’s late entrance to the political arena has been an obvious disadvantage compared to that of men’s, this late coming has had many different basis for justification. Indeed, many scholars argued that women’s political representation should not even be an issue which needs to be justified; rather it is a natural claim of full and equal citizenship.

In the early 1980s, Virginia Sapiro’s (1981) reasoning on the problem of women’s representation undoubtedly had its place among the most enlightening elaborations of the case for women’s political representation. It was pointed out that the representation of women became an issue when women realized that their interests are represented by the male heads of the household due to the sexual divisions of labor prevailing within the traditional family structure. This realization resulted in the rejection of the conventional wisdom that women’s interests could be represented by men since these interests were a reflection of the family interests.

Thus, franchise was the first, but a small step towards ensuring political equality between women and men as separate individuals. To go one step further, it was a

necessity to clarify whether women as a group have politically-relevant unique characteristics; whether they have special interests to which a representative could or should respond to (Sapiro, 1981). At this point, Sapiro concludes that the unequal division of labor within the family and gender-differentiated roles within this structure has strongly justified the view that women have interests to be represented. In fact, women's social position within the society created problems specific to women themselves and they set the basis for their distinct interests. Women's low proportions of involvement in many areas of social, economic and political life were also the factors justifying the necessity for the representation of their distinct interests.

Understandably, with the rise of the feminist waves, women's distinct interests and the representation of these interests have been debated intensively on the basis of difference and equality. The views of more conservative nature were more open to the issues of difference and collective attributes while the classical liberal democratic theory more often discussed the problem of extending equality. Even from a conservative perspective, the group rights could be protected by a concurrent majority required for legislation (Scott, 1996). On the feminist side of the discussions, the claims on ensuring equality between women and men were countered by the view that the inescapable differences between men and women needed different treatment for both. In other words, the early argument that assumed the differences between men and women unimportant was challenged by many feminists by asserting that these differences should actually be the main focus of the feminist discourse. For many feminists, the divisions on the basis of class, sex and race which shape the differences among women require different treatment for women themselves.

From the 1970s onwards in Europe in particular, feminist scholarship with the discourse of difference asserted that it mattered whether it was men or women making political decisions; men and women represented different values, experiences and priorities. Therefore, men could make no legitimate claim to represent women (Skeijie, 2001). The main point lying behind this argument was

related to the needs of the groups represented. Given that the political representation of a group rested on shared attributes, speaking for others in a legislative environment called for not only sympathy but also a sharing of attributes. So the conclusion was that only a woman finally would know what women's needs were.

Feminist scholarship has largely envisaged women as a homogenous group possessing collective attributes and, in this context, asserted that women's interests could be truly represented by women themselves. However, the justifications for women's representation have been endangered in the conceptual framework of fairness and utility which were commonly debated under the liberal democratic theory.

The arguments on 'fairness' held that the position of a single woman in or out of the political arena was mainly about her preference and that any intervention to such situation would be a form of prejudice (Mansbridge, 2001). That is, if more women than men want to spend their lives out of politics, no force ought to be applied to change this situation. In this respect, any intervention for change meant prejudice or discrimination (Skeijie, 2001). Yet, this perspective on women's representation may simply form a basis for maintaining the low levels of women's involvement in politics with the implication that women's situation in politics was related to women's own preferences. However, such a view obviously ignores the different social positions of women and men. Positioning women's preferences at the centre of the problem would be somewhat an assumption of the existence of an equal world for women and men, while the debates on women's interests and representation have already stemmed from the unequal social positions of women and men. So, it could only be argued that the preferences could be considered for both men and women if the conditions of both were equalized.

Among the possible dangers related to the rhetoric of difference, I believe, the most crucial one has been the discussions carried on utility of the gender difference. Debates on social utility, by questioning the utility of women's

possible contributions to the common good, suggest that women's involvement in politics is a matter of necessity or desirability. From this point, women's contributions to the common good can be evaluated only through the concrete examples of their utility. It is clear that the necessity or desirability of contributions to the common good is an issue raised just for women due to their late comer position in politics. In this context, political scientist Anna Jonasdottir (1991) strongly criticizes the tendency to think the gender difference in the framework of utility because utilitarianism degrades women and contributes to the definition of woman as the 'other', the sex with special interests or experiences. The debates on the utility of women, she argues, require some form of proof which can be judged by the evaluation of practice. She draws attention to the dangers of difference by pointing out that if women cannot demonstrate that they do something different from men, the conclusion may be that there is no point in women's presence in the political realm.

In general, feminist theorists have approached the debates over women's representation by countering the arguments which degrade women's contributions to the development of a truly good society. While the necessity for women's representation by women was questioned by many on the basis of 'difference', the case for women's representation have found equally specific bases for justification. Among these, the most commonly accepted one has been the argument that representation is a prerequisite for the full and equal citizenship. This is both expressed as an ideal of an activist, participatory and egalitarian citizenship in social democratic discourse, and as part of a more liberal approach; since John Stuart Mill, transformation of self-regarding individuals into citizens with a more expanded set of values was defended. As many scholars claimed, political representation should include a physical reflection of public. Therefore, it was undeniable that women comprising half of the population should get their place within the system as equal and active citizens.

The definition of democracy, in its all forms, involves an equal and participant citizenship. In the frame of this definition, it is hardly true for any of the political

systems in the world that democracy can be reached in its full legitimate form. Democracies approach normative legitimacy to the degree that their processes approach the conditions of legitimacy.

Undoubtedly, the degree to which women as making up half of the population are represented in a democratic system provides important clues as to the degree of democratic legitimacy. Equality arguments on women's representation assume that the quality of democracy depends on the degree to which a significant group in a society has its own representatives. Parity movements which consolidated their power especially during the early 1990s in Europe also rested on the principle of equality between men and women. Parity arguments assume that the low numbers of elected women should be redressed for the sake of all of us since the equal representation of men and women is a matter of democratic consolidation. For example, Gaspard (1992) argues that parity in representation is simply an application of the principle of equality among the people who make up the human race.

As explained above, while arguments on women's representation commonly have suggested that women have interests to be represented and that the representative systems require a substantial quotient of women among the representatives, what form of representation could be more representative for women has also been debated. As mentioned earlier, the most common view among the feminist theorists has been the necessity for women's representation by women themselves. By definition, *descriptive representation* refers to the statistical correspondence of particular demographic characteristics in the population – for instance, gender, race religion or age – with those of the representative. For instance, women representing women is a form of *descriptive representation* (Pitkin, 1967). On the one hand, descriptive representation requires numerical representation of groups in a legislative environment where the collective decisions are taken. On the other hand, *substantive representation* focuses on the representation of interests which does not require shared descriptive attributes; i.e., shared characteristic such as gender between the representative and the

represented is not a prerequisite for substantive representation. Yet, descriptive representation is based primarily on this sharing.

Anne Phillips (1995) suggests that descriptive representation which she calls ‘politics of presence’ is the most adequate form of representation for the members of socially excluded groups. She also argues that substantive representation, which she calls ‘politics of ideas’, can not ensure an effective representation of these groups. David Canon (1999) also categorizes the concepts of descriptive and substantive representation as the ‘politics of difference’ and the ‘politics of commonality’, respectively. He argues that the politics of difference, due to its descriptive nature, seeks primarily to represent the needs of the racial, ethnic or gender group of which an individual is a member. The politics of commonality, he argues, focuses on the representation of interests that do not require shared descriptive attributes since they are not so unique that someone outside the group cannot identify with them and, thus, fail to provide adequate representation.

While the arguments which have envisaged *substantive representation* as the major pathway to true representation, the political practice has shown that the authority given to the representative by the voter and the responsiveness of the representative to the voter does not solve the problem of representation. Mansbridge (1999) draws attention to situations involving the disadvantaged groups in which the constituents may want to be represented by individuals whose backgrounds and experiences mirror those of group members. It is argued that the physical reflection of the public with its demographic characteristics can be seen as a prerequisite for democratic deliberation since the persuasiveness in the decision making process needs the presence and the perspectives of the relevant members of the society. Mansbridge in her essay “The Descriptive Political Representation of Gender” claims that democratic deliberation is best performed by ‘descriptive’ representatives in the historical contexts of communicative distrust and of uncrystallized interests. According to her, the descriptive representation is best suited for the deliberative and aggregative functioning of democracy. That is, the most satisfactory decisions in a deliberation can be taken

only through the participation of relevant descriptive representatives, and such decisions can best serve for legitimate democracy. She also points out that a perfect communication between the representatives and the voters requires shared attributes of both and that the issues on which the representatives do not have a clear position can be best represented by descriptive representatives.

As Mansbridge (1999) argued, the problem of representation cannot be resolved through the entitlement of the voters to the representative. Voting to be represented does not always mean, especially for women, the true representation of different interests. It is argued that democratic representation should be a platform where people from different social backgrounds could create a commonality which would be good for all. Nevertheless, it can be said that a democratic system representing all perspectives in the society is not always an easy political project to create. In many legislative assemblies in the world, the political representation of different groups is undertaken by the representatives who do not have the same experiences with the groups they represented. It is a general practice that people vote for the candidates who, they believe, are qualified enough to represent themselves. However, in many legislative processes, it is generally evidenced that the representatives remain too far from reflecting the perspectives and the interests of the people they represented.

Considering women and men in the historical context of the domination-subordination relationship, it is hard to claim that women as subordinates can be represented truly by men as dominants. Mansbridge (1999) rightly questions whether the dominant group's inattention and subordinate's distrust could make a representative deliberation possible. She argues that women, as the historically subordinate group, are more likely to communicate with a woman representative than women represented by a man and that such descriptive representation facilitates the communication between the constituent and the representative.

Overall, political representation of women's distinct interests has also been one of the major problem areas of politics. It should be mentioned that in many political

systems, knowledge and perspectives of the representatives on the gender related issues can not be clear enough to make a fair collective decision. Phillips (1995) argues that descriptive representation can provide the best substantive representation through the involvement of the individuals in the deliberations for whom these uncrystallized interests are really important.

The fact that in many political systems in the world, gender-related issues in the decision-making processes cannot be satisfactorily taken up for women's advantage can be linked to women's token position in the decision-taking bodies. Nevertheless, in deliberative bodies, women's own perspectives and experiences could be an important force in changing the understanding of other representatives.

To conclude, democracy can be achieved through the involvement of all perspectives in the process of deliberation. While such an ideal can perfectly serve to an equal and peaceful society, it is a difficult question whether the perspectives of all groups could be fairly involved in a deliberation. Until now, in none of the legislative bodies in the world, women have achieved numerical balance with men. However, women's increasing representation in many European countries has proved that women-friendly policies and gender equality policies could be produced through the descriptive representation of women. Accordingly, Chapter II looks more closely at the factors behind women's selection and election into representative bodies in established democracies.

## CHAPTER II

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE RECRUITMENT

“(a female candidate) must be handsome, a lady, able to introduce the President gracefully, and wear orchids well; she must have an acceptable bank account and she must never, never interfere with party policy.”

Edward J. Flynn,

Democratic national chairman under President Franklin Roosevelt.

(Kerr, 1956 cited in Flammang, 1997)

The political position to be achieved in time within the political system has usually been unpredictable for individuals who are at the beginning of a political career. The problematic side of the recruitment process derives from the fact that the movements to the higher levels of political office do not follow a linear route (Norris, 1993). Some of the aspirants fail in the process but some succeed to promote their political position. In addition, legislative recruitment which refers to the individual movement from lower levels of political office to a parliamentary career does not always function through clearly defined rules and standardized criteria (Norris, 1996). In fact, legislative recruitment is a process which is shaped directly by a diversity of individual, institutional and cultural factors specific to political systems.

Given this context, political parties play the major role in determining the political actors who will be recruited at top ranks of political office. In democratic elections, except for independently running candidates, people choose their representatives from among the candidates who are nominated by political parties.

Accordingly, it can be argued that political parties are the main actors of recruitment process by selecting the eligibles for government office. Norris and Lovenduski (1993) question this selection process on the basis of whether it is 'democratic' in involving the members of different ranks within the party, whether it is 'fair' in treating all political aspirants equally, and whether it is 'efficient' as a decision-making process, and whether it is 'effective' in producing representative candidates for society.

As it is elaborated in the first section, democracies need some degree of legitimacy to set its roots within the society. In this respect, women's equal political representation, which is considered as an indication of a functioning democracy, is highly dependent on an institutionalized recruitment process. However, it is hardly true for most political systems in the world that the recruitment is processed in a fair and effective way for women since the prevailing male hegemony in decision-making mechanisms of political parties holds significant influence over determining the political position of women. It can be argued that women's movement to high levels of political office usually reflects on the preferences of high ranking officials within political parties officials who are predominantly male (Norris, 1996). However, the reasons keeping women at a disadvantaged position during the recruitment process cannot only be limited to the dominance of male selectors at high political posts. To understand the process more clearly, other relevant factors at work should also be reviewed.

Norris' model of the conceptual frame of legislative recruitment which is based on three major dimensions identifies the basic variables of the process as; (i) the political system including the political culture, party system and electoral system, (ii) the degree of internal democracy within the party organization and nomination practices, (iii) the supply of the candidates and the demands of selectors. These three levels of analysis, Norris argues, do not function independently of each other; rather the rules of the political systems together influence the behaviors and

attributes of individual actors (Norris, 1996). These factors can be dealt within a supply-demand framework.

### **1. The Supply and Demand Side of Recruitment and the Gender Factor**

For many individuals who seek a political career, a political party is mostly the first place to be involved in due to the fact that political parties provide the major mechanisms through which a political aspirant climbs up to a legislative career. However, the possibilities of getting selected as a candidate depends on the factors which are closely linked to what political aspirants have and what selectors expect them have. In other words, the interaction between supply and demand factors lies at the heart of the recruitment process to determine who will end up with a seat in parliament. Thus, building of a legislative career depends on the point at which the supply of the aspirant and the expectations of the selector intersect. On the supply side, the political aspirants' individual resources carry with them into the recruitment process and, on the demand side, selectors' attitudes to and expectations from applicants come into play.

In a recruitment study, an important question relates to what a legislative candidate should ideally possess to be considered a legitimate representative. While the imperatives of democratic representation require a proportionate reflection of the features of society in political structures, it is hard to claim for most of the parliaments in the world to be representative in this sense. Moreover, it is a common situation for many parliaments of the world that legislators are selected from among candidates with the most privileged background (Norris and Lovenduski, 1993).

The tendency to select the most privileged candidates can be seen as an important indicator in measuring the level of democratic legitimacy in a political system, but as more relevant to this study, it has important implications as to what makes a candidate more privileged than others. In her evaluations on the dynamics of the candidate selection, Norris gives the example of British system where political aspirants climbed up to a standardized career ladder that requires specific

individual qualifications such as public service experience (Norris, 1993). Therefore, the aspirants who have public service background are more likely to be selected as a candidate in Britain than those who lack this experience. Like public service experience, the other factors such as party service, formal qualifications, legislative experience, speaking abilities, financial resources, political connections, name-recognition, group networks, organizational skills, ambition for office or incumbency status also raise the aspirants' status to a privileged one (Norris, 1996). More importantly, in the political systems where political participation is under the monopoly of professionals holding more than one political office, the outcome of the selection process usually closes the door to the 'unprofessionals' (Norris and Lovenduski, 1993).

In one sense, selecting the most privileged aspirants for candidacy can be considered as a form of discrimination against the 'unprofessionals'. For this reason, it is important to understand the demand side factors more clearly. In other words, an analysis on the selectors' attitudes toward aspirants could be highly relevant for a recruitment study in order to understand probable discriminating factors at work.

The expectations and attitudes of selectors' in nominating candidates may vary across different political systems. As it will be presented in the following sections of this chapter, the demands of the selectorate are shaped by the political system as a whole. In particular, the political culture, consisting of the values and attitudes dominant in a political system, significantly influences the practices of the selection, through the evaluation of the aspirants' qualities by the selectors. The selectors evaluate the applicants' abilities, qualifications and experience through their perceptions shaped by the political system including the political culture. Hence, one should look at those factors which shape the attitudes of selectors in nominating a candidate.

First of all, it should be noted that the possibility of being known by the selectors may not be equal for each individual applying for candidacy. In fact, in a highly

institutionalized system, where the candidates are nominated through a set of clear-cut criteria, being personally unknown by the selectors may not really matter in the process. However, candidate selection can be highly personalized in some democratic systems. In systems where party selectors have little information about applicants, Norris argues, the perceptions of the selectors may create direct and imputed discrimination toward the applicant and accordingly, a certain category of candidate or an individual applicant may be personally favored by the selectors (Norris, 1996).

Candidate selection is also affected by the selectors' position within the party mechanism. While the candidates nominated by the party members are commonly considered as more representative, it could be also claimed that the party members may also favor a specific category of candidates. For instance, the selectors' attitude towards women, considering them as candidates who are likely to damage the party's electoral chances is an example for such kind of discrimination. It is also suggested that the leadership cadres nominating the party's candidates may be influenced by the party activists in local areas or grassroots party members in favor of certain candidates (Norris, 1996).

Secondly, selectors' preferences in nominating candidates may be related with the question of accountability. Political aspirants who seem to be accountable to the electorate may be an important factor that influences the perception of the selector. However, as Norris (1996) points out, it is also determined by the demand of the selectors on whether the representatives should be accountable to the whole electorate, to grassroots party members, to a smaller group of party activists, or to the party leadership.

Thirdly and more importantly, the individual's own resources that help raise aspirant's status to eligibility for candidacy are taken into account by selectors. It is important here to mention that the individual resources which make the aspirants eligible for selection function in the process as both supply and demand side factor. During the process, the supply of the aspirants comes together with

the demands of the selectors. Selectors may favor a variety of resources which can be categorized as follows:

**a. Demographic characteristics including age, educational status and occupation:**

Previous studies reveal that younger age, high educational status and jobs with high social status are among the factors to which selectors give particular importance. First, educational background of the applicants becomes an important asset in the selection process. Selectors may favor the aspirants with high educational status since education is mostly seen as the source of other individual abilities such as good speaking and organizational skills. Also, it is evident that the better educated aspirants are selected by the party members since they value high educational status as a sign of ability and social status (Ranney, 1965).

Second, political activism demands motivation so that selectors in nominating candidates are more likely to favor young candidates who can provide high performance and dynamism. Parallel to this perspective, Norris (1996) argues that the selectors mostly believe that the younger candidates are more motivated than the older ones.

When it comes to occupational background, selectors' preferences mostly concentrate on the aspirants with professional jobs. It is argued that party members mostly consider manual workers as less able and articulate (Bochel and Denver, 1983). Thus, from the demand side, the working-class status may look like a disadvantage for candidacy. Norris (1996) also argues that the jobs with flexibility over time, professional independence, financial security, public networks, social status and technical skills facilitate one's political career.

**b. Financial and time resources:**

In almost all political systems in the world, politics is an area of interest which requires sufficient financial resources and additional time to be actively involved in. Especially in election times, campaigning and meeting with party members

require adequate money and time. Research indicates that the applicants with more available time and financial resources to invest in a political career are more likely to promote their political status (Norris, 1996). Moreover, the financial resources sometimes become the most important determinant of the selection. In United States, for instance, the campaigning for the candidacy works as a political entrepreneurship where the political aspirants invest big amounts of money for their candidacy. (Stanley and Niemi, 1995)

**c. Political experience and public service:**

Aspirants having political experience and/or public service are more likely to be seen as more advantaged in the selection process compared to those who lack experience. Political experience can be considered as a powerful resource for candidacy since it provides individual additional skills such as knowledge and expertise. Thus, selectors may favor those who have already had such skills to be useful for legislative work (Norris, 1996).

**d. Name-recognition and group networks:**

It is a common situation in many countries that legislative representatives are known by the society before getting elected. Political parties usually give priority to the applicants who are recognized by large segments of the society in order to increase party votes in the elections. In addition to this, selectors' may favor the aspirants who have close relations with different groups such as civil society organizations and business networks (Davis, 1997).

**e. The Gender Factor in Recruitment:**

It can be contended that women mostly constitutes the most disadvantaged group among political aspirants due to the tendency of selectors to select among "the most qualified" aspirants. Women's deprivation from most of the above mentioned political resources as defined appropriate for candidacy usually put them in a more disadvantaged position compared to male aspirants. Moreover, in many countries, even highly qualified women aspirants are more likely to be

discriminated in the selection process due to the attitudes of selectors toward women.

In societies where traditional gender roles are still powerful, the emphasis on women's primary responsibility as the homemaker provides a clear explanation for women's disadvantaged situation in recruitment process. First of all, marriage and children may constitute an advantage for a man but a disadvantage for a woman (Norris, 1996). Home-based responsibilities of women usually mean the division of time between political activity and housework. Second, as it is stated before, the political resources such as educational attainment or political experience have a positive impact on recruitment; however, women's lack of such resources mostly due to their gender role responsibilities prevent them to be advantaged in the process. More importantly, financial resources that enable individuals enter into politics become a big obstacle for women who are economically dependent on men. Under such conditions, women, as they are deprived of political and financial resources, face obstacles in political life.

In addition to women's political disadvantages that prevent or discourage them in the recruitment process, another crucial obstacle is highly related with the attitudes of the selectors toward women's involvement in politics. As Breckinridge (1933) argues, usually men are unlikely to be supportive for women as they do for male candidates. Vallance (1984) argues that selectors have mostly been reluctant to nominate women since they believe women lose votes if they are put on the top of the election list.

Thus, as women are treated by male political actors as inadequate for political activity, women's low levels of political involvement led to their under-representation in positions of power. In turn, lack of political experience makes women unfit for selection, leading to a vicious circle. Thus, it can be claimed then that the lack of support mechanism for women's political recruitment can be raised as an important factor that perpetuates women's disadvantaged position in politics and traps them into a vicious circle.

## **2. Political System and Political Culture**

As mentioned before, legislative recruitment is largely shaped by the interaction between the individual and the institutional factors. In this point, political system works as one of the determining factors of the legislative recruitment since as political culture, party competition and electoral system work together to set the rules for legislative recruitment. Therefore, an analysis of the components of political system which may work for or against some of the political aspirants is highly relevant in understanding the functioning of the recruitment process.

In many societies, political culture has stood as a serious obstacle over women's entrance and active involvement in politics. Until very recently, however, the traditional roles attributed to women can still be a powerful force to determine their access to political competition or make them more reluctant to pursue a political career compared to men. In addition, a woman who is actively involved in politics is more likely to become vulnerable in a traditional political culture since the whole system reproduces itself under the effect of patriarchal codes of conduct. In this respect, it is argued that women are highly disadvantaged by a traditional political culture (Hill, 1981).

In traditional societies where the dominant values evolve from patriarchal division of labor, party selectors may be reluctant to support women's involvement in politics. Parties may be unwilling to establish women-friendly mechanisms in their internal settings (Norris, 1993). It can be stated that political culture affects not only the political behavior of individual actors but also the parties' policies as institutions.

In more egalitarian cultures in terms of gender roles, compared to traditional societies, women could find more opportunity to be actively involved in politics since the channels of political recruitment would be open to all social groups (Davis, 1997). It is expected in egalitarian cultures that the gender equality policies can be supported and implemented by political parties. For instance, in many European countries which came to possess a more or less egalitarian

culture, the political parties play an instrumental role in recruiting and training women to take positions in decision-making. The Nordic parliaments, regional parliaments in Germany and Scotland and Wales have achieved almost 50 per cent representation through women-friendly equality-oriented policies adopted by political parties (Council of Europe, 2002).

## **2.1. Party System**

An analysis over party system is also highly relevant to understand basic dynamics of women's integration into political life. Here, ideological orientation and the size of the political parties and also the level of the competition among parties are important indicators for the level of women's integration into politics through recruitment.

### **2.1.1. Party Size**

The body of registered members of a political party determines the party size. Previous studies on recruitment reveal that the process has also been affected by the size of parties in a political system (Matland and Studlar, 1996). The tendency to reflect the socio-demographic characteristics of the society in selecting candidates varies across political parties. It is argued that the majority parties would be less concerned with the problems of socio-demographic representation than minority parties (Czudnowski, 1975). In this context, women's candidacy may not take particular attention by majority parties since their fundamental concern is not the numerical presence of women candidates for elections. In contrast, it is more likely that the smaller parties would be the first to nominate women since they have less to lose. In addition, the tendency of smaller parties to nominate representative candidates can have the function of "window dressing" rather than reflecting a true interest in achieving gender equality in recruitment.

### **2.1.2. Party Ideology**

It is well-established in the literature that party ideology has also been an important factor directing the recruitment process. Ideological orientation of a political party provides significant clues for the extent of the women's

representation within parties. However, over the past few decades ideology has become a less reliable factor in assessing a party's approach towards women's recruitment and policies to promote gender equality. Today, it is a common practice in European culture that almost all political parties support equity policies in their internal mechanisms to promote more women in party organizations and in elections.

Considering the development of women-friendly policies within the party cultures, it was a common practice that the right-wing, conservative parties were usually more reluctant to adopt these policies. It is still claimed by many scholars that having a more traditionalist view on gender roles, rightist parties are likely to recruit less women than men in the party organs (Rule, 1987).

In contrast, the left parties including the communist, socialist and left-liberitarian parties including environmentalist parties have traditionally been more supportive of the strategies to increase women's representation since an egalitarian ideology justifies intervention into recruitment (Lovenduski and Norris, 1993). For instance, in Scandinavian countries, it was always the leftist parties which sent higher percentages of women to parliament in the 1980s (Matland, 1996).

Some scholars, however, point to the need to distinguish between the Old Left and the New Left politics in evaluating their concerns with diversity and participation. In Western Europe, with the growth of post materialist and environmentalist parties, the distinction between the 'old left' industrial working-class parties and the 'new left' parties defined by their social concerns and preoccupation with diversity and participation has become sharper (Reynolds, 1999). Historically, the question of women's representation has not been a specific issue that should be given particular importance according to orthodox Marxism/socialism. Rather, 'old left' parties have questioned the representation as the problem of a subordinate class, namely the proletariat (Berkday, 1995). It can be said that old left parties are still concerned with materialist issues rather than issues of equality while the concept of 'New Left Politics' had a perspective from the beginning on

the question of women's representation. The New Left parties have been more concerned with gender issues than the traditional Left parties and they became the major proponents of women's issues (Jenson, 1982).

Overall, ideological orientation of political parties has had significant impact over the level of women's representation in Western Europe. It is undeniable that leftist ideology has been a positive influence over women's parliamentary representation (Lovenduski and Norris, 1993). However, the growing attention to women's representation worldwide as a prerequisite for democratic legitimacy has more or less contributed to a change in the preferences of political parties based on ideology. It is evident in many European countries that the rightist parties have been employing positive discrimination strategies toward women in their internal party mechanisms mainly under the influence of the changes initiated by social-democratic parties.

### **2.1.3. Party Competition**

The number of political parties and the degree of competition among parties may have important consequences for women's integration into politics. There are two different arguments in the literature on whether a stabilized party system provides more access points for women than a fragmented one.

On the one hand, it is argued that a fragmented multi-party system promotes women's candidacy and election in politics than a stabilized one does (Norris, 1993). The growth of new parties which could provide seats for newcomers can be seen as the basic premise of this argument. In addition, enhanced political competition in a fragmented party system may provide opportunities for women since the number of safe seats may be restricted due to the low incumbency turnover in a stable two-party system. For instance, in the United Kingdom where the political system has evolved around a stable two-party system, the turnover rate has always been low. In the House of Commons, over the 90 per cent of the incumbents who choose to run again usually return to the parliament (Norris, 1992).

On the other hand, it is sometimes claimed that women are in fact more likely to get elected in a stabilized two-party system since the dominant parties have more potential in terms of votes gained in the elections and accordingly, it is expected that strong parties would have more safe seats in parliament compared to new parties (Reynolds,1999). According to this argument, the number of seats to be won in the elections is often unpredictable for new parties, and a small number of seats won by each do not help increase the access points for women.

These two different arguments raise the problematic side of the relationship between the party competition and the level of women's integration into politics. However, it can be argued that the party system, whether fragmented or stable one, should be evaluated under the effect of the political culture and the ideological orientations in the party system. To make a judgment about the impact of the party competition over women's political recruitment, it is necessary to find out whether political parties in the legislature stand closer to the left or to the right-wing ideologies and, whether the party system has been evolved into an egalitarian political culture or not.

## **2.2. Electoral System**

The relationship between electoral systems and the number of women elected into national parliaments have been studied by many scholars on the basis of the participation opportunity different electoral systems provide for women aspirants. Past research has demonstrated that electoral system is a major factor accounting for the cross-cultural differences in the legislative representation of women (Rule, 1981). In these studies, it is suggested that women's representation is affected by electoral system on the basis of three main factors; the ballot structure, district magnitude and the degree of proportionality (Norris, 1985; Rule, 1981). Therefore, women's access to parliament is closely linked to whether each constituency have more than one candidate, whether the voting ballot provides a variety of candidates and whether the district size provides more than one seat. These factors can be analyzed on the basis of electoral systems; proportional and plurality systems.

It is usually argued that the party list PR systems with multi-member districts are more likely to increase the number of women in parliament (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). High number of seats per district provides an advantage for women candidates since their chance to be elected increases when there are more than one candidate in the election lists (Matland and Studlar, 1996; Beckwith, 1992). Thus, when the selectors do not position women on the top of the election lists, they still have a chance to get elected as the second or third candidate (Rule, 1987). For instance, the single transferable vote is adopted in small multi-member constituencies of Ireland. In transferable vote, the sufficient amount of vote is obtained for the election of the candidate at the top of the list and the rest of the vote is transferred to the next candidate in the election list (Norris, 1993).

While party list PR systems produce more women in parliament, plurality and majoritarian systems are not adequately conducive to women's representation (Lakeman, 1994). The electoral systems with single member constituencies are unlikely to increase women's chance in the elections since only one of the candidates has the chance of getting elected. In such cases, the selectors may prefer to choose a male candidate rather than a woman since the selectors may consider women's candidacy as an electoral risk. In addition, in plurality systems where there is only one candidate, incumbency status may enhance the candidate's chance of being elected since it is mostly difficult to refuse their candidature and give their seats to women (Norris, 1993). Therefore, it can be argued that it is the PR system through which the women candidates are more likely to be elected compared to the plurality systems since the PR system provides election lists on which more than one candidate's name is written. In addition, the *preferable vote* as a part of the PR system is also important in providing the voters an opportunity for selecting their own candidates in the election lists. Such an open list gives the voter the chance of expressing a preference for a candidate within a party and, voters are not restricted to voting for any of the candidates since the voters, not the party, determines the ranking of candidates. This system obviously can also work for the promotion of women's

representation. Voters may prefer to vote for women candidates in the elections and thus, women's descriptive representation increases (Norris, 1993). However, it should be noted that preferable vote requires a women-friendly culture in which the voters have a gender sensitivity in electing their political representatives.

### **3. Party Organizational Factors**

Party institutionalization and centralization are also singled out as the two significant characteristics of party organization interacting to shape the recruitment process for or against women. These two characteristics of the party organization also influence the propensity of the parties to adopt positive discrimination policies to promote women in politics. Political parties, as the "gate keepers", are crucial in determining the composition of elected assemblies and also promoting women's representation by adopting positive discrimination strategies. Therefore, an analysis of the institutionalization and centralization levels of political parties is highly relevant in a recruitment study.

#### **3.1. Institutionalization**

Institutionalization is the process during which institutions achieve a degree of value and stability (Huntington, 1968: 12). It can be said that the institutionalization process is highly related with the elite practices during the recruitment process within political parties. As mentioned before, a possible intersection of the aspirant's possession of the right combination of resources and the expectations of the selector is likely to depend on some certain rules and procedures established within the political parties. Thus, the stability of these rules and practices provides important implications about the level of institutionalization within political parties.

The level of institutionalization within a particular political party is highly related with the interaction between supply and demand side factors in recruitment. Individuals whether women or men who seek a parliamentary career are more likely to feel secure with certain set of criteria institutionalized within the recruitment process. Norris (1998) argues that only a well-defined recruitment

process can create stable and institutionalized political careers. Czudnowski (1995) also argues that the selection process is more likely to be transparent and predictable if it is highly institutionalized with formalized rules. In other words, the higher institutionalized the party, the more people in and outside of the party understand how the recruitment process works and this increases the accountability and the reliability of the party.

From gender perspective, the existence of formalized and explicit party rules helps women aspirants to know whether they are discriminated by these rules and to understand their chance of being elected (Norris, 1996). Obviously, a clearly defined party rule which ensures that the political aspirants are unlikely to face any kind of discriminative attitudes by the selectors during the candidate selection make the recruitment process more transparent.

It can be argued that an institutionalized party organization is more likely to contribute to the elimination of discriminatory acts against women aspirants during the candidate selection process. Moreover, parties can promote women's representation through formalized rules which positively discriminate women's aspirants. Considering that the candidate nomination is a process which mostly works for the advantage of male political aspirants with adequate political resources, it can be said that women are more likely to be selected as candidates in a highly institutionalized party organization provided that certain policies are formulated to enhance the women aspirants' chances of being selected. For example, quota practices or reserved seats for women can be adopted as a part of the party rules through which women aspirants would predict their chance of being elected in the intra-party competition.

### **3.2. Centralization and Internal Decision-making**

Nomination rules specific to each political party also define who will have the power to select among the aspirants in the election time. The question of who becomes the selector also provides us an idea about the power distribution within political parties. Who selects candidates, whether top party officials, members or

voters, may have important consequences for the distribution of power within party organizations (Ostrogorski, 1992). In addition, as it is the case in many political systems, intra-party conflict usually arises from the struggle between the party members and the leadership cadres to have control over the selection process.

Parties can vary according to the degree of centralization of the selection process, ranging from the most open systems determined by voters to the most closed systems determined mainly by the party leaders (Norris, 1996). From the perspective of centralization, three types of recruitment exist:

- a. Informal-centralized Recruitment: Leadership cadres have the power to control over the selection of the candidates. They are entitled to select whom they want.
- b. Informal-localized Recruitment: Local party organization determines the selection. There are no formal and standard rules governing the process. The central leadership cadres may ask the local party members or the delegates for the most suitable nominees.
- c. Formal-localized Recruitment: Local party organization makes the selection. There are standardized bureaucratic rules implemented in the process.
- d. Formal-centralized Recruitment: National party leaders have the constitutional authority to decide on the candidate selection.

The question of which nomination practices should be implemented for candidate selection mostly becomes a major issue of the party agenda in the pre-election times. Among these nomination practices, the formal-localized nomination is mostly considered as the most democratic practice since the candidate selection is determined with the participation of the local party members. In other words, the formal-localized nomination is a proof of the consent given freely by the greater number of party members in determining the party's candidates. In many European countries, selection is determined with the participation of party members in local constituencies. For instance, in the UK, the nomination of the

candidates has been determined through the formal-localized system with the participation of the party members. (Norris, 1996)

While a centralized control over decision-making process is a challenge to internal party democracy, women's representation may be positively effected by a centralized nomination. In other words, a highly centralized party does not necessarily and always mean a disadvantage for women's representation. In many systems with localized nomination, the process can be hospitable to women (Lovenduski and Norris, 1993). If party leaders have the will and determination to promote gender equality within the party, then, they can use their power to support women in the nominations through positive discrimination strategies. Party leaders can improve the position of women in party lists or place them in good constituencies (Norris, 1993).

However, it is also possible that a highly centralized party organization can also be responsible for the low numbers of women candidates (Norris, 1996). Party leadership may not favor the enhancement of women's integration in politics. In such cases, the local party members may put pressure on leadership cadres to support women candidates.

In sum, centralization within political parties may work for or against women candidates. However, it can be said that whether the party is centralized or localized or whether the nomination is determined through the interaction between leadership cadres and the local party members does not provide us with definite finding on women's legislative recruitment. In this point, it can be argued that the adoption of party strategies for promoting women's legislative recruitment depends on both the organizational and cultural structure of political parties. That is, equality strategies in recruitment are more likely to be adopted within the parties where the major political actors holding the power of selection have a positive perspective toward gender equality. As it will be overviewed in the next chapter, it is evidenced that equality strategies were born out from the

combination of a women-friendly party culture and organizational models initiated in most European political parties.

#### **4. Parties Implementing Strategies to Promote Women's Legislative**

##### **Recruitment**

Women's political representation can be supported and facilitated by political parties through a variety of recruitment strategies. The strategies to promote women's recruitment may also vary across different cultures.

Firstly, advocacy of women's representation on rhetorical basis can be seen as one of these strategies. Parties can encourage and invite women into politics by emphasizing and making frequent references to the importance of equal representation with men in party publications, leadership speeches or party meetings. Parties' emphasis on the equal representation can also be evaluated as an important way of informing the party members or party officials about women's situation in politics. Usually, rhetorical strategies are used by political parties either as a channel to change the party's profile in parliament by attracting more women or as the first step of long-term reforms for the enhancement of women's representation within the party (Norris, 1999).

Another party strategy for the promotion of women's recruitment can be the adoption of affirmative action programs. These include training programs for selectors and financial assistance for applicants. Political parties may hold training sessions for selectors to alter their negative perspectives toward women candidates. Parties may also assist economically deprived women applicants to fund their party activities (Norris, 1999). For instance, in the early 1990s, the Netherlands' government offered financial support to each political party represented in Parliament, on the condition that the money to be used for training activities aiming to increase the number of women in the electoral bodies (European Commission, 1996: 42).

As mentioned above, the strategies toward the promotion of women's legislative recruitment require a women-friendly political party culture where the party selectors as well as the party members are willing to support the enhancement of women's presence in political decision-making mechanisms. In this context, political parties may develop a variety of strategies to promote women's legislative recruitment. Party strategies may include rhetorical strategies, affirmative action programs and positive discrimination strategies. At the rhetorical level, the equality messages of the political parties can be an important tool in informing public about parties' position to the women-related issues. Affirmative actions include campaigns to mobilize women into becoming party members, training programs for women, adapting selection criteria, removing existing gender biases and quota setting for both internal party structures and electoral bodies are the most commonly used strategies.

While legally binding rules for gender equality seems to be the most fundamental channel for the promotion of women's legislative recruitment, political parties may willingly set their own rules as a reflection of an egalitarian party culture. For instance, most political parties in Europe offer training programs for their members and their cadres in order to inform them about the necessity for the equality between men and women for democratic consolidation. These training programs sometimes financed by the governments. These training programs also aim to train women and men to stand for parliament and deal with campaigning skills, presentation and negotiation techniques and media training (European Commission, 1996).

Also, parties in different European parties offer internship opportunities for young women in order to observe the work of experienced women politicians. Thus, young women political aspirants can clearly understand what it means to be a female politician and acquire a lot of practical know-how. Another example which offers a know-how opportunity for women aspirants is the practice of 'shadow councillor'. In several parties in Europe, women who are still hesitant to be

nominated for local council are given the opportunity to assist the elected council members in order to gain experience and confidence (CoE, 2003).

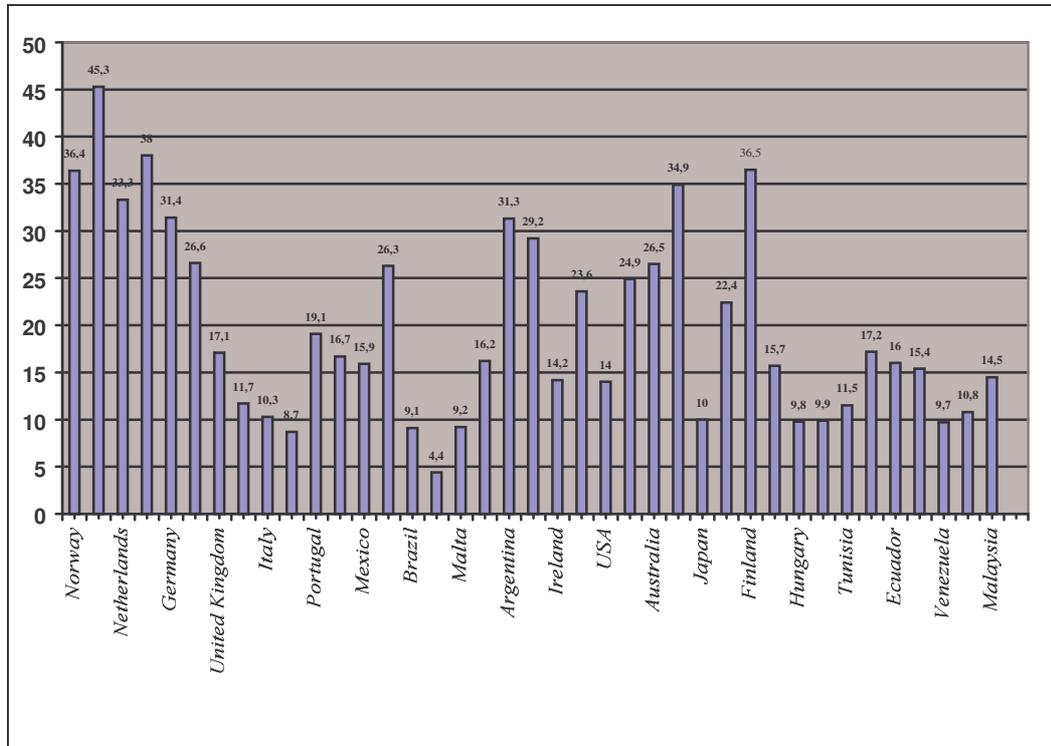
Another important tool in affirmative action policies is the collection and publication of relevant statistics. This is the empirical confirmation of women's under-representation in decision-making. Such studies are mostly carried out by the government institutions and disseminated to the relevant institutions such as political parties and women's organizations. However, political parties may also establish their networks which carry out the generation and dissemination of the women-related data to the party members. In addition, political parties may emphasize their commitment to gender equality through their public speeches, party program and campaigns.

Among the political party strategies in promoting women's legislative recruitment, quota setting both at party organizational level and also at the legislative level can be considered as the most efficient strategy in its application and the most concrete one in terms of its outcomes. Therefore, it is important to understand in what ways the quota application as a positive discrimination strategy facilitates women's legislative recruitment and what its concrete outcomes are in some of the European countries.

#### **4.1. Moving the Barriers: Positive Discrimination Strategies**

Today, women's adequate presence in political and public decision making makes up a measure of democratic standards in society (IDEA, 2002). However, the achievement of a perfect equality in numbers of women and men parliamentarians seems to be a long-standing political project even in the most developed countries of the world. Although the latest published UN Human Development Report reveals that the level of women's parliamentary representation especially in Nordic countries has approached nearly a parity level, it is hard to claim the same situation for the rest of the national parliaments (*see Table-1*).

**Table 1. Seats in parliament held by women(as % of total), United Nations Human Development Report 2003**



However, it is important to note that the presence of a significant minority of women, which refers to a critical mass, is an important factor that facilitates women's political representation. Research suggests that at least a significant minority of women must be present in parliament before a change can be established. That is, a critical mass of women present in parliament contributes to the development of women's representation through their individual actions that will improve the situation both for themselves and for other women (Lovenduski, 2000:98). For instance, in Nordic countries, it is found that women politicians struggled to recruit more women and that their attempts such as proposing legislations for women and establishing institutions to benefit women contributed significantly to women's recruitment (Dahlerup, 1988).

Therefore, while the absence of numerical balance between men and women in parliament is still one of the major political challenges for many European democracies, it should be noted that countries such as Norway, France, UK and Germany have had success stories in terms of reaching a critical mass of women in parliament. It is important to mention that the increase in the number of women politicians in most European countries have been the result of strategies which were adopted both at party and parliamentary levels. Adoption of positive discrimination strategies<sup>2</sup> have played important role in most European countries in promoting women's recruitment and brought about concrete changes in the number of women in politics. Therefore, it can be argued that positive discrimination strategies and especially the quota practices have proved to be central mechanism for promoting women's legislative recruitment.

From the mid-1960s, immense changes have taken place in Europe in ensuring women's basic human rights and in equalizing the status of women with those of men in all spheres of life. Also the parity movement<sup>3</sup> which gained power in the early 1990s has made a great impact over the levels of women's political representation.

In many European countries, the equality between men and women is placed in the constitution as a basic human right and, most recently in Belgium and France, political parties are obliged by law to observe parity between candidates in political elections (CoE, 2003). More importantly, the rules of political recruitment have been changed to involve more women in the political arena. In recent decades, countries as France and Germany have also implemented gender quotas, adoption of which has made a clear impact over the numerical

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<sup>2</sup> Positive discrimination is defined as special measures adopted for a temporary period in order to accelerate the achieving of the equal opportunities between women and men and not considered as discriminative actions. These strategies mostly appear as legal measures for securing particular legal, economic and social protection of women, as well as stimulating women for participation in political and public life (Inter-Parliamentary Union web site, [www.ipu.org.tr](http://www.ipu.org.tr)). It should also be mentioned that positive discrimination is not a term which is used only for women. The idea behind positive discrimination is to ensure the equality by changing the conditions. The quota setting in maintaining the proportion of the sexes in a business settlement is another example.

<sup>3</sup> Parity movement emerged in France in the mid-1990s. It was a primarily women-based movement that campaigned for reforms to bring more women into elected office.

composition of these parliaments. Before reviewing these practices in European party mechanisms to enhance women's representation, it is necessary to review positive discrimination policies and quota systems for women.

#### **4.2. Quotas For The Enhancement of Women's Integration into Political Life**

Positive discrimination has so far proved to be the most effective strategy in promoting women's political integration. The most important aspect of the quota systems, unlike other strategies, is its concrete outcome in terms of women's representation. Quotas can be implemented both at party and parliamentary levels to create a gender balance in political decision-making. At party level, quotas can be applied for candidate selection and for the internal party structures. At parliamentary level, quota system helps the recruitment of more women in not only the deliberative bodies but also the decision-making bodies within the parliament. In fact, as Dahlerup (1988) states, 'introduction of quota systems for women represents a qualitative jump into a policy of exact goals and means'.

Quota implementation within a political system may take different forms<sup>4</sup>. While all political parties sometimes may be obliged by law to use quotas in nomination,

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<sup>4</sup> Quotas may be applied in certain time during which the imbalanced representation between men and women is removed. There are basically three main categories of quotas: those established by political parties which target the candidatures; those by electoral law which target the seats to be filled and those established by the constitution (Dahlerup, 1998). Quotas can also be established for the recruitment of internal party positions or for legislative bodies. In some political systems, the political parties may be obliged by the constitution to use certain percentage of quota in the elections. The law may also stipulate the use of quota only for certain sex. In other words, women as a token group in parliament can be positively discriminated by law. It can be said that the most effective use of quotas is mostly realized if quotas are established by political parties. Political parties' willingness to use a certain percentage of quotas in candidate nomination for legislative and/or for internal party bodies help women to increase their numbers in both legislation and party cadres. In some political systems, electoral law may facilitate the presence of women by reserving a certain number of seats in parliament. For instance, Bangladesh reserves 9 per cent of all parliamentary seats for women. Also, Eritrea (9.5 per cent) and Tanzania (6 per cent) apply reserved seat system in parliamentary elections (Norris, 2001:93). In all types of quotas, the percentage determined for women means that men cannot be represented more than that percentage. Quotas can be introduced in different stages of recruitment process. Parties may use quotas for the selection of delegates, for governing bodies or for legislation. The most common use of quotas, however, is realized in two stages. First, a small number of women are selected for internal bodies through quotas; then, with the support of these newly elected women officials, women are carried into the party's lists of candidates (Dahlerup, 1998). Political parties may use quotas in different forms. Through zipping system, parties put women candidates in the party-list every after than the name of a male candidate. Therefore, an equal outcome can be reached in the elections. Also, parties may use only women short-lists in the elections through which the voters

some political parties may be willing to use quotas as a part of their party policy. Therefore, an overview of quota systems and the examples of quota implementation in different countries can help one understand both the direct impact of quota systems on the enhancement of women's representation and the motives and factors behind the adoption of quota as a positive discrimination strategy.

Mansbridge (2001:92) argues that 'when a polity has experienced a history of group domination and subordination, proportional descriptive representation of the subordinate group is unlikely arise naturally without some form of action'. With regard to Mansbridge's argument, the use of quotas can be seen as a direct action for the representation of women as a subordinate group in politics.

There are different arguments for and against the positive discrimination and quotas in particular. The introduction of quota systems symbolizes the presence of efforts to alter the political equilibrium between men and women (Dahlerup, 1988). In addition, the use of quotas not only helps women to increase their presence in politics but also prevents the selectors' tendency to nominate only male applicants in the recruitment process. During the recruitment process, selectors' tendency to perpetuate the male hegemony in the decision making bodies can be overcome through the use of quotas. Therefore, quotas can be seen as a direct intervention to the existing political culture which favors a political life with male hegemony.

Dahlerup (1998) argues that quotas for women represent a shift from one concept of equality to another. While the early definitions of equality emphasize the equal opportunities between men and women, a new understanding of equality envisages a notion of equality of results. With regard to this shift in the conceptual framework of equality, the equal opportunities ensured for men and women with

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choose among women candidates. The use of quotas also varies by the type of the electoral system. It can be argued that the use of quotas is most easily introduced in proportional representation systems. In party list systems, women can easily placed in the most winnable parts of the party lists (Matland and Studlar, 1996).

the expectation of an increase in the representation of women has been replaced by the argument and the belief that women's representation could only be ensured through direct action to the political practices which guarantee the equality of the outcome. Therefore, the use of quotas has matched with the latter notion of equality by its concrete outcomes for women's representation.

The introduction of quotas in Europe emerged in the late 1970s and the number of parties establishing quotas has slightly increased between 1975 and 1985 (Skeijie, 2001). In most European countries, the sex composition in parliaments has changed after the adoption of the gender quotas. However, despite the introduction of quotas in many European countries has served to the provision of a nearly equal outcome for the proportional representation of women and men, quotas have also been criticized on the basis of democratic principles.

On the one hand, the use of quotas in the recruitment process has been considered as a violation of democratic principle which envisages the equal treatment of each individual regardless of sex. It is argued that the discrimination of one sex over the other cannot produce legitimate representatives. In addition, it is argued that the use of quotas removes the freedom of the voters in choosing his/her own representative.

Opponents of quotas claim that quota system is not democratic since it damages the realization of a fair competition among the candidates. It is also argued that the political aspirants, regardless of sex, should succeed in the elections with their own talents, qualifications and experiences. Quotas are considered as an intervention to the fair and democratic electoral competition. It is also evidenced that a considerable number of business and professional women think that quotas connote regulation, protectionism and unnecessary intervention (European Commission, 1996:40). Therefore, it can be argued that the empowered women with high educational and socio-economic status may reject such kind of positive discrimination since they rely on their own talents and qualifications. While women opponents of quota system find such kind of protectionism as

unnecessary, implementation of quotas is also unacceptable for many men politicians. The discriminatory practices for the enhancement of women's political representation mostly make many male politicians feel uncomfortable in the electoral competition. It is not fair for many male aspirants to lag behind women in the elections just because of their sex. They also make arguments such that 'it is an insult for selection committees to include a token woman on a board, as a candidate at election. Women want to be judged on merit, not because they wear skirt' (European Commission, 1996:40).

On the other hand, the advocates of quota systems believed that the low levels of representation of women could be overcome by compensation of barriers that prevent women from their fair share of the political seats (Dahlerup, 1998). For quota defendants, the use of quotas is a channel to prevent male hegemonic political scene and women's disadvantaged position in the recruitment process even though they are equally qualified with men applicants. Since women mostly start the political competition behind many men aspirants, it is argued that quotas contribute women to start this competition with the same conditions with men. Although women aspirants who are as qualified as men aspirants, their qualifications are downgraded in the male-dominant system. Therefore, quota system compensates this downgrading approach against women aspirants.

In addition, even when the implementation of quota system is more a symbolic strategy, it can still make an impact over the existent individual perspectives toward women's political representation. It can be argued that quotas have an 'eye-opening effect' which makes party officials who hold the power to select candidates more aware than before that women are possible representatives. Another argument of the quota defendants is that the implementation of quotas in one party also has an effect on the other political parties. Even the parties which strongly oppose to the use of quota system may adopt other policies to increase women's participation as well as to increase the parties' attractiveness to women voters (European Commission, 1996:41). According to the data gathered by the Inter-parliamentary Union reference, it is also evident in European politics that, by

1992, despite the arguments against the use of quota systems, quotas were used by at least 56 political parties in 34 countries and were commonly implemented for internal party rules than for legislative elections. However, the use of quotas in the intra-party structure had also great impact over the number of elected women in parliaments. Quotas significantly increased the presence of women especially in Scandinavian parliaments and then diffused rapidly to the other European democracies.

### **4.3.An Overview of Party Strategies to Promote Women in Politics**

Apart from other cultural, institutional and individual factors, it can be argued that women's legislative recruitment is also highly dependent on the implementation of the positive discrimination strategies by parties. As it is evident in many European political parties, the adoption of positive discrimination strategies provide the most concrete results for the enhancement of women's integration into political life.

However, it is also evident in European parties that the level of women's political representation decreased significantly because of the fact that the adoption of the positive discrimination strategies are sometimes challenged with the argument that these strategies provide women some form of privilege in the political competition which also removes the democratic atmosphere of political life. As in the example of the British Labour Party, the positive discrimination for parliamentary recruitment was declared as illegal before the Sex Discrimination Law.

Therefore, it can be argued that the positive discrimination strategies especially the quotas for legislative recruitment can effectively be implemented under the mechanisms supportive for gender equality. It can be argued that the legal challenges to the adoption of parliamentary quotas to some extent ignore the women's disadvantaged position in politics. Women aspirants mostly have unequal conditions with men in the electoral competition. The challenges, which derive from the view that the adoption of quota system violates the principle of

equality between men and women, ignore the unequal conditions of women with men in the electoral competition.

In European politics, the challenges to the adoption of positive discrimination strategies have usually been overcome with the development of the support mechanisms for the promotion of women's legislative recruitment. Women's movement was one of these mechanisms. As in the examples of French parity movement and the feminist movement in Norway, women's solidarity in and out of the party organizations significantly contributed to the acceptance of positive discrimination among party power holders and also among legislators. Women's advocacy activities for the adoption of positive discrimination strategies changed the perspectives of the opponents and raised the awareness on gender equality. Also, political parties' perspectives on the promotion of women's legislative recruitment have been a determining factor when the power holders within the political parties, especially the selectors, have a gender sensitivity to advocate the use of positive discrimination for women aspirants. In addition to the change in the cultural and attitudinal approaches to the positive discrimination, the gender sensitive amendments concerning the institutional factors including the party organization, electoral system and party system play important role in changing the perspectives toward positive discrimination.

Therefore, it can be argued that the adoption of these strategies require a political system which is supportive for gender equality with its all dynamics. The political culture, the institutional and ideological structure of the political parties and the electoral system should be supportive for women's inclusion in politics for the introduction and effective implementation of such strategies.

In the next chapter, the institutional, cultural and the attitudinal factors at work in the Turkish political system and specifically in the Republican People's Party will be analyzed to understand the deficiencies of the Turkish political system in adopting the positive discrimination strategies for enhancing women in political representation.

## CHAPTER III

### POLITICAL SYSTEMIC DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE RECRUITMENT IN TURKEY

As explained in Chapter II, recruitment is directly affected by the nature of a political system. Therefore, the way to women's increased integration into representative institutions lies in the dynamics of political systems. The question whether the Turkish political system is adequately supportive for women's legislative recruitment has thus its answers in the political structures and institutions. In this context, other related questions could be raised: Does the Turkish political culture have a supportive nature for the enhancement of women's representation? To what extent, has the contemporary Turkish party system initiated mechanisms to encourage women's involvement politics? How does the electoral system affect women's political representation?

It is in the light of these questions that this chapter provides an analysis of how women's legislative recruitment in Turkey is affected by the political systemic factors. In addition, the chapter looks at the political systemic factors which have affected women's political recruitment in Turkey by focusing particularly on the Republican People's Party's political identity and its perspective on women's political recruitment in the pre-1980 period.

#### **1. Political Culture and Its Impact on Women's Election in Turkey**

With the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the Kemalist reforms aimed to create a new society on the basis of the values of modernity and laicism. In the atmosphere of these reforms, women's integration into political and social

life was also taken into consideration in the context of constructing a modern nation state modeled after the Western political systems. The adoption of the Civil Code which stressed equal civil rights for women and the provision of right to vote and to be elected can be considered as important developments for the promotion of women's social and political status<sup>5</sup>. However, during and after this reformist tide, the attempts to integrate women into political and social life have always had a symbolic importance. In the early years of the Republic, the reforms targeting women were a part of the attempts to demonstrate the world that Turkish Republic was a democratic state<sup>6</sup> (Tekeli, 1988:299).

Until 1950s, single-party period was under the effect of populism which was one of the ideological dimensions of Kemalism. According to the ideologues of Kemalism, the principle of populism also included feminism which proclaimed the equality between men and women officially (Köker, 1988:106). Sirman (1989:33) argues that "this state-proclaimed gender equality produced many professional and academic women in Turkey who saw no point in women's movement since its aims had already been accomplished by Kemalism". However, the Republican ideology asserted that the equality between men and women is based on participation in professional occupations and that it offers education as the main channel for achieving this end (Sirman, 1989). Therefore, it can be argued that Kemalism ignored the problems that women face in the private spheres of their lives. In this sense, it is hard to characterize Kemalism as a feminist perspective which aims at women's liberation in both private and public spheres of life, rather, Kemalism defined women as enlightened mothers of the nation who are responsible for the education of the new generations (Tekeli, 1988; Kandiyoti, 1987). However, in another sense, it is existent in Atatürk's expressions that women's active involvement in political life is clearly encouraged:

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<sup>5</sup> The Turkish Republic adopted the Swiss Civil Code in 1926. Also, women were enfranchised for the local elections in 1930 and for the national elections in 1934.

<sup>6</sup> The feminist criticism which developed in parallel to the women's movement in the 1980s has been critical about the 'state feminism' of the Republican period. The criticisms were based on the symbolic importance of modernized images of women for the general outlook of the nation as a 'civilized nation' and the new Republic as a democratic state facing the West (Tekeli, 1988).

....there can be no logical reason for disqualifying women from political life. The hesitance and the negative mental attitude in this respect are the doomed remnants of a social order already buried in the past...I am sure it is necessary for the happiness and the prestige of mankind that political and social rights be exercised by women...I wish the Turkish women great success too in the political sphere into which she has just entered (cited in Dođramacı, 1989).

It can be argued that Atatürk’s perspective on the enhancement of women’s integration into politics has been supportive for women’s political participation. However, in practice, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that following the legal reforms and the voting rights for women, the emancipation of women has been out of concern at the level of the political elite. In fact, the Turkish political culture has always seemed to be a women-friendly political culture stressing the gender equality, but has never been so in reality. As the Table-2 indicates, the number of women in the Parliament has represented a ‘near absence’ since the early years of the Republic.

**Table-2. The number of Turkish parliamentarians by election year and sex**

<i>Election year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female %</i>
<b>1935</b>	399	18	381	<b>4.5</b>
<b>1939</b>	424	16	408	<b>3.8</b>
<b>1943</b>	455	16	439	<b>3.5</b>
<b>1946</b>	465	9	456	<b>1.9</b>
<b>1950</b>	487	3	484	<b>0.6</b>
<b>1954</b>	541	4	537	<b>0.7</b>
<b>1957</b>	610	8	602	<b>1.3</b>

**Table-2 (continued)**

<b>1961</b>	450	3	447	<b>0.7</b>
<b>1965</b>	450	8	442	<b>1.8</b>
<b>1969</b>	450	5	445	<b>1.1</b>
<b>1973</b>	450	6	444	<b>1.3</b>
<b>1977</b>	450	4	446	<b>0.9</b>
<b>1983</b>	400	12	387	<b>3.0</b>
<b>1987</b>	450	6	444	<b>1.3</b>
<b>1991</b>	450	8	442	<b>1.8</b>
<b>1995</b>	450	13	437	<b>2.9</b>
<b>1999</b>	550	23	527	<b>4.2</b>
<b>2002</b>	550	24	526	<b>4.4</b>

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*Source: State Institute of Statistics, Ankara*

Until the onset of the multi-party period in the late 1940s, women's representation had been supported with a view that women's involvement in the decision-making mechanisms was a must in a democratic state. While women's political representation was rhetorically continued to be encouraged by parties during the multi-party period, increasing competition between parties meant that parties sacrificed their support for women's representation (Danforth, 1975).

The democratic deficit in the Turkish political culture on gender equality in political involvement can be seen primarily in the internal functioning of the

Turkish political parties. Political parties in Turkey have always been dominated by leadership monopolized by male politicians. In fact, the number of women selected for the party office positions has always been rare. Moreover, the women party officials have usually been selected from among those with high education profile and high socio-economic class. Most scholars explain women's marginal situation in party politics by the prevailing the political culture in the Turkish society based on traditional gender roles.

As it is stated before, with the establishment of Turkish Republic, Kemalist reforms aimed to create a modern Turkey which also encouraged women's visibility in social life. These reforms were initiated and put into force by the Republican People's Party<sup>7</sup> elites. It should also be underlined that under the single party dominance, the reforms were put into force despite the resistance from conservative segments of the political system. Historically, the prevailing culture in Turkey has not defended women's social and political visibility. The gender roles attributed to women and men in Turkish society has evolved around patriarchal norms. Therefore, the social roles attributed to men and women have always been based on the cultural division of labour between the sexes confining men to the production and women to reproduction. Thus, limited with the private sphere responsibilities, women's integration into political life was seriously hampered by this social division of labour.

According to Tekeli (1982), women's disadvantaged situation in politics can be explained with the factors which are common for all capitalist systems. In the framework of capitalist mode of production, women's role has largely remained inside the household and their emancipation from this structure would be possible through their inclusion in the production process. As Tekeli (1982) argues, in Turkey, women's low level political participation is closely related to this capitalist division of labor and, women's private sphere responsibilities such as child-rearing and housework are still the main barriers over their political involvement.

Political culture in Turkey has reproduced this relationship between men and women in political structures and processes. Political parties have mostly been reluctant since the legislators and party leaders have been predominantly male. Therefore, the way for women's increased recruitment for political office has been obstructed consciously and unconsciously in the male dominant and male-dominated political system.

The patriarchal structure of the Turkish society has had its reflections over the political life that the political parties in Turkey have been dominated by male politicians. Tokgöz (1994) argues that political parties are the main actors in the Turkish political system which contribute to the reproduction of the patriarchal relations by emphasizing a male-dominant rhetoric and women's images which perpetuates this model. In this power structure, the women voters in Turkey remain subordinated to the images of parties limited to wife, mother and working women identities. At rhetorical level, political parties usually approach women voters around questions of women's health and social security. Parties in Turkey have an indirect perspective on equality between men and women.

According to Tokgöz (1994), since 1930s, political parties have considered women as potential voters and their main aim has been to benefit from women's symbolic role in the political system. It can be argued that the symbolic role of women in the political system and the efforts of political parties to perpetuate the *status quo* remain the major challenge of democracy in Turkey. It is hard to claim that any of the political parties in Turkey have made significant efforts to challenge the existent system from a gender-sensitive perspective. The lack of such efforts in the party system brought about the legitimization of the existent institutional structure in the eyes of women.

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<sup>7</sup> The RPP was established in 1923 and stayed in power until 1950 covering the single party period till 1946.

The nature of the Turkish political culture which has been evolved around traditional values can be clearly observed in the attitudes and practices of the Turkish political parties. According to Talaslı (1996), in Turkey, there is a clear distinction between the leftist and rightist parties in terms of their attitudes toward women. In rhetorical level, it can be argued that almost all political parties in Turkey seem to have a positive perspective toward women's inclusion in social and political life. Except some of the right-wing parties<sup>8</sup>, women's active involvement in the political decision-making bodies is an important target of the party programs. However, in practice, it is important to note that the party strategies to promote women's legislative recruitment are not implemented especially in the rightist parties in Turkey. On the left, the Freedom and Solidarity Party (FSP) seems to be the most women-friendly party both with its rhetoric and with its party practices. With its establishment, the FSP has declared its strong commitment to the enhancement of women's legislative recruitment and implemented 30 per cent quota for women candidates in both general and local elections. Before the general elections of 2002, even the FSP leader barely succeeded in being the party candidate in the primaries since the party women were positioned in the top of the election lists<sup>9</sup>. However, it has always remained as a question whether small leftist parties which have no chance in getting over the parliamentary threshold prefer to support women more than the larger parties.

On the center-left, the Democratic Leftist Party (DLP) has surprisingly no mechanisms to support women's legislative recruitment. While women's pictures are used as a symbolic tool in the party campaigns, women candidates have been nearly absent in the election lists. Although the DLP has a strong commitment to the equality between men and women, it significantly lacks supportive mechanisms for women. In the last national elections, the DLP had 48 women

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<sup>8</sup> For instance, in the 1995 general elections, the Nationalist Action Party stated its strong opposition toward positive discrimination for women. The party asserted that women's place was beneath men's place (Milliyet Daily, 21 December 1995). In following elections, the NAP has also emphasized that women's empowerment is a benefit toward the reproduction of the traditional values.

<sup>9</sup> *Evrensel Daily*, October 22, 2002.

candidates in 81 constituencies, among which only 8 women were placed in the winnable positions<sup>10</sup>.

On the center-right, however, a clear change in party rhetoric is observed by the early 1980s. For instance, during the Motherland Party governance from 1983 to 1991, its party discourse on women has gradually changed. In the early 1980s, the Motherland Party had little concern with women related issues. However, in the mid-1980s, with the establishment of a women association which worked as a branch of the party with the attempts of the party women, the party rhetoric became more supportive for women's political representation. Although the Motherland Party, just like other rightist parties, envisaged women's public sphere participation in the framework of volunteer institutions and the party did not question the male dominant system and women's issues were not significantly brought to the political agenda (Ayata, 1998). Although it was under the Motherland Party governance that Turkey signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Kinds of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women (DGSPW) was established. However, it is hard to claim that the Motherland Party has supported women's legislative recruitment through its party practices. While the party states its strong commitment to the enhancement of women's legislative recruitment, the leadership cadres do not have a tendency to nominate women candidates in the elections. In its party program, there is almost no specific statements related to the women's place and role in the political life. It can be argued that the Motherland Party has no certain targets and strategy related to the enhancement of women's political participation (Talaslı, 1996). In the last national elections, the Motherland Party nominated 70 women candidates among whom only 5-6 women were placed in the winnable positions<sup>11</sup>. Also, the True Path Party which is one of the mainstream center-right parties in Turkey does not provide a different scene than the Motherland Party in terms of intra-party support mechanisms for women. The True Path Party as being one of the most conservative parties in Turkey does not have a specific strategy for promoting the representation of party women.

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<sup>10</sup> *Hürriyet Daily*, October 27, 2002.

Although the party implements 30 per cent quota for women in the election of internal bodies, there is no quota setting within the party in nominating the legislative candidates. In the last national elections, the True Path Party nominated 36 women among whom only 6-8 women were positioned on the winnable ranks<sup>12</sup>.

While the Turkish political culture is shaped around male-dominant political culture, it can also be argued that there are signs that the tendency in the society to transform male hegemonic political culture into a more egalitarian one is growing. A recent research<sup>13</sup> on women's political participation reveals that 74.3 per cent of the society evaluates the number of women deputies as inadequate (Kalaycıoğlu and Toprak, 2004). According to the survey results, a considerable majority of the society believe that women are not given chance in political life and that the political parties do not struggle sufficiently to enhance women's integration into politics. The research also shows that people in Turkey would prefer to vote for women if more of them are placed in the party lists.

It is clear that the Turkish society is evolving towards a new culture that is more supportive for women. The recent legislative attempts which have been realized with the objective of accelerating the harmonization of the legal system with the European standards can be seen as the evidence of this transformation. The recent reform initiates in the Civil and Criminal Code aim to empower women socially and economically and to prevent discriminatory acts against women. However, the reforms aiming at enhancing women's political representation especially the proposed positive discrimination strategies have not been positively considered by the majority of the legislators. Adoption of positive discrimination strategies for promoting women's legislative recruitment was unacceptable for the majority of legislators, since it was considered that such an amendment in the constitution would be the violation of democratic principles. According to the prevailing view

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<sup>11</sup> *Milliyet* Daily, October 20, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> *Hürriyet* Daily, October 16, 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Report on "Women's Participation to Political and Business Life in Turkey", prepared for the TESEV, March 2004.

among the legislators, electoral competition has to be carried out fairly under equal rights and, it would not be acceptable to give women aspirants a privileged position through such kind of legal arrangements.<sup>14</sup>

It can be contended that the parliamentary debates on the adoption of positive discrimination for women indicated that such enforcements to achieve equality between men and women in political representation are not considered necessary and acceptable in the eyes of the legislators yet. It was surprising that some women MPs also seemed reluctant to support the adoption of positive discrimination for women's legislative recruitment. The reservation of women MPs toward positive discrimination strategies for women's legislative recruitment can be evaluated as a reflection of the prevailing attitudes in Turkish political parties. Moreover, the strength of the party discipline mostly forces the deputies to behave in parallel to the attitudes of the leadership cadres. It can be argued that women MPs' reluctance for the legislative proposal was a result of this loyalty to the party leadership. Therefore, the inadequate support for the adoption of positive discrimination can also be explained with the dynamics of the party system which has been under the hegemony of male leadership.

## **2. The RPP in the Pre-1980 Period Party System**

Political culture has been the most powerful factor which shapes women's legislative careers in Turkey. In addition to the impact of the political culture, party and electoral system are the other important political systemic factors which affects women's political recruitment. In this section, the party and electoral system will be examined by giving particular reference to the Republican People's Party's political identity and its perspective on women's political recruitment in the pre-1980 period.

### **2.1. Party Identity: Ideology and the Question of Democracy**

During the single party period, women were enfranchised for the local and national elections with the pioneering role of the RPP. The legal reforms (e.g. the

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<sup>14</sup> *Radikal Daily*, 2 May 2004.

Civil Code) were crucial steps toward making women full citizens. It should be remembered that until the mid-1930s, the RPP had not written its party program in which the main priorities and policy areas were established. However, the RPP worldview (i.e. Kemalism) based on the principles such as secularism, modernization and nationalism emphasized the limited and controlled political participation of the people (Ayata, 2002).

When the RPP was established in 9 September, 1923, national sovereignty, modernization, populism, superiority of laws were among the basic principles of the RPP's statute. Party principles unified with the party program in the third party congress of 1931. Party was in the position of a pillar of a newly founded republican state which was trying to empower itself. The six principles of the party were taken into the constitution in 1937. The principles were defined as Kemalist principles (Tachau, 1991).

According to Kemalist principles, (1) 'republicanism' represented the state form which represents the sovereignty of the nation. Republicanism represented the development of a national will and the citizenship. (2) The principle of 'nationalism' asserted that while the progress and relations of the party should be implemented in harmony with the other nations, it is essential that the social characteristics of the society and its independent entity should be protected. Nationalism has also been considered as the main pillar of the nation-building process. It considers each individual as equal and avoids from racism. It is a form of unification perspective. (3) The principle of 'populism' asserts that the source of the sovereignty and the will is the nation and the nation is composed of equal citizens. Social order and solidarity of the nation is the basic aim. The RPP populism aims to combine social democratic values with rationality and production. It also aims equal opportunities for each citizen of the Republic. (4) The principle of 'etatism' asserts that for the nations' prosperity, especially in the economic area all actions are related to the state. State is considered as the guarantee of a healthy balance between the collective and individual benefits. This guarantee is seen as necessary to prevent monopolism and the violation of

consumers' and also producers' rights in the market mechanisms. (5) The principle of 'laicism' envisages the separation between the religious and scientific affairs. According to RPP's laicism perspective, all beliefs are equal before the state. It is seen as the guarantee of the Republic and democracy. It represents that all different beliefs can live together in harmony. (6) The principle of 'revolutionism' is based on the protection and loyalty to the principles lying in the revolutions which have achieved by the nation. Its revolutionism perspective is the perception of modern thought and its internalization<sup>15</sup>. According to Özbudun (1976), the principle of revolutionism which can be considered as reformism sometimes meant a commitment to Kemalist reforms and sometimes a more general commitment to permanent change and progress. As Özbudun argues, the RPP's revolutionism has remained the vaguest principle among the six principles. While the party has been viewed as the institutional embodiment of the Turkish revolution and as its only true and legitimate representative, the RPP contemporary statist and elitist structure was a challenge to its principle of revolutionism. It can be argued that from its establishment, the RPP made efforts to transform its ideological position into the universal social democratic principles and tried to prove its commitment to democratic and modern values. However, the party tried to harmonize the social democratic values with the Kemalist principles. As will be explained further in the next chapter, especially after 1980, the RPP directed itself to the European social democratic principles. However, it remained as an intra-party debate whether the RPP should leave the Kemalist principles and committed itself to the European social democracy or remain loyal to the Kemalist principles. It can be argued that the RPP's insufficiency in internalizing a clear social democratic perspective was related to the ambiguity of its principle of revolutionism.

In the first two decades of the Republic, there was a close integration of the party and the state. The military officers and civil bureaucrats were the main props for both the party and regime (Tachau,1991). It is argued that in the early years of the Republic the creation process of a new social life and modern values were shaped

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<sup>15</sup> See the RPP's web page: [www.chp.org.tr](http://www.chp.org.tr)

around the views of the intellectual-bureaucrats and thus, the Republican regime was the regime of the intellectual-bureaucrats (Güneş, 1983). It is also argued that the RPP governance was composed of bureaucrats with high socio-cultural level and the party was distanced from the villager segments of the society (Avcıoğlu, 1963). The RPP has generally been described as a party born out of an alliance between the central military-bureaucratic elite and local notables (Özbudun, 1976; Öz, 1992). Most members of the top elite were recruited not on account of their prior party organizational work but more often than not on the basis of their successful performance in state bureaucracy. Top elite positions were filled by people with little parliamentary and party experience. In the single-party period, the government officials, intellectuals and locally based deputies were clearly dominant in the National Assembly. The RPP remained largely a cadre party, an elite organization and dominated by the official elite and local notables. According to Özbudun (1976), the alliance between the military-bureaucratic elite and the local gentry was dictated by the circumstances of the Turkish War of Independence since these groups were greatly interested in maintaining an independent Turkish state and they were the only group capable of mobilizing the peasant majority into war of national liberation. Thus, in this power game, the losers were the peasant majority that the coalition of bureaucrats and the local notables excluded the peasant masses from the effective share of power. The RPP leadership made no effort to broaden the party's popular base and to enlist the support of the peasant masses. Rather, it concentrated its attention on the small westernized elite.

It should be emphasized that the establishment of People's Houses and the People's Rooms starting from 1931 can be evaluated as an effort of political mobilization. However, these organizations were conceived as a measure social mobilization and of raising the general cultural standards rather than as an instrument of political mobilization or ideological indoctrination (Özbudun, 1976). Therefore, the RPP's organizational structure and the political participation within the party was effectively limited to the westernized urban classes and the mass of the traditional peasantry were excluded from power.

In the 1950s, the Turkish party system was characterized by two-party system in which the RPP and the Democrat Party were the major competitors. The system was shaped around a culturally-loaded center-periphery cleavage (Mardin, 1973). On the one side, the RPP was representing the *center* and it was supported by and dependent on the dominance of the military and civil bureaucracy in the polity. This center was representing the Western modernity, laicism, centralization and state control over social and cultural life. On the other hand, the Democrat Party came to power representing the *periphery* and it was supported by those socio-economic groups politically and economically marginalized. The periphery was loyal to the traditional values and practices in social life and it supported the DP's liberalism in the economy in contrast to the RPP's etatism (Sunar, 1974).

With the transition to multi-party period, the RPP gradually underwent into an ideological transformation. Until the mid-1960s, the RPP acted as a pillar of the state elite which envisaged strong state control over the social and economic dynamics. In the changed social and political atmosphere following the 1960 military intervention, the RPP set out to transform itself into a social democratic party like those of Western Europe (Ayata, 2002).

In the mid-1960s, the RPP ideologically positioned itself between the Justice Party which was the mainstream center-right party and the Turkish Communist Party which represented the left at the time. It was declared that the RPP should define itself as a social democratic party<sup>16</sup>. Such a change in the ideology was strongly criticized by the rightist parties on the basis of socialism. The RPP leader İsmet İnönü asserted that the RPP was a statist party and had never been socialist<sup>17</sup>. In the mid-1960s, the RPP defined its ideology as social democracy and advocated the rights of the labour segments of the society. This ideological transformation resulted in a electoral success in the general elections of 1977 and the RPP gained the 42 per cent of votes. This was the highest vote proportion that the RPP had gained since 1950. At the same time, the party was trying to change

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<sup>16</sup> The RPP Declaration, 9 February 1965.

the RPP's image within the society from a 'state+party' into 'people+party'<sup>18</sup>. The 'Left of the Center' perspective of the RPP was a revolutionary and labor oriented ideology. Under the leadership of Bülent Ecevit, the party emphasized humanitarianism, social security, value of labor, land reform and a nationalist outlook on foreign policy. The major emphasis in its platform and program was ensuring social justice for all groups in society. However, this new ideological approach initiated a period of a long-standing discussion over the RPP ideology and identity which extended into the 1970s. While the leftist groups from moderate to Marxist currents became active within the party in the 1970s, the RPP ideology was debated in the party in the context of reconciling Kemalist principles with those of European social democracy. Since the 1970s, the RPP has played an important role in the crystallization of the leftist ideologies in Turkey. While social democracy and leftism was legitimized by the RPP, at the same the party contributed to ideological polarization in the party system and radicalization within the society (Ayata, 2002).

During the single-party period, the RPP had a centralist and disciplined identity both in its party organization and in the country. While the RPP had implemented authoritarian methods in the modernization process of the society, it did not officially create an authoritarian ideology. As Özbudun argues, there cannot be a totalitarian regime which willingly creates an opposition party (cited in Kışlalı,1992:54). In the single-party period, the RPP leadership, especially Atatürk had given importance to the views of the party's local organizations. In the 1931 general elections, while Atatürk himself declared the party's candidates, he clearly expressed his views on intra-party democracy: "I strongly support that our views should be examined and criticized by those who have opposite views. This would contribute to the true perception of the facts"<sup>19</sup>.

Until the transition to multi-party competition in 1946, the only route to be involved in politics was to be a member of the Republican People's Party. The

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<sup>17</sup> The RPP Declaration, 25 July 1965.

<sup>18</sup> <http://sodev.org.tr/basin/makaleler/posta/ataaturkunpartisichp.htm>

<sup>19</sup> Atatürk's speech, 1931. Cited in Turan, (2000), pg. 58.

RPP cadres were formed by the elites of the society and the party in the early years had a highly centralist structure due to its single party position within the system. However, in the party organization, all the party leaders including Atatürk wanted both the party delegates and also the public to freely speak and criticise the party practices.

The RPP projected to be the agency of mass mobilization and political training. It tried to become the school for the training of Turkey's future politicians, providing knowledge and experience in the technique of political organization (Karpat, 1991). In addition, in 1931, the party set an internal system which systematically communicate with the local party branches and conceive their demands to the relevant ministries.

The organizational structure and ideological identity of the RPP have been important factors for women's political recruitment within the party. Not only the RPP's elitism and its perspectives on modernization but also its organizational structure in the pre-1980 period had significant consequences for party women. At this point, it is important to analyze how the RPP women considered themselves within the party, whose major were modernization and democracy, and what impact the elitist structure of the party made particularly on women's legislative careers.

## **2.2. Women's Recruitment within the Pre-1980 RPP**

In the single-party period, the criteria to be elected as a deputy was based on some certain rules. The elected representatives of the period were mostly among the publicly known authors, journalists, businessmen who struggled for the national independence. Popularity and prestige within the society were important criterias for the consolidation of the single-party governance (Uyar, 1998).

During the single-party period, women's political representation was supported as a part of the RPP's efforts to create a modern society where women would also participate in social and political life. Although the elected women deputies were

derived from the elite segments of the society, the number of women elected during the single-party period represented a peak in Republican history until the late 1990s (*see Table-2*).

After the transition to multi-party period, the weakening power of the RPP also brought about the weakening of the reforms on gender equality. As explained before, the RPP has always symbolized the modernity and secularism in the Turkish political alignments. During the single party period, the reforms which were to emancipate women were undertaken by the RPP which was also the symbol of the democracy and the secular Republic. However, with growing support for the Democrat Party in the early 1950s, the competition between parties pushed the women's issues behind the political agenda. Therefore, it is hard to claim that the multi-party period has made a positive effect over women's recruitment since there were no established mechanisms at the time for promoting women's political representation (Tekeli, 1988).

The reason behind why the RPP leadership nominated those women who were elected in the elections of 1935 was closely related with their occupations and their educational level. In the single-party period, the main characteristic of the elected women deputies was their professions and public work experience. There were only a few housewives among these women. It was a common criterion among the RPP selectors that working women with a professional career were more likely to be successful in political life. Among these elected women representatives, there were also women who came from inside the local politics. More importantly, all these elected women deputies had high educational levels. In this sense, the educational level of the elected women were not representing the majority of the society. Moreover, the educational level of women deputies was higher than that of the men deputies. Therefore, the parliament which was composed of elite and well-educated members seemed to be far from the people who represented the features of the society (Tekeli, 1982).

After the transition to multi-party system, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, the Democrat Party which came to power after the RPP governance had no specific policies for women. It is argued that the strengthening power of traditional and religious values under the DP governance negatively affected women's political representation and women image in the political arena as 'the elected' was significantly damaged (Tokgöz,1994).

During the 1960s and 1970s, except some small political parties, almost all parties nominated only one fifth of all women applicants (Tekeli, 1982:279). Even the number of women candidates nominated by the Republican People's Party, which has been the symbol of democratization in Turkey, was significantly low (*see Table-3*).

**Table-3: The Number of Female RPP Candidates in the Elections (1961-1977)<sup>20</sup>**

<b>Election Year</b>	<b>RPP Candidates</b>
1961	6
1965	14 (3)
1969	12 (2)
1973	6 (3)
1977	4 (2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>

*Source: (Tekeli,1982:279)*

However, it can be said that the transition to multi-party period somewhat changed the self-identification of women deputies. A comparison between the women deputies of the single-party and multi-party period provides how the transition affected women in politics. In the single-party period, the majority of women deputies considered themselves as spectators while a small minority identified themselves as activists. It is argued that women activism in the parliamentary group was limited to asking questions and participation in the

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<sup>20</sup> The numbers in brackets are the numbers of elected women deputies in each election.

parliamentary commissions. Women deputies' tendency to meet their party supporters was also low. It is found that compared to DP's women deputies the RPP women deputies were more passive in meeting the party groups. It is also interesting that in 1950s and 1960s there has been no women party members who identified themselves as active member (Tekeli, 1982). After 1960, women deputies took more active role in politics although their concerns were representing the women-related issues such as health, education, and childcare. Another study (Arat, 1984) revealed that during the single-party period, women deputies identified themselves as the representatives of themselves and of women<sup>21</sup>.

Apart from the change in the self-identification of women in the political life, attitudes of the political parties toward women was no different than today's. Although the RPP have always had a somewhat women-friendly political culture, the competition between parties and their ideological polarization made women's legislative recruitment a forgotten issue of the political agenda. Women's issues have rarely been remembered in the male power game (Tekeli, 1988).

During the early 1970s, with the establishment of Women's Branches within the political parties, women party members became more active in party related activities. However, it is important to mention that the establishment of the Women's Branches in the RPP had been a critical issue that the local party organization of the time strongly opposed to the establishment of these branches. Although the party leadership clearly dictated the establishment of Women's Branches, the provincial and sub-provincial leaders resisted to the leadership cadres. According to the local party leaders, the reason behind this opposition was the traditional culture. However, following the establishment of Women's Branches, the local party organizations gradually encouraged the activities carried out by Women's Branches since their activities were considered as important means to increase party votes. Following the establishment of Women's Branches,

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<sup>21</sup> However, after the transition to multi-party period, women deputies started to take part in with their male colleagues and lose their feminine identity (Tekeli, 1988).

wives and close women relatives of the provincial party leaders became the members of these branches (Ayata, 1990:302).

It can be argued that Women's Branches can theoretically play important roles in empowering women in political life. That is, Women's Branches can serve as an intra-party mechanism which helps women to gain necessary skills relevant for political life and to feel eligible for entering into politics. Therefore, these mechanisms can be used by women aspirants as springboards in achieving higher levels of political office. However, as Ayata (1998:238) argues, the RPP Women's Branches limited women party members to the party activities which were no different than women's private sphere responsibilities. Women party members have usually confined with the activities such as holding party ceremonies and mobilizing votes for party candidates. Therefore, it can be argued that Women's Branches did not make a significant change in the lives of women party members.

### **3. The Turkish Electoral System and The Changes in the Party System**

The specific obstacles that prevent women from entering into politics have considerably been related to the atmosphere of the multi-party period. It can be argued that the ideological and organizational structure of the parties, the society's lack of trust for political parties, the volatility in the votes and the uninstitutionalized character of the party system due to the military interventions have been influential in creating the inconvenient environment of the party system for women's recruitment. It can be argued that the unpredictable and unstable nature of the party system prevented the political parties to establish stable and certain rules within their internal structures.

Since the transition to the multi-party period, Turkey has experienced three military interventions which created a fragmented and polarized party system. These interventions have also prevented parties to create an institutionalized structure which would bring the stability to the whole system. Following the 1960 military intervention, party system gradually became fragmented. In fact, during

the 1970s, the main characteristics of the Turkish party system were the volatility, fragmentation and polarization (Özbudun, 1981). First, there was increased volatility that the party votes were changing considerably between two elections. Second, the number of parties in the parliament increased significantly as ideological polarization got more intensified.

The number of parties which are established during the multi-party period has run considerably high. Among the 173 political parties, five were established in the single-party period and the rest were established in the multi-party period. 44 of all participated in the general elections between the years 1950-1999 and only 24 of them could succeed to enter into the parliament (Yaşamış, 2001). Today, there are 36 political parties actively involved in politics and only three of them have been represented in the parliament<sup>22</sup>.

The adoption of the proportional electoral system was also one of the factors that affect the fragmented structure of the party system in the 1970s during which none of the parties could reach the majority of the votes. The coalitions formed by the ideologically polarized parties were unable to produce common policies and to prevent the increasing political violence among the ideological groups. During this period, the increase in the votes of Islamic and nationalist parties also increased the fragmentation and polarization within the parliament (Özbudun, 2003).

After the 1980 military intervention, a new electoral system was adopted under the influence of the military regime to prevent a possible fragmentation within the party system. In the first elections following the 1980, the party system emancipated from its fragmented structure with the victory of a right-wing party. Until the mid-1995, four mainstream political parties have been active in the political arena; the Motherland Party and the True Path Party were on the right-wing, and the Republican People's Party and the Democratic Left Party on the

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<sup>22</sup> Two political parties entered into the Parliament in the latest national elections in November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002. However, the number of parties represented in the Parliament rose to three after the elections.

left. However, as Özbudun (2003) argues, the Turkish political system has still the tendency toward a fragmented structure since the volatility in the votes continues to be the major problem of the party system<sup>23</sup>.

In addition to the fragmented nature of the party system, other factors that have prevented the stability of the Turkish party system can be related to the organizational structure of the parties and their loose ties with the society. First, especially after 1980 political parties in Turkey have not achieved high institutionalization with stable principles, norms and processes. This is despite that the Turkish political parties traditionally achieved high degrees of institutional development. After the 1980 military coup, this institutional development was heavily damaged. As a result, parties came to rely mostly on the conventional patronage politics which further damaged their institutional strength. Second, the Turkish political parties do not have close relations with the organized sections of the society, this impedes their capacity to devise and implement effective and long-standing policies. Third, oligarchic structures around leaders prevailing in the parties also prevent the establishment of the intra-party democratic mechanisms (Özbudun, 2003).

As mentioned in Chapter II, an institutionalized party organization is more likely to contribute to the elimination of discriminatory acts against women aspirants during the candidate selection process. In Turkey, it can be argued that political parties remain inadequate in promoting women's representation through formalized rules which positively discriminate women's aspirants. As mentioned above, this can be related to the fact the contemporary party system in Turkey has experienced frequent interventions which prevented parties to complete their institutional developments. In addition, increased competition among political parties due to the fragmented, ideologically polarized nature of the party system and the volatility in the votes has transformed the Turkish party system into a

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<sup>23</sup> According to Özbudun (2003), the increasing votes in the Islamic parties and the weakening support for the mainstream left and right parties lead the party system to a fragmented and polarized one.

system where the political parties remain distant from the problem of women's low levels of political representation. Considering the recruitment process within the Turkish political parties, it can be argued that the rules and procedures within the internal structure of the parties have been far from being stable and advantageous for women.

It can be argued that the problems of institutionalization in the party system of Turkey negatively affects women's legislative recruitment. In addition, it can be hypothesized that the male dominant patronage politics in the Turkish political system also excludes women from political bargaining. The male leadership hegemony within the parties significantly put women's legislative recruitment out of the agenda of political parties. As mentioned in Chapter II, centralization within political parties may work for or against women candidates. That is, the leadership hegemony within the parties may work for the promotion of women's legislative recruitment if the leadership cadres are willing and determined to use their power for the women's advantage in the candidate selection processes. In Turkey, it is a common fact for almost all political parties that the candidate nominations are usually determined under the control of the leadership cadres. However, it can be argued that women's legislative recruitment is also negatively effected by this leadership hegemony due to the lack of gender perspective within the leadership cadres.

Since the transition to multi-party period, 41 elections have been realized in Turkey including 13 general, 8 by-elections, 11 local and 8 Senate elections. Until 1960, the electoral system was the plurality system. Following the 1960 military intervention, the new constitution adopted the proportional electoral system (PR) (Türk, 1997).

With the introduction of the PR, the number of the parties represented in the parliament rose significantly. In the 1965 and 1969 elections, all of the parties which were included in the elections entered into parliament. In the following years, the electoral system produced a similar result. Compared to the plurality

system, the proportional system increased both the number of the parties involved in the elections and the number of parties represented in the parliament.

After the 1980 military intervention, the electoral system was amended to alleviate the fragmented structure of the party system. PR system was adopted with an electoral threshold which put some of the parties out of the parliament. In 1995 general elections, only 5 of the 12 political parties, in 1999 only 5 of the 20 and in 2002 elections only 2 of the 18 parties entered into the parliament (Yaşamış, 2001). The PR system brought about an imbalance between the numbers of the parties participated in the elections and the number of parties represented in the parliament after the elections. It put major parties at advantage, small parties at disadvantage. It also accelerated the party competition in the political system.

Currently, the electoral system in Turkey can be seen as semi-proportional system which combines a 10 % threshold with D'Hont<sup>24</sup>. It is argued that the existent electoral system in Turkey is creating several problems in terms of democratic legitimacy. First, the votes gained in the elections are highly fragmented and maximum 3 parties can reach the majority of the votes. Second, there has always been a small difference between the parties in terms of the votes they gained in the elections so that the winner party cannot be legitimate in the eyes of the public. Third, the period following the elections, it has been always problematic to establish a coalition between parties since the relevant mechanisms that contribute the formation of a coalition does not exist in Turkish political system (Türk, 1997).

In addition, the above-mentioned problems related to the electoral system can also be seen as one of the factors that explain the fragmented nature of the party system. The difficulty in gaining the majority of the votes is increasing the

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<sup>24</sup> A system involving a mathematical model in which positions are shared out amongst different parties in the wake of an election with specific appointments made on the basis of proportionality (TESEV).

competition between parties. In addition, the volatility in the party votes is another factor that explains the fragmentation in the system.

More importantly, the electoral system has a negative reflection over women's legislative recruitment. As explained, the PR system is generally expected to produce best results in terms of women's legislative representation. However, it can be argued that in Turkey the proportional representation does not particularly enhance women's recruitment into the legislature. As it is indicated in the Table-5, in the general elections held since the establishment of the Republic, the number of newly elected representatives ( i.e. turnout rates in the parliament) has considerably been high compared to the number of the former deputies. Therefore, theoretically speaking, it can be said that elections have always had the opportunity to open a space for women candidates. But, on this particular point again, the existing situation offers a paradox for Turkish women.

At this point, it can be argued that the causes behind this disadvantageous position of women in the selection and election process should also be sought in the nature of the selection and the nomination practices applied in the majority of the political parties in Turkey. These practices are embedded in the party structures and the attitudes of the selectors in the party. As *Table-4* indicates, the likelihood of women aspirants to be nominated in the elections runs quite low compared to that of men.

In Turkey, there has been a strong leadership control over the nomination practices. The leadership cadres mostly act as the sole authority during the candidate nominations. The centralization in determining the candidates mostly puts women in a disadvantageous position during the nominations since women are placed on the lower ranks of the party lists. Therefore, the situation can be explained through two arguments; first, the lack of internal party democracy negatively affects women's legislative recruitment since the leadership cadres have the tendency to select the candidates who stands closer to the party leadership; second, the party culture in Turkey significantly lacks a women-

friendly approach towards women's legislative recruitment. Theoretically, as explained in Chapter II, centralized nominations could be advantageous to promote women's legislative careers since the selectors could then have the chance to place women on the upper ranks of the party election lists and to implement equality policies. But it seems that the impact of this factor is not certain. Hence, in the Turkish case, the weight of these party-related factors should be examined closely.

Overall, the party mechanisms for promoting women's legislative recruitment depend on both the organizational and cultural structure of political parties. In this sense, the problem of institutionalization in the Turkish political parties and the leadership hegemony within the political parties seem to pose important obstacles to the promotion of women's legislative recruitment.

To conclude, transition to multi-party politics, PR with multi-member districts and high turnover rates in elections have not been transformed into an advantage for women in Turkish elections. In line with the major questions of this thesis, the next chapter looks more closely at how women's chances of election to the Parliament is prevented by the prevailing party structures and the attitudes of the party elite toward women aspirants in the case of the RPP.

**Table-4. The Probability of Getting Elected for Male and Female Candidates**

	1995 General Elections	1999 General Elections
% and Numbers of Female Candidates	534 (8.1 %)	1748 (16.4 %)
% and Numbers of Women Elected	13 (2.4 %)	23 (4.2 %)
Probability of Election for Female Candidates	2.4 %	1.3 %
Probability of Election for Male Candidates	6066 (91.9 %)	8890 (83.6 %)
% and Numbers of Men Elected	537 (97.6 %)	527 (95.8 %)
Probability of Election for Male Candidates	8.8 %	5.9 %

Source: *Toward Equality Between Men and Women*, (Istanbul, Association of Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists), 218.

**Table-5. Results of General Elections**

Election Year	Electoral System	Number of New Deputies	Number of Former Deputies	Number of RPP Deputies	Number of Women Deputies
1954	Plurality (List-based)	268	269	31	4
1957	Plurality (List-based)	365	237	178	8
1961	D'Hont (Periphery threshold)	116	334	173	3 (RPP deputies)
1965	Milli Bakiye	276	174	134	8 (4 of them from RPP)
1969	D'Hont (without threshold)	271	179	143	5 (2 of them from RPP)
1973	D'Hont (without threshold)	286	164	185	6 (4 of them from RPP)
1977	D'Hont (without threshold)	259	191	213	4 (2 of them from RPP)
1983	Double Threshold D'Hont (with 10% threshold)	343	57		12
1987	Double Threshold D'Hont (with 10% threshold)	229	221	99	6 (1 of them from RPP)

<b>Table-5 (continued)</b>					
1991	Double Threshold D'Hont (with 10% threshold)	266	221	88 (Social Democratic People's Party)	8 (1 of them from SDPP)
1995	Country-wide Threshold D'Hont (with 10% threshold)	301	249	49	13 (2 of them from RPP)
1999	Country-wide Threshold D'Hont (with 10% threshold)	310	240	-	22
2002	Country-wide Threshold D'Hont (with 10% threshold)	490	60	177	24 (11 of them from RPP)

Source: [www.belgenet.com/turkiyese cimleri](http://www.belgenet.com/turkiyese cimleri)

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RPP IN THE POST-1980 PERIOD AND WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE RECRUITMENT: AN INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

As mentioned in Chapter II, party organizational factors play important role in legislative recruitment and as such they pose both constraints and opportunities for women political aspirants. In particular, the level of institutionalization and centralization within the party and the party ideology which shape the strategies of the political parties are likely to exert considerable influence over the recruitment process. From gender perspective, it is necessary to investigate in what ways these factors in parties facilitate or, for that matter, hinder the promotion of women's legislative recruitment. Hence, this chapter analyzes the RPP's institutional characteristics in 1990s from the perspective of women's legislative recruitment within the party.

#### **1. Reconstruction of the Party and Its Challenges**

With the 1980 military intervention, the military did not make an exception for the RPP and it was closed in 1981 along with other parties. The first party to be formed to succeed the RPP was the Social Democratic Populist Party (SDPP). The RPP was re-opened and merged with the SDPP in 1995.

In 1991 the RPP that had not contested elections because of political disturbances in Turkey returned on the stage after almost 10 years break. Following the 1980 military intervention, the RPP members were separated as members of the newly established People's Party (PP) and Social Democratic People Party (SDPP).

These two parties also merged and became the Social Democratic People's Party (SDPP).

The SDPP was a social democratic mass party. From its establishment, the SDPP aimed to set close relations with cooperatives, labor unions and NGOs. The basic principles of the party were equality, justice and freedom. The SDPP program was aiming at the elimination of regional disparities, the reduction of the inflation and unemployment, growth in industrial sectors.

While the SDPP policies were designed in line with the social democratic values, the party faced difficulties in maintaining intra-party democracy. The sixth Congress of the party was convened with the aim to promote the intra-party democracy. Erdal İnönü, the leader of the SDPP invited all party officials to protect the internal party democracy in the Congress:

Each party member should be sure that there is a career for everyone in this party and each honest and successful party member has the opportunity to promote their career. The first and the most important condition for the SDPP's success in the political arena is that the party leadership should take the trust of both the party members and the society. The party became a stage for 'friend crisis'. People expect us to quit intra-party conflicts. Block list practice should be left and all party members should prefer the choice which provides the opportunity to the representation and participation of all group competing for the party office.<sup>25</sup>

In the early years of 1990s, the RPP returned to the political arena. The RPP was re-established in 9 September 1992 by merging with the SDPP. The party aimed to unify those who came from the RPP tradition and cadres and who continued their political careers on the left wing after the closing of the RPP. In the re-establishment process, the RPP formed a General Executive Committee which was composed of forty-four party officials among whom there were only two women. In the first general elections following the establishment of the RPP, the party formed its parliamentary group which was composed of twenty deputies among whom there were no women. It can be argued that the RPP re-appeared in the political arena without women. Among the members of the Central Executive

Committee which was composed of 21 party officials, there were no women officials.

In the party program of 1995, the RPP emphasized its loyalty to the six Kemalist principles and its social democratic identity which emphasized modern democratic leftism. The program was based on the concepts of freedom, equality, solidarity, peace, the superiority of labor and law, sustainable development and environment (Turan, 2000).

However, the RPP leftism in Turkey which had a particularly populist perspective and emphasized the equal distribution of production means in the pre-1980 period had an ideological shift. It can be argued that the rightist governments of the post-1980 period established the capitalist values within the society. The rise of the capitalist values have particularly distanced the Left from social justice and equal distribution of wealth (Dağıstanlı, 1998). While the party ideology combined the Kemalist principles with the social democratic principles, the emphasis on secularism continued to be the major principle of the party. Unlike the pre-1980 period, the RPP ideology revised itself to be more lenient and flexible on the religious issues. It can be argued that the democratization in all spheres of life has been raised as major axis of pragmatic reforms in the party. It is argued that the RPP in the 1990s became the alternative of the right in Turkey, however, it have not developed relevant policies in conformity with the changing conditions of Turkey due to the intra-party conflicts.

The RPP for the first time in Republican history remained out of the parliament in 1999. The party did not pass the parliamentary threshold (10 per cent) in the general elections of 1999. Actually, this was an expected result for most of the party officials. The party votes had decreased from 20.8 per cent in the elections of 1991 to 10.7 per cent in the election of 1995. There were a variety of reasons behind this electoral defeat. First, the political corruption appeared in the party, especially the party majors had arbitrary applications at the local level. This

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<sup>25</sup> Speech of Erdal İnönü, the leader of the SPP, 29 September 1990.

created a mistrust within both the party and the society. Secondly, the coalitions between 1991-1995 in which the RPP took part with rightist parties significantly destructed the party's image among the social democrat masses. The party did not make a self-criticism and thus, the structural and political problems have continued. One of the most common criticism directed to the RPP was that the party was not able to produce efficient and effective policies on country's problems and did not have a clear and concrete perspective toward these problems. The emphasis was just on the secularism. The party members believed that it was not possible to win the elections though abstract concepts such as secularism, rather the RPP needed concrete commitments, projects and policies.<sup>26</sup> A healthy record of party members, intra-party training on democracy and party discipline, active involvement of the local party organization over the decision-taking process, cooperation with the women NGOs and environmental institutions were main areas on which the RPP had to restructure itself. The local party organization had lost its control over the central organization and the governance evolved to a centralist and exclusive governance<sup>27</sup>.

Before the defeat of the RPP in the national elections of 1999, it was often expressed that there should not be a Turkey without the RPP<sup>28</sup>. The RPP was strongly criticized that it was no longer a leftist party. It did not give place for women and youth, did not respond to the needs of labor and it lacked new and dynamic cadres<sup>29</sup>. The party was criticized also on the basis of its internal structure that the personal benefits was put over the collective benefits. The restructuring of the RPP was essential<sup>30</sup>.

In the late 1990s, the RPP had broken its ties with the public officials, villagers and labor segments of the society and remained in the middle between the labor and the capital and could not produce relevant policies. The line that separate the

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<sup>26</sup> Evaluation of 18 April 1999 Elections, *Party Document*.

<sup>27</sup> Evaluation of 18 April 1999 Elections, *Party Document*.

<sup>28</sup> Güngör Mengi, *Sabah Daily*, 8 March 1999.

<sup>29</sup> Necati Doğru, *Sabah Daily*, 27 March 1999.

<sup>30</sup> Ahmet Taner Kışlalı, *Cumhuriyet Daily*, 4 April 1999.

RPP from the rightist parties disappeared and became a liberal party by distanced from the Atatürkist leftist line.

While the RPP ideology, in the pre-1980 period, emphasized the class-based inequalities, the minority rights and ethnic identities, in the late 1990s a clear shift can be observed in the party ideology. It is argued that the RPP discourse distanced itself from egalitarian politics which is based on the analysis of class-based socio-economic inequalities as the party declared that its identity was based on universal rules of social democracy with a strong emphasis on Westernization (Ayata, 2002). While the RPP program emphasizes the basic components of welfare such as universal education, health care and social security reforms, the party ideology is aliening to the right in terms of its economic perspective which accepts the market economy and gives priority to the technology and industry based investments.

At another level, from the early years of the Republic, the RPP ideology evolved as a gender-sensitive one which recognizes the secondary position of women in both private and public spheres of life. As explained in Chapter II, ideology has had significant impact over party approaches toward women's legislative recruitment and positive discrimination policies. Although in many European countries, rightist/conservative parties have also implemented positive discrimination strategies in their internal bodies, it is commonly argued that the leftist parties are more likely to adopt women-friendly and equity-oriented policies compared to the rightist parties. It can be argued at first glance that this finding also applies to the Turkish political party system. Although the True Path Party, one of the major conservative center-right party in the Turkish system has also been supportive of measures such as gender quota to promote women's participation in internal party elections<sup>31</sup>, almost all right-wing parties have been reluctant to consider and adopt such measures and currently, they do not have such strategies in internal elections and for nominations. It is important to note

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<sup>31</sup> 10 per cent quota for each sex is applied in the elections of all party organs. In the national elections, the same percentage is applied for the selection of party candidates (True Path Party Statute, Article 17).

that the RPP officials and elite more often criticize and challenge the structure of the Turkish patriarchal society with a view to change it to emancipate women than conservative parties (Ayata, 1998). It can be argued that the RPP program does not specifically focus on the deconstruction of the traditional society which puts women in a secondary position in the society. However, the program aims at the provision of the conditions which would liberate women in all spheres of life such as economic independence, child care services and social security for housewives. Historically, the RPP was the first party in the Republican history which held a women's congress and established a Women's Branch within the party.

However, the RPP have been under criticism throughout the 1990s especially on its ideological standing within the Turkish party system since its program and policies remain highly insufficient in responding to prevailing socioeconomic inequalities. Intra-party and extra party critics consider the RPP social democratic in rhetoric but highly elitist, statist at heart and in actual practice, and accuse it of not being in touch with the realities of Turkish society (Kahraman, 2002).

## **2. Perspective on Gender Equality and Women's Political Recruitment**

In the Congress of 1990, women's problems were also brought to the agenda. The leadership cadres mentioned that women's political representation should be enhanced within the party. The Party declared that women quotas should be effectively implemented. In the Congress of 1993, the SDPP also criticized the women's situation in politics. According to the party leadership, the number of women in the party organs was significantly low. Therefore, the activities of the Women's Branches should be encouraged and supported.<sup>32</sup>

The SDPP was the first Turkish political party which launched and effectively implemented the quotas for women. With the amendment to the Statute in the Congress of 1993, it was decided that 25 per cent quota for women shall be applied at provincial and sub-provincial levels. The SDPP recognized that women had not the same opportunities with men in social and economic life and thus,

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<sup>32</sup> SDPP Statute and Program Congress, 1993.

they should be supported with positive discrimination strategies. The quota application of the party was established along this principle.<sup>33</sup> The policies of the SDPP on women were designed as basic principles of the party. The SDPP based its principle of equal rights and opportunities for women and men on social democratic principles. Among the SDPP's policies on women, it was proposed that the laws should be revised in conformity with the CEDAW and Women's Branches Law should be put into force.

It is at this point that the RPP approaches and strategies to promote women in political representation and recruitment can be raised as a critical issue and problem. To what extent does the RPP, an ostensibly social democratic party, which has a historical baggage of promotion of women's rights through radical reforms, supports gender equality-oriented policies in the party and in national politics? How do ideology, party institutional features and cultural attitudes influence the party's approach toward women's promotion in politics? Especially, the RPP policies and strategies on women's integration into political life need a closer look in view of the fact that though the RPP adopted a 25 per cent quota for women in the election of the members of all internal party organs, the number of the RPP women MPs (4 per cent) remains marginal to that of male deputies (96 per cent) in the TGNA.

The RPP program agrees that Turkish women lagged behind men in terms of political representation<sup>34</sup>. In the party program, it is stated that women start political competition behind men, and therefore, they should be supported to equalize the conditions for women political aspirants. In this context, the party proposes three channels to overcome women's disadvantageous position in politics; effective implementation of quota setting in the internal party bodies, the re-organization of the women's branches and addressing women's problems in the party programs.

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<sup>33</sup> SDPP Program, Political Parties, April 1993, pg. 42-43.

<sup>34</sup> RPP Party Program, 2001.

The RPP's perspective on quota setting is justified on the basis of ensuring the principle of democracy. That is, women's equal political representation is seen as the prerequisite of democracy. Therefore, the RPP states in its program that the quota is not a favour for women but it is a condition of democracy. In this context, the party has implemented 25 per cent quota in the internal party bodies since 1989. RPP leaders believe that women usually cannot be party leaders although they become party members. Thus, they consider the quota application as a means to overcome the barriers that prevent women from being party leaders. In practice, the 25 per cent quota is applied when quantitatively 15 women are absent among 60 Party Assembly members. In such case, the membership of men who got the lowest vote percentage drops and they are replaced by the women who got the highest vote percentage following those 60 members. The quota application at the Party Assembly level is not different from that of the provincial and sub-provincial levels. In the provincial and sub-provincial assemblies, 25 per cent quota is applied for women party members<sup>35</sup>.

One of the targets addressed in the RPP program is ensuring the quota application in both local and general elections. However, the lack of any attempt toward the implementation of quotas at local and general elections shadows the RPP elites' commitment to the enhancement of women's legislative recruitment through positive discrimination. While the implementation of positive discrimination toward the enhancement of women's legislative recruitment has still been unconstitutional in Turkish political system, the political parties in Turkey have the initiative to accommodate more women in the election lists through intra-party arrangements such as reserving seats for women political aspirants. On this point, it is important to question whether the RPP has a local party base which is supportive for the quota application for the enhancement of women's legislative recruitment. Following the RPP's defeat in the general elections of 1999, Altan Öymen<sup>36</sup> who was then brought to the party leadership to reform and empower the party, claimed that their attempts to adopt the quota setting for the local and

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<sup>35</sup> The RPP Statute, 2001, pg. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Altan Öymen was the party leader between May 1999-September 2000.

general elections failed due to the reluctant attitudes of the local party organizations. In one of his speeches, he explained the situation as follows:

The members of the Party Assembly visited the local party organizations and listened their expectations and problems. These visits were the infrastructure for the creation of a new party statute which would be created in the light of the views and perspectives of the local party organizations... During these local meetings, it was seen that the local party organizations did not agree with the application of the quotas for women aspirants in the local and general elections... We realized that training of the party members on gender equality is a necessity for the application of positive discrimination for women.<sup>37</sup>

The unwillingness among the local party organizations toward the quota setting also raises the question whether the RPP with its local party base favors women's descriptive representation or not. As it will be explained in the next chapter, the local party members interviewed for this study did not express a clear objection to quota setting within the RPP. It can be argued that the negative attitudes of the local party members toward quota setting point out that the RPP party base is not against the descriptive representation but they are against the 'undemocratic' applications in the electoral competition. Nearly half of the local party officials who were interviewed for this study stated that quota setting in the local and general elections would be undemocratic since it would prevent a fair competition. On other hand, all of the CEC members interviewed for this study firmly expressed their strong commitment to the 'descriptive representation'.

While the quota setting facilitates women's moves to the internal party bodies, Women's Branches are also one of the intra-party mechanisms which was established to promote women's political participation within the RPP. However, it is hard to claim that the RPP Women's Branches can be seen as a springboard for women political aspirants in getting elected for the parliamentary office.

The idea behind the establishment of Women's Branches is to disseminate the RPP policy and program among women and to maintain their active participation in public sphere as free and equal citizens. Women's Branches functions as a

coordination center for the RPP women who want to be actively involved in politics. However, as Ayata (1998) argues, the participation model of these women is not usually toward having a career in political life. She argues that especially well-educated women in the local regions tend to support their husbands by being active in a particular political party. In addition, these women do not usually struggle for candidacy to obtain a legislative career. Undoubtedly, it does not mean that there are no women among the members of the Women's Branches who aim at obtaining a legislative career. As Ayata (1998) argues, there are also independent women who see the Women's Branches as a springboard for a parliamentary career. However, the activities carried out by the Women's Branches are far from being a preparatory stage for a legislative career.

One of the factors which prevent the Women's Branches being a springboard for women aspirants is closely related with its organizational structure. First, Women's Branches lack an autonomous structure within the RPP organizational structure. Women's Branches work as the sub-branch of the provincial, sub-provincial and central organizations. The members of the Women's Branches have no natural voting right in the party congresses and on the decisions taken by the Party Assembly.<sup>38</sup> It can be argued that the will of the Women's Branches is not reflected in the decisions taken by the intra-party organizations and also, their preferences in the election of the provincial and sub-provincial party leaders and the delegates are significantly ignored.

Second, Women's Branches meet the Women's Congress once in two years period with the call of the Central Executive Committee. However, the Women Congress has not been convened by the Central Executive Committee in the last seven years. It can be argued that the oligarchical nature of the RPP structure is

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<sup>37</sup> Kazete, June-July 2000, pg.2-3.

<sup>38</sup> According to the RPP Congress Statute (2003), the party members who are elected as the participant of the congress are called 'representative' and who have the right to participate in the party congress due to their position within the party are called 'natural member'. All of the party representatives and natural members are called congress members (Article 3). Also, the provincial and sub-provincial leaders, the members of the provincial and sub-provincial organization, the legislative representatives of the province, members of the party discipline committee have the natural voting right in the provincial party congresses.

maintained over the RPP Women's Branches. While the Women's Branches lacks an autonomous structure and acts under the control of the RPP male elite, it is also evident in the latest Women Congress that the RPP women are told what their problems are by the RPP male leadership cadres (Kahraman, 2002). The attitudes of the male leadership cadres toward women's issues can be observed both in the Women Congress and in the RPP Women Program. In the Women Program, the party leader, Deniz Baykal, calls out to the party women as follows:

...Our mothers, our wives, our daughters...You are born social democrat because you want equality, you want justice, welfare, democracy, peace, freedom...The RPP believes that all existing inequalities can be overcome with the participation of women. I call out to you for this reason. Do not leave us alone, do support us...<sup>39</sup>

As stated before, the RPP elite recognizes the inequalities between men and women. However, the attitudes and messages sent out to the RPP women emphasize the traditional gender roles of women. First, the party leader emphasizes the traditional roles of women by calling out to them as mothers, daughters and wives, although the RPP program stipulates that women should be actively involved in the social, economic and political life. Second, the RPP women are told by the party leader what women's identity and values are. Third, they are called out to support their male colleagues for the success of the party.

The RPP also considers women's issues in the context of the problems of democracy, peace, secularism and social justice. The party envisages an equal citizenship model for the women who identify with the secularist-Kemalist principles. Hence, there is a close relationship between the commitment to secularism and support for women's public sphere involvement. However, the RPP perspective on this relationship is based on the distinction between veiled women and unveiled women. The RPP discourse based on such a perspective significantly reduces women's issues to the secularism and closes the door to other women problems. The RPP program asserts secularism as the guarantee of the equality between men and women. However, it is problematic that the party

congresses mostly become the places where the emphasis remains largely on secularism and women. Yet, the congresses are far from being sufficient in discussing women's problems and needs (Kahraman, 2002). While women should define their own problems, it seems that the RPP male elite tell women what their problems are. Women's movement within the RPP has not been independent of the existing ideology which is based on statist politics.

The RPP did not struggle for the equality between men and women in terms of political representation. Rather, according to Arat (1997), the RPP placed a few number of women on the party short-lists who have been inherited names. In the late 1990s, the party appointed a male politician to the Women Ministry and the leadership cadres stated that it should not be important whether the women-related policies had to be executed by female politicians. The important thing for the RPP leadership was to have a sensitivity on women issues. In other words, descriptive representation was not essential.

As explained in Chapter I, descriptive representation is a way of representing women's collective interests by women themselves. It can be argued that the RPP's policies and programs have never included a proposal that project the descriptive representation for women. The perspectives of the RPP elite on women's political representation clearly support women's substantial representation with the representatives who are qualified enough to represent women's interests and problems. As will be explained in Chapter V, although some of the leaders interviewed for this study stated their strong commitment to descriptive representation, there is a clear tendency in the party that women can be represented and supported through gender-sensitive policies and programs. However, it is also hard to claim that the RPP cadres have followed effective policies on women-related issues (Arat, 1997:205). During the post-1980 period coalitions in which the RPP took part, it is hard to claim that the RPP with its male government officials served for women's interests and struggled to solve

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<sup>39</sup> The RPP Women Program, 8 March 2002, pg. 3.

their problems. Therefore, the commitment to the substantial representation does not also work in the RPP.

It can be argued that the RPP with its statist and the status quo based political identity is not expected to have a challenging and reformist position in the women related issues. Although the RPP Women's Branches have initiated its own program which aims at listening women's problems from women themselves and formulate policies in the light of these views, it seems that the RPP male elite tend to reflect these problems by themselves on behalf of the RPP women.

### **3. Institutionalization in the RPP**

It is well-established that the stability of a particular political system is highly dependent on the level of the institutionalization within political parties. Recent studies demonstrate that the institutionalization of Turkish political parties has still been problematic despite relatively high levels of institutionalization achieved in the past (Çarkoglu, 2000). Moreover, it can be said that the Turkish political party elites are not paying enough attention to the strategies to strengthen and enhance their institutional strength such as promoting internal party democracy and freedom of discussion on party policies.

One of the major factors that could largely explain the problem with party institutionalization in Turkey is the interruptions in competitive party system through military interventions. In fact, the constitutional provisions adopted after each intervention constituted a new start for all political parties to review their ideological orientations and their organizational structures<sup>40</sup>.

In Turkey, almost all political parties have similar organizational characteristics since the Political Parties Law imposes a standard organization model for all political parties. Political parties were initially prohibited to act as autonomous

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<sup>40</sup> Following the military intervention in 1980, the new constitution, the political parties' law and electoral law aimed at ending the fragmented and ideologically polarized structure of the pre-1980 period. However, the 1981 Constitution have also introduced provisions that restricted the parties in their internal structure and their relations with the society.

institutions in forming relations with the civil society organizations or in cooperating with them. Political parties were even prohibited to establish youth and women's branches under their internal structure although these restrictions were removed in the late 1990s. Therefore, parties can only set their own principles through party statutes to the extent which the Law permits.

Considering the institutionalization as a process to achieve organizational stability with the established principles, norms and practices, the RPP as the oldest party of the Republic suffers from problems with institutionalization like other Turkish parties. In this sense, it should be noted that the RPP's problems with the institutionalization cannot be linked to the principles established with the Political Parties Law and the Constitution. The situation can be explained with the dynamics of the RPP's organizational and ideological structure. The quest by the party elite for a clear ideological identity is not over. This is also true for the issue of the selection of the party administrators over which there are still endless debates within the party in both formal and informal platforms. There is a strong oligarchy within the central party which controls the local party organization. The central party cadres have loose ties with the local party organization. In fact, since the RPP has a cadre party organization, the local party members have been under the control of the local elites within the party (Bektaş, 1993). Even though the party holds regular provincial and sub-provincial congresses and went to great lengths to have some form of peripheral input in these congresses, the majority of the decisions have been made in the center (Ayata, 2002). Second, the party delegates have been elected among the privileged and powerful segments of the party. They have some form of patron-client relations with the top rank party officials which destroy the democracy within the party. One of the party officials interviewed for this study explains the situation in the following way:

There is strong cooperation between the delegates and the party leaders. At first glance, this seems to be a perfect relationship which symbolizes the harmony between the local party organization and the party leadership. However, the loyalty to the leadership cadres is mostly the result of the centralized nature of the party organization. The delegates know that they preserve their position as far as they support the leadership cadres.

Therefore, the delegates are mostly concerned with their own benefits in order to preserve their position within the party.<sup>41</sup>

Third, the oligarchic structure within the party leads to anti-democratic practices in terms of membership. The membership registration has not been regular in the RPP. Usually closeness to leadership cadres works as a determining factor for membership. The tricks and “nylon memberships”<sup>42</sup> prior to the congresses have been quite common in most of Turkey’s parties. The local party members claim that such tricks prior to the party congresses is also evident in the RPP. The opposition within the RPP complains about these unlawful applications of the leadership cadres.<sup>43</sup> One of the party members states his strong opposition to such applications in the following way:

The number of newly registered members significantly affects the election results. The leaders’ tendency of registering new members prior to the congress hampers the equal competition among the candidates and, it also damages the intra-party democracy.<sup>44</sup>

It is evident in the elections that the amount of the votes has not reflected the number of the registered party members. These manipulations on the membership registrations provide an advantage to the top party cadres and increase their chance in the intra-party competition. However, such manipulations lead to the perpetuation of undemocratic culture within the parties (Türk,1997).

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<sup>41</sup> Personal interview with a male, local party member, Ankara, April 2004.

<sup>42</sup> According to the principles of the RPP Statute (Article 8, 9,10,14), political aspirant who wishes to be a party member becomes the candidate member following his/her application for party membership. During the 6 months period, investigations are conducted by the local party organs to approve the membership. In addition, the Central Executive Committee (CEC) has the power to appoint new members by taking the advice of the local party leaders. Nylon membership is closely related with the CEC’s power to appoint new members. Prior to the party congresses, the leadership cadres, in cooperation with the local party leaders, appoint new members who are supporters of the party leadership. These new members are mostly registered ten days before the congress with the approval of the party leaders. These members have mostly no political orientation. The local candidates who are supported by the party leadership may use their ethnic, religious or kinship relations in registering these new members who will vote for them in the elections. What the term “nylon” means that these new members are registered as the inheritants of the parishes where they have never been before. Thus, the candidates increase their vote support from the districts they have a weak support in reality.

<sup>43</sup> Prior to the party congresses, the local party members protest the nylon memberships (*Hürriyet Daily*, 08.07.2003; *Milliyet Daily*, 08.06.2003; 13.02.2001; *Hürriyet Daily*, 07.01.2004).

<sup>44</sup> Personal interview with a male, local party member, Ankara, April 2004.

In 1993, there have been several attempts within the party to reform the structure of the party organization. For example, during the leadership of Altan Öymen<sup>45</sup>, a number of initiatives were planned to transform the party to strengthen its institutional structure. Among the proposed reforms, the most significant ones were the obligation of resignation for the leadership cadres in the case of an electoral defeat, the adoption of the rule that obliged the party leaders to declare their financial possessions, transparency rule in the campaign and election expenditures, the principle not to have any economic relations with the public institutions, adoption of quotas for women and the payment of the membership dues. However, with the defeat of the reformist cadres in the party congress that the majority of the delegates re-elected the former RPP leader, the new party cadres ignored the necessity for these reforms.

As stated in Chapter II, the intersection of the aspirant's possession of the right combination of resources and the expectations of the party selectors is likely to depend on some certain rules and procedures established within the political parties. In the framework of the RPP, it is hard to say that the political aspirants are involved in political competition under stabilized rules and principles of the party. Changes in the form of the nomination practices across the constituencies and the implementation of nomination practices that differ from one election to the other attest to the unstable nature of the rules in the RPP. In this context, one of the RPP officials who is currently the leader of the intra-party opposition accuses the current leadership cadres of preventing the institutionalization within the party. He criticizes the nomination practices in the RPP in the following way:

I don't think that the RPP has stable rules and procedures that determine the candidate nominations. To me, the reason behind this situation is the attitudes of the leadership cadres who have a direct control over the nominations. They see themselves as the owner of the party and accordingly, they use their power to change the rules whenever they want...the RPP as a social democratic party should take the views of the local party officials into consideration while taking party-related decisions and, there should be a stability in the party rules which would make the candidates feel secure in the candidate nomination process.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Altan Öymen served as the party leader between May 1999-September 2000.

<sup>46</sup> Personal interview with a male local party member, Ankara, April 2004.

In terms of women's recruitment, the RPP's organizational structure and nomination practices perpetuate women's disadvantageous position in legislative recruitment. The RPP leaders seem reluctant to support more women in the nominations and they shy away from women-friendly intra-party novelties for the promotion of women's legislative recruitment. One of the party officials stated:

There is a contradiction between the rhetoric of the RPP cadres and their actions. They state that they want to see more women in the candidate lists and they state their strong support for the promotion of women in politics. However, in the election times, they do not position the women applicants on the winnable positions although they have the power to do that.<sup>47</sup>

As almost all party officials have pointed out, the RPP has indeed a women-friendly party culture which supports the rules established within the party to promote women's legislative recruitment. However, they state that the lack of such rules and mechanisms within the party is a result of the leadership attitudes which is more likely to support the aspirants who are personally close to themselves. The views of the party officials emphasize and demonstrate that the high level of centralization within the party is currently the major reason behind the undemocratic practices and rules within the party.

It can be argued that women's legislative recruitment is also negatively affected by the undemocratic practices and rules within the party. In the 30th Party Congress of 2003, the amendments made in the Party Statute provide important indicators for these undemocratic practices of the party. In the Congress, the amendments made in the Party Statute stipulated that the candidacy for the party leadership could be possible with the signatures of 20 per cent of the all party delegates. Second, the election of new leadership cadres was decided to be elected through block list application.<sup>48</sup> During and after the Party Congress, the amended

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<sup>47</sup> Personal interview with one of the male opposition leaders who is the former RPP deputy, Ankara, April, 2004.

<sup>48</sup> In the election of the leadership cadres, the party leader is elected first and following the election of the party leader, the members of the Party Assembly and the CEC are determined. During the process, the elected party leader prepares a list of candidates for the top party positions. Block list application means that the candidate list of the elected party leader pass in the Congress. The sheet

Articles generated a crisis within the party. The intra-party opposition claimed that it was undemocratic to let the party leader to determine the leadership cadres by himself.<sup>49</sup> However, the party leader and his cadres claimed that the block list has been a RPP tradition. The elected party leader, Deniz Baykal defended the block list application as follows:

...disagreements and debates are out of our concern...Block list is a RPP tradition which has been launched in the twentieth Congress of the RPP...The success of the party and its reliability in the eyes of public depends on the harmony of the leadership cadres.<sup>50</sup>

While the party leader appointed his own cadres in the Congress, he claimed that the harmony within the party could be maintained with the leadership cadres who are also the supporters of the elected party leader. In addition, the majority of the delegates agreed to vote for the list of the party leader.

It can be argued that the existing leadership cadres significantly ignore the intra-party opposition with its undemocratic practices and rules. Such practices have also consequences for women's political careers. First, the promotion of women's political careers highly depend on the attitudes of the party leader toward women. That is, women's move to the top party office is unlikely to be promoted as long as the preferences of the elected party leader is not gender-sensitive. Second, a result of the leadership attitudes which is more likely to support the aspirants who are personally close to themselves, the promotion of women's political careers cannot be maintained since the party leaders mostly support the candidates who are predominatly male. Third, the undemocratic practices and rules within the RPP significantly damages the institutionalization of the party.

#### **4. Centralization in the RPP and the Nomination Process**

The Turkish party system has always been shaped by a leadership oligarchy. In fact, this is the most important factor within the Turkish party system that explains

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list, on the other hand, includes the names of the various candidates including the supporters and opponents of the elected party leader. In the sheet list application, the delegates are provided the opportunity to select their own representatives who will have a seat in the Party Assembly.

<sup>49</sup> *Hürriyet Daily*, 24 October 2003; *Sabah Daily*, 25 October 2003.

the weaknesses of the internal participatory mechanisms. The communication between the party leadership and the local party members rests on a highly hierarchical and top-to-bottom relationship.

One of the factors that closely reflect the degree of the intra-party democracy is the nature of the nomination practices applied in the elections. Decades ago, Schattschneider (1942) had argued that the owner of a party was the one who determined the selection of the party candidates in the elections. Therefore, who held the power in determining the candidate selection could provide important implications about the power relations within a particular political party.

In Turkey, the formal-localized nomination which can be seen as the most democratic way of determining the candidates, has not been used by political parties except by some of the left wing parties. As defined in Chapter II, in the formal-localized nomination, the party candidates are nominated with the participation of party members or delegates. That is, the candidates are determined under the control of the party members. However, the decision of the central cadres or party leader has been the common way of determining candidates for elections in Turkey. According to the Political Parties Law (1983), parties are free to nominate their candidates through primaries or central appointments. However, party leaders in Turkey have the authority to dismiss the members of the local party organizations whenever they want. Therefore, the reason why party members remain subordinate to the leadership oligarchy can be explained by their obligation to the leadership or by their personal expectations for the next elections. The loyalty of the party members to the leadership is one of the factors that reproduce the oligarchy within parties (Akgün, 2002).

Obviously, when candidate nomination is taken up exclusively by this leadership oligarchy, competition for candidacy cannot be carried on under equal conditions for all aspirants. All of the mechanisms functions to secure the power positions of the party leader and his close friends within the party. (Türk, 1997) The formal-

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<sup>50</sup> *Hürriyet Daily*, 23 October, 2003.

centralized nomination practice which has been granted to the parties by law has to be applied through the consultations with the local party organizations and the society. However, in Turkey, the party leaders mostly decide on the candidates by themselves without taking into consideration the public opinion and the views of the local party members.

In the latest elections, the members of the MKYK nominated the party candidates through their own methods. That is, they came together and wrote their own names on the top of the election lists. After that, they put the names of their close friends who have always been supportive of the leadership. They did not even ask the opinions of the local organizations.<sup>51</sup>

One of the RPP's local party officials also expresses his views on nomination practices of the RPP as following:

In the latest national elections, the central leadership did not recognize any of the demands of the local organization. For instance, in İstanbul, the provincial and sub-provincial party organization had decided to nominate the party's candidates through primaries. However, the leadership did not listen to our demands. As a result, the candidates which were nominated by the leadership cadres were the ones who did not supported by the local party base. The candidate lists were the lists of the friends of the party leaders.<sup>52</sup>

During the pre-1980 period, the Political Parties' Law obliged all political parties to nominate their candidates through the formal-localized nomination in primaries. The law also stipulated that the formal-centralized system could be only used if there was no sufficient number of applicants in a particular constituency. The Political Parties Law (No.2820) which entered into force in 1983 obliged all political parties to use formal-localized candidate nomination with the participation of all registered party members. However, in 1986, an amendment was made in the law and the Law (No. 3270) provided the freedom to all political parties in determining the candidate nomination by themselves. Each political party would have the power to implement one or more nomination practices in general elections in parallel with the rules established in their own party statutes within the framework of free, equal and secret ballot principle.

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<sup>51</sup> Personal interview with a male local party member, Ankara, April, 2004.

<sup>52</sup> Personal interview with one of the RPP local party officials, Ankara, May 2004.

However, if a political party prefers to apply formal-localized nomination, then it has to be conducted according to existing principles in the Political Parties Law (Özbudun, 1995).

However, in Turkey, all political parties across the ideological spectrum have mostly determined their candidates through the formal-centralized system. The current RPP Statute, which was lastly written in 2001, stipulates that the candidate nomination would be determined through three types of nomination practices: formal-localized, informal-localized and formal-centralized nominations. In each election, the members of the Party Assembly, composed of 72 elected officials, decide on which nomination practices will be applied in which of the constituencies. The Party Assembly has the authority to apply different nomination practices for each of the constituencies. If the nominations are decided to be held as formal-localized practice then, the primaries are determined with the participation of all registered party members. The central appointments are determined by the Party Assembly and, the informal-centralized nominations are determined with the participation of the party delegates. In the each election, the party publishes a regulation which provides information for the party officials about the rules of the nomination practices to be used in the elections.

Nevertheless, the rules and procedures related to the candidate nominations are declared prior to the elections, it is controversial whether these rules and procedures are applied as written in the regulations. Following the latest national elections of 2002, most of the party officials accused the leadership cadres of having violated the nomination rules. Although the leadership cadres found such accusations as unacceptable, the intra-party opposition claimed that the members of the CEC itself decided on the candidates ignoring the views of the members of the Party Assembly. One of the former male members of the Party Assembly explained the situation in the following way:

In the last national elections, the party candidates are decided on by the members of the Central Executive Committee. They chose the candidates

whom they had personal and close relations. And they did not even submit the names for voting among the members of the Party Assembly.<sup>53</sup>

It was a reality that some members of the Party Assembly submitted their resignation to the administration following the candidate nomination by claiming that the members of the CEC had ignored their views over the candidate selection. On the one hand, there is a strong intra-party opposition to actions and attitudes of the leadership cadres. On the other hand, the members of leadership cadres think that such kind of reactions should be considered as normal since it is impossible to respond to each and every demand of the party officials. One CEC member defends the current practice in the following way:

In some constituencies, it becomes impossible to nominate the party candidates through primaries due to the constituency-related problems. The form of the nomination practice to be applied in all constituencies cannot be fixed. In some constituencies, it sometimes becomes an obligation to apply central appointment.<sup>54</sup>

Another member of the CEC also evaluated the criticisms on the nomination practices in a similar manner:

As being one of the members of the CEC, I can say that we take risks by nominating the candidates through central appointment because we know that the party base in general do not favor the centralized appointments. Most of the RPP members find central appointments as undemocratic and unfair. It is normal to face with such reactions from the opponents of the central appointments; however, the priority to me is to win the elections and the RPP had to nominate the candidates who are more likely to win the elections.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, the nomination practices in the RPP have been evolved around the formal-centralized nomination although the normal practice was predominantly toward formal-localized nomination since the 1950s until 1980 (*See Table-6*) The two female members of the CEC who were interviewed for this study agreed that the central appointments may become necessary in some constituencies although they

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<sup>53</sup> Personal interview with a male former member of the Party Assembly, Ankara, 2004.

<sup>54</sup> Personal interview with a female member of the CEC, Ankara, May 2004.

<sup>55</sup> Personal interview with a male member of the CEC, Ankara, May 2004.

believe in the fairness of the primaries. One of the female members of the CEC explains her views as following:

I know that the primaries are preferred by the local party base. However, it is hard to say that the candidates in all of the constituencies can be nominated by using the same nomination practices. The aim is to win the elections. Therefore, the most winnable candidates should be on the top of the lists. The reason behind the use of central appointments is related to this aim<sup>56</sup>.

It should be mentioned here that there exists no research related on the opinions of the RPP women party members about the party's nomination practices. But some party officials who were interviewed for this study criticized the nomination practices of the RPP and they claim that the local party base of the RPP demands that the nominations have to be decided through primaries which also have to be a permanent rule of the RPP as a social democratic party. One such official stated that:

I stand strongly against the central appointments in the nominations and also the party base does so. The rules are changing in each elections and changing toward more centralized one. In fact, the RPP has a tradition of formal-localized nominations. This is not fair and democratic for the aspirants. I know many people who did not apply for candidacy due to the changing rules of nominations. They thought, they would lose in the nominations if the leadership cadres determine the candidates through central appointments.<sup>57</sup>

In the latest elections (November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002), the RPP nominated 550 candidates in total. Among the 74 electoral districts, only the candidates of 10 districts have been determined through formal-localized nomination. In the constituencies where the candidates were nominated through formal-centralized practice, 39 women were placed in the candidate lists among whom only 8 women were on the winnable ranks of the lists. Therefore, the election result was not surprising: only 11 women were elected for the Parliament.

Following the nomination of the party candidates, however, it was surprising that some of women aspirants who were placed in the unwinnable ranks of the party lists did not react against the choices of the party leadership. Moreover, they

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with one of the female members of the CEC, Ankara, May 2004.

stated their pleasure to be positioned in the RPP's party list. A women aspirant who was positioned on the twenty-second rank of the party list stated that, "I found my position on the party list as satisfactory. It is honourable to me to be involved in the RPP's candidate list."<sup>58</sup> Another woman applicant who was positioned as the fourteenth rank of the party list states that, "It is a honour to me to be involved in the same party list with the experienced and successful politicians."<sup>59</sup>

The perspectives of the women applicants on their positions on the party lists is surprising although some of them stated that they just applied for candidacy to be able to participate in the elections as a woman and did not expect to be elected. However, it should be noted that it was the women's associations which strongly criticized the low numbers of party candidates and accused the leadership cadres of being insensitive to the promotion of women's legislative recruitment.

**Table-6. Candidate Nomination Practices in RPP**

Year and Article of the Party Statute	Nomination Procedure
1923-Article 101	Candidates are determined by the party ministers, members of the Central Execution Committee and Parliamentary Group Committee.
1927-Article 23 1931-Article 20 1935-Article 26 1938-Article 28 1943-Article 27	Party candidates are determined by party leader, vice-party leader which was selected by the party leader and Central Party Committee, and it is declared by the party leader.
1947-Article-148	70 per cent of the candidates are determined by the local committees and 30 per cent by Party Council which was composed of 40 party members.

<sup>57</sup> Personal interview with a male local party member, Ankara, April 2004.

<sup>58</sup> *Hürriyet Daily*, 12 September, 2002.

<sup>59</sup> *Hürriyet Daily*, 11 September, 2002.

<b>Table-6 (continued)</b>	
1951-Article 54 1953-Article 54 1954-Article 55 1957-Article 55 1959-Article 55 1961-Article 55 1963-Article 55 1964-Article 55	Narrow formal-localized. All candidates are determined by the Committees which were established in each province.
1966-Article 54 1974-Article 87, 88	In parallel with the principles Political Parties Law of 1965, candidates are determined through formal-centralized nomination and only 5 % of all candidates are determined by the Party Council through formal-centralized nomination.
1976-Article 66, 67	95 % of candidates are determined through formal-localized nomination with the participation of all registered party members. However, until the formation of the infra-structure for this system, the candidates are nominated by party delegates. (Article-66) 5 % of candidates are determined through formal-centralized nomination. (Article-67)
1983-Article 60, 61 (The Statute of the Social Democratic People's Party)	95 % of candidates are determined through formal-localized nomination with the participation of all registered party members. 5 % of candidates are determined through formal-centralized nomination.
1993-1995	Formal-centralized nomination.

*Source: CHP Tüzükleri Dünü Bugünü, Aydın Erdoğan, 2000.*

Considering the numbers of the women in the RPP candidate short-lists, it can be argued that the RPP selectors did not prefer to use their power particularly for the promotion of women's legislative recruitment in the last national elections. Therefore, it can be argued that the formal-centralized system which could theoretically be helpful for the promotion of women's legislative careers compared to other ways of candidate nomination does not work in the RPP for the advantage of women due to the selectors' preferences. This is closely related with the difference between the rhetoric and practice in the party. Women's disadvantaged position in candidate nominations is a result of the contradiction between the RPP's commitments on women's representation and its practices in the nominations. In other words, the RPP's rhetorical support for women political

aspirants disappears in the nomination process and the number of women candidates remain significantly low.

Although the RPP's rhetorical support for women cannot be undermined in the Turkish party system, the difference between its rhetoric and practice brought about women's exclusion from legislative representation. Such a difference can be explained with a variety of institutional and ideological factors rooted within the party. First, it is hard to claim that the RPP is a party which internalized the social democratic values. Although the RPP has experienced ideological transformations since the early years of the multi-party period, it is hard to claim that the social democratic identity has clearly been internalized both by the leadership cadres and the local party members. The problems of institutionalization and high level of centralization within the party can be seen as the results of the RPP's ideological uncertainty. Especially from the perspective of women's political recruitment, the RPP's nomination practices which significantly exclude women aspirants are important indicators which prove that the RPP's perspective on women is also problematic. It can be argued that under the contemporary elite structure of the leadership cadres and the conservative nature of its modernity perspective, the RPP is significantly far from being a party where women's legislative careers are strongly supported.

The RPP's low institutionalization and its centralized structure become apparent especially in the candidate nominations. So, it is also necessary to analyze the selectors' preferences in the RPP during the process of candidate nomination and how women political aspirants are affected by these preferences.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **ATTITUDES OF THE RPP SELECTORS TOWARD WOMEN'S LEGISLATIVE RECRUITMENT**

In the last national elections, the RPP ended up being one of the two parties which entered into the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) by winning the 19.41 per cent of the total vote cast. It emerged as the main opposition party after the majority party, Justice and Development Party (JDP). However, the result of the election was especially disappointing for the RPP women since only 11 of 38 women candidates could be elected. As explained, although the party selected its candidates through the formal-centralized nomination, women candidates were mostly placed on the lower ranks of the party lists with little chance of election.

In this chapter, the interviews with five members of the Central Executive Committee (CEC) and 50 party officials will be analyzed. The study has been designed to understand the values, attributes and beliefs of selectors in the recruitment process, their perspectives on positive discrimination strategies for women and the criteria under which these selectors made their choices on candidate short-lists. As the RPP has always had a highly centralized party organization, it can be argued that the views and values of the elite leadership cadres in the recruitment process can be seen as the determinant factor.

Following the elections, the RPP was harshly criticized by the intra-party opposition which called the leadership cadres for resignation. The opposition voices criticized the party leadership mainly for their anti-democratic attitudes and decisions. According to the opposition, candidate nomination was undemocratic and unfair; the party members who have worked for the party for years were

excluded in the nomination process.<sup>60</sup> In addition, the party leaders had nominated many people who have no party experience and who have had even held no party membership before. However, in the first party Congress following the national election, the party delegates extended their consent one more time to the existing leadership cadres. It can be argued that the loyalty of the delegates to the leadership has been the major characteristic of the RPP since its establishment. However, the main reason behind this loyalty can be also explained through the patronage relations between the leadership cadres and the delegates. In fact, one of the party officials states that the relationship between the leadership cadres and the delegates takes some form of patronage:

Party delegates are mostly the local party officials who have a strong authority over their constituencies. They mostly have close relations with the leadership cadres. They are supported by the leadership cadres in the local politics. And in return, the delegates also work for the party leaders in the Party Congress and become loyal to the leadership cadres. It is a kind of invisible bargaining between the party leaders and the delegates.<sup>61</sup>

As far as women party officials and members were concerned, there was silence after the elections. Except the reaction of some of the women's organizations, the criticisms on the low number of women deputies slowed down after the elections. For women inside and outside the party, the RPP has always been a party that defended women's rights. Since the establishment of the Republic, the RPP had not only initiated suffrage for women and changed the civil code but also encouraged women to take an active part in social and economic life.

However, the question remains: Why has the RPP not been supportive for the enhancement of women's political representation in the party and recruitment in the elections? It was clear that the number of women deputies would increase significantly if the selectors had nominated women on the winnable parts of the lists in several constituencies. Moreover, the gender quotas adopted in the election of the party councils have promoted the women's participation in decision making, however, the similar support mechanisms to promote women's legislative

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<sup>60</sup> *Hürriyet Daily*, 15 September, 2002.

<sup>61</sup> Personal interview with a male local party member, Ankara, April 2004.

career through the RPP have been noticeably absent within the practices of intra party mechanisms. In contrast to prevailing practice in many European parties, the adoption of the positive discrimination strategies to promote women in elections are constitutionally unacceptable in Turkey since it is thought that such strategies extent to women a privileged status over and above men. However, in the last elections, the RPP leaders were theoretically speaking about the opportunity to place women on the winnable position of the party as they nominate their candidates through the centralized nomination.

It can be argued that the strikingly low numbers of women deputies elected on the party ticket is largely a result of the selectors' attitudes toward women's recruitment in the nomination process. Therefore, it is important to have a look at the motives and views of the party elite in the leadership cadres with the power to select the candidates.

A cursory look at the social background characteristics of the deputies could give us an idea about the selection criteria. In the most recent general elections, the deputies elected as the RPP representatives did not display different characteristics than those of the prior legislative period in terms of their demographic and social-background characteristics. More than half of the elected representatives are above 50 years old with well-educated background and high socio-economic status. Among the deputies, nearly all of them are married with children, 63 per cent are above 50 years old, 68 per cent are university graduate. (*see Table-7 and Table-9*) The social background characteristics of women deputies are also parallel to those of men. Among the 11 women deputies, half of them are older than 50 years old with at least university level educational status and professional occupation and 8 of them are married with children. (*see Table-8*)

As it is seen in the Table-6, in the last elections, the RPP selectors preferred to select among the candidates with high educational status. Among the RPP deputies, only 10 per cent have an educational attainment lower than university degree. In addition to high educational status, it is also evident in the selectors'

responses that they are more willing to prefer some occupational groups. One of the RPP selectors who were interviewed for this study explained the situation in the following way:

Legislative work requires professionalism and expertise. We expect the representatives to be specialized in some areas such as law or economics. This makes the legislative work easier to carry out for the MPs.<sup>62</sup>

**Table-7. Main Characteristics of the Elected RPP Deputies**

Age	
>50	% 63
<50	% 37
NGO membership	
Member	% 43
No membership	% 57
Public Service	
Public Service	% 69
Private Sector	% 31
Major	
Major	% 9
Union membership	
Union membership	% 5
Marital Status	
Married with children	% 94.8
Married without children	% 1.2
Single with children	% 2.3
Single without children	% 1.7

Source: <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr>

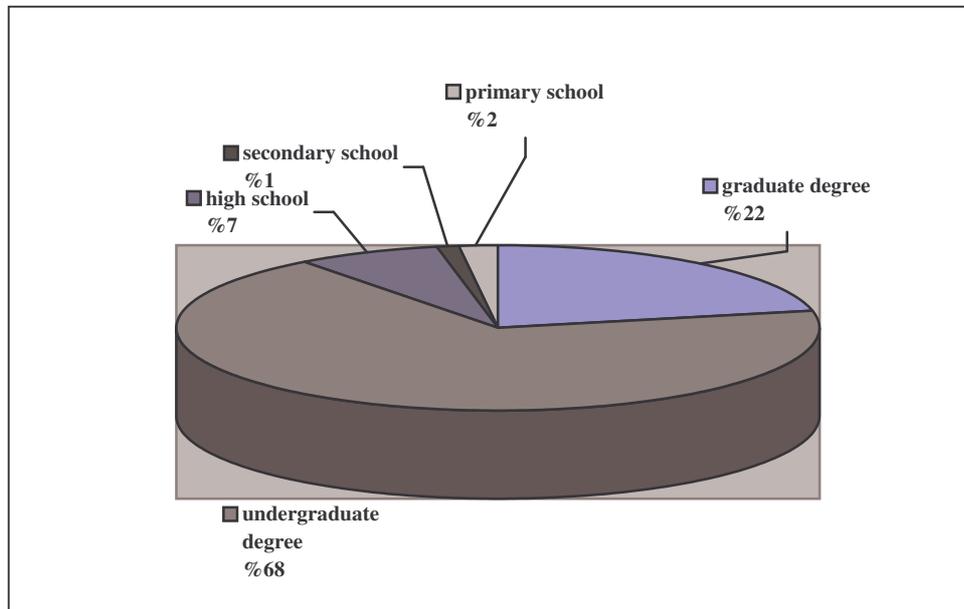
<sup>62</sup> Personal interview with a male member of the CEC, Ankara, May 2004.

**Table-8. Characteristics of the Elected Women Deputies**

<b>Age</b>	
>50	5
<50	6
<b>Occupation</b>	
Public Service	5
Private Sector	5
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Married with children	8
Married without children	1
Single with children	1
Single without children	1
<b>Educational Background</b>	
Under-graduate	5
Graduate	6

Source: <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr>

**Table-9. Educational Status of the RPP Deputies**



Source: <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr>

Although the educational status and the occupational expertise seem to be the priority in the nomination process, all of the respondents stated that the applicants were subjected to a general evaluation during which their social background characteristics were also examined. According to the selectors, their main motivation in selecting candidates was to select the ones who would contribute most to success of the party in a constituency. One of the members of the CEC stated that:

In the last national elections, as the members of the CEC, we tried to find out the candidates who are more likely to win the elections. That's why we preferred to put those applicants with a publicly recognized name on the top of the candidate shortlists.<sup>63</sup>

According to the selectors, the formal-localized nomination can produce some unexpected results in the process. That is, the candidates whom the selectors think are more likely to lose the elections can be selected as the first candidate of the party list if the selection is determined through the formal-localized nomination. From the respondents' view, the formal-localized nomination can produce candidates with whom the party is unlikely to win the elections in the particular constituency. However, the respondents also acknowledge that they take risks prior to the elections by using the formal-centralized nomination since the party members mostly react to centralized nominations. One of the CEC members stated that:

As we experienced in the previous candidate nominations, the primaries do not always give the expected results. In the primaries, the party members may bring those aspirants who are not likely to win the elections to the top of the lists.<sup>64</sup>

Another CEC member also stated that:

The electoral success of the party is closely related to whom you selected as the party candidate. Voters usually votes for the candidates in the elections, especially in the small constituencies where people know each other

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<sup>63</sup> Personal interview with a male member of the CEC, Ankara, May 2004.

<sup>64</sup> Personal interview with a male member of the CEC, Ankara, May 2004.

closely. Therefore, when the primaries help the aspirants who do not have a vote potential, it negatively affects the electoral success of the party.<sup>65</sup>

When compared the results of the national elections of 1995, the incumbency turnover in 2002 was 85 per cent<sup>66</sup>. Prior to the elections of 2002, 87 per cent of the members of the Party Council were nominated as party candidates. However, among the elected representatives, 70 per cent were the members of the Party Council. 64 per cent of women among the members of the Party Assembly were nominated as candidate but not elected. The low proportions of elected women among the members of the Party Assembly can be explained by the fact that the women members of the Party Assembly were placed in the lower ranks of the party lists compared to men. Therefore, it can be argued that, unlike male candidates, party experience did not become an advantage for women candidates in the elections. In fact, some CEC members stated that the party experience was not a priority for the candidacy: as explained by one of them, “party work experience is of course an important asset in the nominations. However, there are also people outside the party who would contribute to the party and parliamentary work.”<sup>67</sup> It can be argued that the attitudes of the RPP leaders on party experience create a paradox for women political aspirants. As explained in Chapter II, party experience can be considered as a powerful resource for candidacy and that the selectors may favor those who have already had political skills to be useful for legislative work. It can be expected that the RPP selectors’ tendency not to exclude those who have no party experience would be an advantage for women applicants. However, the candidate short-lists of the latest national elections have shown that the RPP women aspirants were not evaluated as equals with men aspirants who have also no party experience.

Among the elected RPP representatives, the number of former majors, incumbents and well-known people was considerably high. As the respondents stated, they preferred to position the ones whose chance would be high to win on the top of

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<sup>65</sup> Personal interview with a female member of the CEC, Ankara, May 2004.

<sup>66</sup> The RPP failed to get over the 10 per cent national threshold in the elections of 1999 and therefore stayed out of the Parliament.

<sup>67</sup> Personal interview with a female member of the CEC, Ankara, May 2004.

the election lists. Among the candidates who were positioned on the upper ranks of the lists, there were economists, lawyers, businessmen and the majors who have never had party work before. Hence, it can be stated that the main motive behind the preferences of the selectors was their belief to win the elections through the most professional and best known candidates. The respondents in this study also stated that party experience was not a major asset for nomination in the process. Therefore, women as the more disadvantaged group compared to men have also lost chances of election due to the recruitment of namely recognized candidates in the selection process.

Another criticism directed to the party selectors was their tendency to select the ones with high financial resources. The respondents in this study accepted the view that politics require time and motivation. One of the female CEC members stated that: “Financial resources are important for the aspirants in affording the expenses of their party activities. However, financial resources cannot be a prerequisite for being selected as a candidate in the RPP.”<sup>68</sup>

According to some of the selectors, financial resources of the candidates can be helpful especially to be able to concentrate on their political careers. One of the CEC members explained this in the following way:

Political life requires a close interaction with the society. If you are a full-time politician, then you have to spend time and money for party activities. Campaigning for candidacy is an example... Women aspirants are more likely to face difficulties to spend time and money for party-related activities since they are mostly dependant on their families economically. However, it cannot be even thought that the applicants are evaluated in the frame of their financial resources.<sup>69</sup>

As stated in Chapter II, the political aspirants with more available time and financial resources to invest in a political career are more likely to promote their political status (Norris, 1996). It can be argued that while the RPP selectors do not consider financial resources as a prerequisite for candidacy, they approve the view

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<sup>68</sup> Personal interview with a male member of the CEC, Ankara, May 2004.

<sup>69</sup> Personal interview with a female member of the CEC, Ankara, May 2004.

that the applicants with more available financial resources are more likely to overcome the expenses of the party-related activities. Therefore, it can be argued that there is a clear relationship between the financial resources and being a candidate in the RPP.

It should be noted that all of the CEC members in the survey of this research strongly agreed that the number of women deputies is far from being sufficient. They stated that women's token position in politics cannot be acceptable since women constitute the half of the population and that women's increased inclusion into political life could change the ongoing political balance in terms of the policies. They also state that the integration of women's perspectives into policies can change the existent nature of the politics. Some of the selectors believe that a woman economist may have a different perspective on an economic policy than a male politician.<sup>70</sup>

In addition, some selectors who were interviewed for this study agreed that the RPP possessed a women-friendly culture; in their view, an indication of that was the fact that during the evaluation process none of the applicants were subjected to a discriminatory attitude due to their sex. None of the members of the Central Executive Committee, who were interviewed, think that women were placed at the unwinnable ranks of the party lists. They stated that they would position more women in the lists however, the applications from women were not sufficient. According to these selectors, the overall result for the RPP was far from being satisfactory due to the insufficient voting returns. They claimed that the result would be better for women if the RPP had gained enough vote to come to the power.

The respondents also stated that they would strongly support the gender-quota applications in the national elections. However, they believe that these strategies should be temporary until the expected results are taken since they can be considered as a form of privilege. The respondents state that the equality between

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<sup>70</sup> Personal interview with a male member of the CEC, Ankara, May 2004.

men and women is a must in a democratic society; however, the measures taken to ensure the equality between men and women has no necessity after women political aspirants are provided equal conditions with men in politics.

The respondents' attitude toward positive discrimination strategies to promote women in the elections is reflected in their approach towards the recent amendments in the constitutional provisions to ensure gender equality. With the legislative bills presented by the RPP women deputies to the TGNA, the RPP aimed at an amendment to Article 68 of the Constitution to introduce financial sanctions to those political parties which fail to recruit sufficient number of women in the candidate shortlists, and also an amendment to Article 69 which would oblige all political parties to apply gender quota during the elections to promote women's legislative recruitment.

Also during the last constitutional amendments<sup>71</sup>, the RPP women deputies presented a legislative bill to add a new phrase to the Article 10 of the Constitution to the effect that the state would be responsible to take 'all necessary measures to ensure the equality between men and women'. The bill also included that such measures shall not be considered as a privilege provided for women.

Although the proposed amendments could not be passed in the parliament, the RPP proved its willingness for the promotion of women's political representation. The constitutional amendment in Article 10 and Article 90 included the phrases: "Women and men have equal rights. The state is responsible to ensure the equality between men and women" and "In case of incompatibility between the provisions of the Turkish laws and the international conventions with regard to the basic rights and freedom, the provisions of the international conventions shall be applied."

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<sup>71</sup> The last constitutional amendments which have been realized in May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004. The RPP submitted a legislative proposal for the adoption of positive discrimination for women, however, the constitutional amendments did not include the positive discrimination provisions due to the insufficient support from other parties in TGNA for the proposal.

During the parliamentary debates over the amendments, both men and women MPs of the RPP defended the necessity for such strategies to promote women's disadvantageous position in politics. One of the women MPs asserted that the proposed constitutional arrangements would hold the state responsible to take the necessary measures in promoting the equality between men and women:

Article 10 and 12 of the Constitution assert that women and men have equal rights. However, such an expression does not solve the problem of equality. We do not demand our rights, rather we face difficulties to use our rights.<sup>72</sup>

All of the RPP selectors interviewed for this study state that they strongly agree with the application of the positive discrimination strategies in the national elections as far as the constitution permits. Moreover, the interviews conducted with the party members reveal that their approach to the positive discrimination strategies positively match with the selectors' approaches. While the majority of the fifty party members expressed support for the introduction of women-friendly mechanisms within the party, a minority strongly disagree with this approach. The party members who support these strategies state that the positive discrimination is a necessary mechanism for the provision of the equality between men and women in terms of their political representation. They also think that the quota application should be applied as a temporary measure within the parties until a parity is reached in the representation of men and women. One of the party members express her opinions on positive discrimination strategies in the following way:

We start the political competition behind men. The conditions are not equal for men and women. For this reason, I support such positive discrimination strategies to reach men in the competition. Many people think that these strategies give women a privileged status. I don't think so. Women's political careers need to be supported since we are more disadvantaged than men in politics.<sup>73</sup>

However, those party members who are against such measures state that the positive discrimination would be the violation of the democracy within the party.

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<sup>72</sup> Parliamentary speech by Oya Araslı, the RPP deputy. *Radikal*, 5 May 2004.

<sup>73</sup> Personal interview with a female local party member, Ankara, April 2004.

They think that women's legislative careers should not be promoted through such measure just because they are women. Rather, it is striking to note that they claim that women have to promote their careers by their own efforts and abilities. These party members also state that they would feel uncomfortable if women are nominated prior to them in the candidate lists with the adoption of such measures.

I would not want to see the name of a female candidate above my name on the candidate list...It is not fair to put women on the upper parts of the lists just because they are women. They have to compete with other candidates with their own qualifications.<sup>74</sup>

In the light of the interviews conducted with both the party members and the RPP selectors, it can be argued that the RPP strongly supports the view that women's integration into the political life is a prerequisite for the democratic consolidation in Turkey. It is clear that there is a party culture in the RPP which is highly supportive for women. Both the selectors and the party members believe that women's low level of representation in the parliament is a violation of their human rights. However, it is also evident that their support for women's inclusion in both the party decision making bodies and in the parliament is remaining at the rhetorical level. Except the 25 per cent gender quota application for the party decision making bodies, there is no concrete mechanism for women established within the party.

This contradiction between the attitudes and the actions of the RPP male politicians occurs especially in the nomination process during which the selectors are more likely to nominate the applicants with high educational status and professional careers. The problematic side of the nomination can be explained by two arguments. First, the RPP selectors do not individually discriminate against some applicants due to their sex, however, their priorities in the candidate nomination ultimately bring about a discrimination towards women since the prerequisites for candidacy such as expertise and high educational status mostly match with the political capital of male applicants. Obviously, women's legislative recruitment depends highly on their political capital. The RPP has

always had elite cadres which function as a determining factor in the candidate nominations. Women are selected in the nominations as long as their political capital is at least as competitive as that of male applicants.

Second argument is related with the functioning of the candidate nomination in the Turkish political parties. The close relations between the leadership cadres and the political aspirants mostly become the determining factor in the process which is also related to the level of institutionalization within a particular political party. Despite the centralized nature of the RPP organization, the candidate nominations are based on the relations between the leadership cadres and the political aspirants. Therefore, women's legislative recruitment is negatively affected by this relationship due to their newcomer status in the political system.

It can be argued that women's presence within the RPP has historically been made possible by the RPP male elite. Moreover, women did not have to struggle for their rights within the party since the RPP male elite introduced the quota application to be used in the organization level. It can be argued that women became active within the RPP after the establishment of the Women's Branches in 1961. Since then, many women promoted their careers by entering to the central party councils from Women's Branches. However, as the members of the CEC claimed, women's participation in the party administration was significantly hurt with the abolishment of the Women's Branches with the 1980 military intervention. After the constitutional arrangements that removed the ban on Women's Branches, the RPP leadership adopted the 25 per cent gender quota in the election of the central party councils.

There are also two significant paradoxes existent in the attitudes of the selectors which hamper the promotion of women's legislative recruitment. First, the leadership cadres strongly support the promotion of women's legislative recruitment in rhetoric; however, they do not particularly support women applicants during nominations although they use the centralized appointment

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<sup>74</sup> Personal interview with a male local party member, Ankara, April 2004.

system. The selectors do not use their selection power for the good of women aspirants. Thus, they contradict themselves by leaving women to the lower ranks of the party lists. This contradiction between the rhetoric and the practices of the selectors can be linked with the prevailing high level of centralization and the weakness of intra-party democracy. As a result of the centralized nature of the party governance, the leadership cadres use their initiatives in parallel to their personal preferences and party traditions. As in the example of the recruitment of well-known and publicly recognized people in the last elections, the selectors prefer to use their power over nominations for the most privileged segments of the society, and thus, women's chances of being nominated and elected is seriously jeopardized.

In addition, the selectors also display a tendency to recruit those applicants who are ideologically close to the leadership cadres. This can be considered as the second paradoxical situation within the party. As the intra-party opposition often claims, the practices of the leadership cadres seriously prevent the development of the internal party democracy. Obviously, from the ideological perspective, the authoritarian attitudes of the RPP leaders in determining the recruitment cannot be reconciled with its social democratic identity. Currently, there is a strong reaction to this situation within the RPP at local and national levels as they accuse the leadership cadres of acting in an authoritarian manner.

## CONCLUSION

Politics has never been a fair game in which each player would always get the cash of his or her own labor. Even if it had been so, women's situation in politics would not be a problematic issue pronounced among the major areas of inequality. Undoubtedly, women's invisibility in the political arena can not be entirely explained with the inadequacy or insignificance of their efforts. In contrast, the individual or collective efforts of women can be evaluated as an important force in achieving electoral success.

In Turkey, women's status in politics can be described as 'the contributors' who mostly become visible in election times to mobilize party support and to help increase the party votes. This time-bounded visibility of women in the political arena usually disappears after the elections and replaces itself with a small number of women MPs in the parliament. Rhetorically, Turkish politics is described as an 'open' area to every single person, regardless of sex, to be actively involved; however, the proportion of women at the elected office has always been away from being 'representative'. Legislative recruitment which is described as the movements from the lower levels of political office to parliamentary careers works in Turkey as an unfair game especially for women.

The fact that women are scarcely recruited at high positions of power within the Turkish political parties seems to be highly related with the insufficient development of women-friendly institutional mechanisms within their internal party structure. Quota systems, nomination practices and many other positive discrimination strategies that were designed in many European countries where women are recruited intensely at top rank power positions are obviously revealing

how determining these strategies are in the enhancement of women's power in the political arena.

Currently, implementation of the positive discrimination strategies is not a common practice in the Turkish political parties. Apart from the constitutional barriers to the application of such strategies within the intra-party structures, it is in the hands of the parties to adopt constitutionally acceptable rules and procedures within the party mechanisms to promote women's legislative recruitment. For instance, parties can support women political aspirants by nominating them on the upper ranks of the election lists and increase the probability of being elected for women. Parties can also implement some affirmative action programs within the party to establish a women-friendly party culture and to raise awareness about women's disadvantageous position within the political system. Undoubtedly, there are a variety of channels which can be applied by the political parties to promote women's legislative recruitment. However, it can be argued that the strategies of the Turkish political parties, especially strategies of the left-wing and social democratic parties to support women in politics are highly limited to their party rhetoric.

At the attitudinal level, among the Turkish political parties, the RPP has been the most supportive for women's political representation since the establishment of the Turkish Republic. In the RPP, the strategies to promote women's legislative recruitment is supported rhetorically by both men and women party officials at the leadership positions. During the recruitment process, however, the RPP selectors believe that they could win the elections by placing the winnable candidates on the election lists who are predominantly male although they state their strong support for women-friendly mechanisms.

The situation that the recruitment process does not work positively for the promotion of women's legislative careers in the RPP can be explained with a variety of institutional factors. First, the RPP's ongoing problems with institutionalization negatively affects women's recruitment since the recruitment

does not rest on stable rules and procedures. It is clearly observed that the practices and rules of the party are often changed by the elected leadership cadres. More importantly, recruitment within the RPP mostly takes place according to the preferences of the leadership cadres. The RPP leaders' support for the enhancement of women's legislative careers remains only at rhetoric level. Second, the high level of centralization within the party largely determines the recruitment process. It can be argued that the form of nomination practices mostly rests on the centralized appointments in the party and, the party leaders have the sole authority in nominating the party candidates. In this oligarchic structure, women's recruitment is mostly out of concern among the selectors although they state their strong support for the enhancement of women's integration into politics.

It can be argued that what the RPP selectors demand from the applicants is largely shaped by the whole political system including the political culture and the party system. The interaction between the Turkish political system and the demand side of the recruitment in the RPP have a negative impact over women's legislative recruitment. One explanation to the situation is the highly competitive atmosphere of the Turkish party system where women are excluded from the political agenda. In Turkey, one of the factors that negatively affect women's legislative recruitment is the nature of the party system. As it is argued in the Chapter II, party system can positively work for women's recruitment in two ways. First, it can be expected that a fragmented party system is likely to work positively for women's recruitment since the growth of new parties can accommodate more women in the political life. Second, a stabilized two-party system is expected to recruit more women since these parties have more chance to win in the elections, therefore, they provide more chance for women to be elected. However, it can be said that these two arguments have not historically worked for women in the Turkish party system in terms of their legislative recruitment. In the two-party years, with the weakening power of the RPP, women's legislative recruitment had been out of concern of the rightist governments. Also, in the multi-party period, especially, in 1960s and 70s, the fragmented party system increased the degree of

the competition among parties. Within the left-right crisis of the multi-party period, political parties did not tend to set the mechanisms for women to enhance their representation.

As explained in Chapter II, political competition among the male political aspirants is a factor which mostly contributes to perpetuation of women's disadvantageous position in the system. Women's lack of political capital is another problem that prevents their promotion in the recruitment process. However, more importantly, the structure of the Turkish party system does not open enough space for women even if women aspirants possess sufficient political capital. That is why women aspirants who are at least as qualified as men aspirants are placed at lower ranks of the party lists than men. This can be explained by the fact that the close and personal relations between the male aspirants and the RPP selectors shape the process significantly. Therefore, the RPP selectors' conviction that the elections could be won with qualified male 'friends' both discourages women aspirants and reduces the probability of their being selected as candidates. Yet, this is not to say that the RPP selectors have a discriminatory attitude towards women aspirants; but it can be argued that the selectors' expectations from the applicants mostly match with the male aspirants. As a result of all these institutional and attitudinal factors, we face a dilemma in the RPP on women's legislative recruitment.

Although the RPP selectors rhetorically support the legislative attempts to adopt positive discrimination strategies for women, this support is not translated into active support strategy and policies to elevate women party members and activists in the party and to promote, in general, women as political aspirants during elections. It is interesting that the RPP continues to emphasize the importance of women's representation in its party rhetoric; however, the party does not make considerable efforts to transform the institutional structure into a democratic one which is also supportive for women.

This thesis underlined that the paradox between the RPP's rhetoric and practice on women's recruitment is closely related with the prevailing elitist attitude within the party selectors and the ambiguity in its ideological position. It can be argued that the disadvantaged position of women political aspirants during the RPP's recruitment process has been a consequence of the preferences of the elite cadres of the party. In addition, the RPP's insufficiency in internalizing the social democratic values also perpetuates this elite oligarchy in the party.

We can contend that women's legislative recruitment within the RPP can only be promoted not by the selectors' individual attempts to select more women in the nominations but by a constitutional enforcement. It seems that the preferences of the RPP selectors will be the same in the nominations until the women-friendly mechanisms are adopted constitutionally.

The RPP's organizational structure which tends to use women party members as a means to increase its vote potential can not enhance women's political careers in the party. As most European social democrat political parties, the RPP has to review the places in the party where women aspirants would take and this should be provided through intra-party training programs.

For instance, the Association for Supporting and Training Women Candidates (KADER)<sup>75</sup> is one of the most important NGOs in Turkey which was established to prepare women aspirants to political life. However, it is hard to claim that the KADER has fulfilled its mission. Before the general elections of 1999, the KADER organized a political campaign which aimed to ensure that the political parties position sufficient number of women in their candidate lists<sup>76</sup>. The campaign did not achieve its aim and women were excluded from the candidate lists. The KADER which described the election lists as 'embarrassing' criticized

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<sup>75</sup> KADER was established in 1997 with the aim to enhance women's political representation through training and campaigns.

<sup>76</sup> The slogan of the KADER in the 1999 campaign was "If there is no woman in the party lists, then there is no vote for your party!" ([www.kader.org.tr/faaliyetler.htm](http://www.kader.org.tr/faaliyetler.htm))

especially the RPP which did not position sufficient number of women in the election lists under its social democratic identity.<sup>77</sup>

It may be argued that the civil society organizations in Turkey have not efficiently function as means to consolidate the democratic environment. The Turkish political system which has several times been interrupted by military interventions has not been a system where the civil society organization easily emerge and flourish. It is a common practice in most European countries that women's legislative recruitment has been promoted through the cooperation between the political parties and the NGOs. In Turkey, historically, the ties between political parties and the NGOs have not been strong enough. The RPP's relations with the NGOs is not different than other political parties in Turkey. The RPP has limited cooperation with the civil society organizations. In terms of women's legislative recruitment, the KADER-RPP cooperation is more likely to change the ongoing situation of women in the RPP. It may be a further study that analyze the attitudes of the political parties in Turkey toward the women NGOs. However, it is important to note that the loose ties between the RPP and the women NGOs may be related to the leadership cadres which became dominant especially in the late 1990s. The RPP leadership have controlled all decision taking processes within the party and excluded the voices coming from the local organizations. Expectedly, the NGOs' effort to support women political aspirants is heard by the RPP leaders as much as that of the local party organizations.

Undoubtedly, the enhancement of women's legislative recruitment could be possible through some measures related to the political system. Women's recruitment in the internal party organs should be promoted through positive discrimination strategies. Political parties should play active role in the provision of financial resources for women political aspirants. And more importantly, the measures which transform the party culture into a more women-friendly one should be taken in the party statutes. For instance, the internal trainings in the party can contribute to enhance the awareness of the party members about

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<sup>77</sup> Hürriyet Gazetesi, 26 Şubat 1999.

women-related issues. The creation of a gender sensitivity among the party members is an important factor which contribute to the promotion of women's legislative careers.

Another point which should be emphasized is that the RPP's position within the social democratic identity. It can be argued that the RPP has a limited modernization perspective which has not shown so far indication of internalization of social democratic values in itself. Persistent problems with institutionalization and weakness of internal party democracy aggravate this problem. Therefore, the insufficiencies in internalizing social democracy reflect itself to the manner of the party cadres. For instance, the negative attitudes of some of the party officials toward the application of positive discrimination strategies cannot be compatible with their self-professed social democratic identity. Secondly, political parties in Turkey have had a conservative outlook over women's political participation. As explained before, in Turkey, few political parties have designed specific policies to promote women in politics. This also affects the RPP's attitudes toward women political aspirants. The RPP was the first party to introduce the social justice perspective into Turkish political landscape. It remains the oldest and the deepest-rooted party in Turkey which pioneered democratization. However, the promotion of women's political recruitment within the RPP in the future seems to be possible through the organizational and ideological transformation of the party. It is the conviction of this study that the transformation of the RPP on the question of women's representation in politics depends on its capacity to emancipate itself from the inherited elite tradition in the RPP cadres and from their conservative modernization perspective.

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[www.tbmm.gov.tr](http://www.tbmm.gov.tr)

*Cumhuriyet* Daily

*Evrensel* Daily

*Kazete* Independent Monthly Women Newspaper

*Milliyet* Daily

*Radikal* Daily

*Sabah* Daily

## APPENDICES

### 1. Quota Practices in Western European Parties

#### (A) Norway

Primary force behind the adoption of quota system in Norwegian politics was the autonomous women's movement which strengthened its demands in the 1970s. Therefore, the enhancement of women's representation in Norwegian politics can be seen as an outcome of women's motivation to diffuse in the political system. In addition, the introduction of quota system was also an example to how determining the leadership can be in altering the existent women-unfriendly political system and could work for the representation of more women in parliament.

In the 1970s, the newly elected leader of Socialist Left Party who was actively involved in the women's movement proposed a constitutional reform for the first time to change the unequal representation between men and women (Skeijje, 2001). Quota system which was proposed at that time to be used in parliamentary elections was targeting only women as the token group in parliament and demanding a different treatment of women from men. Although this first attempt demanding a constitutional reform for a numerical parity between men and women in parliament was rejected by a majority of political parties in parliament, most of Norwegian political parties believed that the voluntary quotas to be applied in both internal elections and candidate nominations were the most appropriate solution for obtaining the equality between men and women (Skjeie, 2001).

Considering the introduction of quota system within the internal party mechanisms, it can be said that the ideological orientations within the Norwegian party system did not cause a division between political parties. Except the two right wing parties, all other political parties voluntarily applied quotas in their party mechanisms. However, it can be said that the introduction of the quota system was realized with the pioneering of a left wing party in Norway. In explaining the quota diffusion in Norwegian parties, Matland (1993) emphasizes the pioneering of a left wing party and argues that quotas and gender specific targets always diffuse in other parties after their adoption in a small left party. Matland and Studlar (1996) also suggest that larger parties are likely to adopt gender quotas under the pressure from the adoption of these rules by a rival party, usually a smaller party on the Left. That is, political parties which do not support women through equity in the party institutions may fear to losing votes in the elections when a rival party directly supports women candidates. Parallel to these views, after the adoption of quotas in the Socialist Left Party, the Norwegian Labour Party also increased women's representation from thirty-three in 1981 to fifty-one by 1989 through the introduction of quotas (Matland, 1993).

Today, equal representation is no longer an issue in Norwegian politics and the least surprising fact is the appointment of at least 40 percent women to the government (Skjeie, 2001).

### **(B) France**

The introduction of quotas in French political system was realized with the emergence of the parity movement in the mid-1990s. In the 1970s and 1980s, the level of women's representation in French politics lagged far behind women's achievements in the area of education and employment. Also, at the beginning of the 1990s, the French feminists were not strong enough to press on the government to take appropriate measures toward the enhancement of women's political representation.

However, the rising number of educated and employed women brought a new era in French politics. The empowerment of French women in social and economic areas strengthened their demand for representational equality in politics. Women's low levels of political participation and their growing marginalization in politics began to be the major concern of women in France.

With the rise of parity movement in the 1990s, the political scene started to change. The demand for a perfect equality became the main discourse of the election campaigns and also the candidates of the 1995 presidential elections were forced to use the word parity in their own election campaigns. Following the presidential elections, the government included a large number of women (36 per cent) (Gaspard, 2001).

Also, in 1997, with the pioneering of Lionel Jospin, the leader of the Socialist Party, an amendment to the Constitution was effected to allow for laws designed to prescribe parity in elected assemblies. The constitution established the principle of equal access for women and men to electoral office and elective positions and more importantly, it provided the provision that political parties shall contribute to implementation of this principle. In addition, the Socialist Party maintained 30 per cent women of all party candidates for 1998 elections.

Since the year 2000, the French Law asserts that the difference between the number of men and women candidates on each list must be no more than one in list-based elections. Also, in parliamentary elections (held as single-member majority elections in two rounds) there will be financial penalties for parties that do not present at least 50 per cent of women candidates. Moreover, if the difference between the numbers of candidates of each sex presented by a party exceeds 2 per cent, parties face penalties by law (CoE, 2003).

### **(C) Germany**

Until the 1980s, male hegemony was one of the main features of the German political system. Political parties have always been very central to the German

political life because of the fact that they were the main mechanism to involve in politics. Therefore, women's low level of party membership and their limited access to the positions of power within parties were the major reason which excluded them from political life.

In the 1980s, the structure of political life has begun to change in Germany. Especially after the German unification, the equal opportunity approach took place in the constitution and the federal government committed itself to abolish the existing disadvantages of women. Following a series of reforms in the constitutional law to ensure the equality between men and women in politics, the legal changes on the recruitment policies of German political parties were introduced.

In Germany, quotas were first proposed by the women's organization within the Social Democratic party, however, it was the Green Party that first adopted party quotas in 1986. By the end of that decade, however, all parties had adopted quota regulations (Lemke, 2001). The Greens proposed 50 per cent quota for women through zipping system. Following the Green Party, in 1988, the Social Democratic Party introduced quota system for candidatures with 33 per cent, raised the proportion to 42 per cent in 1992 and to 50 per cent in 2000. Currently, the German SDP implements a quota of 40 percent for internal party councils and committees and 33.3 percent for electoral bodies.

Similar to other countries, in Germany, quotas have resulted in a sharp rise in women's representation in the Bundestag since 1990 (Kolinsky, 1993).

#### **(D) The United Kingdom**

The gradual mobilization of women activists for positive discrimination strategies in the UK during the 1980s and 1990s was one of the main motives of the changes realized for the enhancement of women's representation. The Labour Party needed to break out from its declining working-class and inner-city base, expanding voting support among women voters (Norris, 2001).

The introduction of quotas for the Labour Party's internal bodies took place gradually. Labor women first proposed to enhance their political representation in the mid-1980s during which the party went into an intra-party reform. In this context, the first change in the party statute was realized in 1983 and the party declared its commitment for the enhancement of women's representation. Following that, the Labour conference passed new rules in 1987 for the compulsory shortlisting of women. It was stipulated that where a woman was nominated in a constituency, at least one woman was to be on the final shortlist for interview. If no woman had been short listed by the regular procedure followed by the Executive Committee, the final name on the short list would be dropped and a ballot would be held to determine which of the nominated women should be included (Norris, 2001).

Then, in 1989, quotas were introduced at all levels of party governance. They were used for the selection of the members of party committees and local delegations, the NEC and Shadow Cabinet. The party aimed to obtain 40 percent of Labour MPs as women by the year 2000, and to achieve this goal, the implementation of 'only-women-short-lists' was accepted in 1993 conference. In the selection of the candidates for the 1997 elections, the Labour Party agreed to introduce all-women shortlists in half of their inheritor seats and half their most winnable seats. As a result, with the victory of the Labor Party in 1997 elections, the proportion of women in the Parliament doubled from 9.2 to 18.2 per cent (Norris and Lovenduski, 1996).

Although the policy of all-women shortlists was officially dropped in 1996, many women were elected to the targeted seats until that time (Norris, 2001). In addition, the use of quotas in the Labour Party led other parties to reconsider their policies.

In 1999, the Liberal Democrats used zipping system in the 1999 European Elections and the Conservative Party adopted more positive approach toward fair

and representative lists of candidates. More recently, in February 2002, the government introduced legislation to enable political parties to introduce positive discrimination measures to reduce inequality in the number of men and women elected in local, national and European elections (CoE, 2003).

## **II. Interview Questions**

(A) The interviews I conducted with five leading members -one women and four men members- of the Central Executive Committee (MKYK) included 10 semi-structured, open-ended questions. The questions are as the following:

1. During the candidate nominations, what do you expect from the political aspirants in terms of their personal qualifications?
  - age, education, occupation
  - speaking abilities
  - time and financial resources
  - political connections
  - name recognition
  - NGO membership
  - party experience
  - ambition
  - public work experience
  - incumbent status
2. In the latest national elections, the elected RPP MPs are mostly older than 50 years old, well-educated, high socio-economic status and strong political connections. To what extent do your preferences conform with the result of the elections in terms of the characteristics of the MPs?
3. Could you please compare the impact of the local party organization over the candidate selection process with that of central party organization?
4. How do you evaluate the RPP's nomination practices of the latest national elections from the perspective of democracy, efficiency and justice?

5. Among these nomination practices, which one do you think is the most supportive for women political aspirants?
6. How do you rate the adequacy of the number of women deputies in the TGNA?
7. Do you think that the increased political representation of women make an influence over the existent political order? If yes, from which points?
8. In the latest national elections, many women aspirants who applied to the RPP for candidacy were not either placed in the lists or positioned on the winnable ranks of the lists. And they reacted to the party leaders. What do you think about this?
9. Do you support the implementation of quotas?
10. The recent studies have shown that women are willing to be involved in politics as far as they are given place in the election lists. Would you support the adoption of positive discrimination strategies within the RPP structure?

(B) During the interviews I conducted with 50 male party officials among whom there were 10 former deputies, 10 former local party leaders and 30 party members, the respondents were asked two major questions:

1. Considering the candidate nomination practices of the RPP in the latest national elections, how do you evaluate the influence of the party leaders and the local party organization over the nominations?
2. Do you support the adoption of positive discrimination strategies within the RPP to promote women's legislative recruitment?